

THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

April/May 1998 • Issue No. 44

A.S.I.A. Projects in Tibet

by Giorgio Minuzzo



Tibetan children

L. MARDER

The A.S.I.A. project called 'Program for the Development of the Health and Educational Conditions of the Village of Dzam Thog' is a project jointly financed with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) which started in the spring of 1996. The program, which consists of assistance in many fields, from education to health, as well as the promotion of activities in the economic, social and cultural fields, was prepared by A.S.I.A. and presented to the MAE in 1983 and financed by them three years later.

This is the second largest A.S.I.A. project in Tibet after the project for constructing a school in the village of Damche in the region of Qingai. The school was inaugurated last summer in the presence of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and his wife Rosa who together with numerous members of the Dzogchen Community came from different parts of the world for the occasion.

Since then the school has started to function full time. The project was favorably received not only by the local population and authorities but also by other organizations which work in the sector of development in third-world countries and in Tibet in particular. They stated that they were in favor of further financial assistance in the field of education in this part of Tibet.

On the basis of these initiatives, the project coordinator and staff will soon be leaving for a new A.S.I.A. mission on site for a few months. The duty will be to organize a new project for creating schools for Tibetans and activate programs for training the local teaching staff.

The village of Dzam Thog situated in East Tibet, is more than a thousand kilometers south of Damche (three or four days of travel). Dzam Thog village, which lends its name to the project, is situated on the right bank of the Yantze River (Blue River) which is called Dri Chu in Tibetan. It is the largest river in Asia and comes down from the upland plains of Central Tibet, crosses the whole of East Tibet and continues on to the Pacific Ocean. In summer, which is the rainy season in Tibet, the river becomes yellow ochre because of the earth and mud in its waters. In winter, the dry season, the river makes its claim for the name which it is generally called in the West and becomes a marvelous blue turquoise color. In summer the local children and the 'big' Westerners can spend some of their time bathing in the river and lying in the sun along the river banks. The Dri Chu also marks the border between the Tibetan Autonomous Region where the village of Dzam Thog is located and the Region of Sichuan which together with Qingai and Yunnan are regions populated predominately by other Tibetans and they were established as Chinese Provinces in 1959.

The project at Dzam Thog provides for the creation of a hospital with 24 beds, a school for 500 children and the setting up and creation of activities (micro-projects) together with the local people, aimed at developing the social-economic and cultural conditions of the village and the Tibetan population in general.

At the moment the hospital has been completed and

continued on page 16



Reclining Buddha at Wat Po

F. BARRY

Thailand Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

by Martin Perenchio

At 5:30 AM on February 3rd, three of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's students met him and his wife Rosa at the Bangkok airport after the two had just flown in from Australia. Two days later, Rinpoche and Rosa were relaxing in a beachside resort on Koh Samet, an island off the southeast coast of Thailand. There they were joined by a small circle of followers and well-wishers for days of swimming, sunbathing, and relaxed conversation. Those of us who live here in Thailand are grateful for the natural amenities this country offers as they provide the inducement and the opportunity for our teacher and his wife to relax free of the well-intended but nevertheless demanding importunities of the members of the ever-growing worldwide Dzogchen Community.

The party returned to Bangkok on February 12th, in time to prepare for one public talk and two days of teachings. On the 13th at the Siam Society, Rinpoche delivered a talk on the origins of the Tibetan religious traditions to a general audience of over one hundred people, including the Israeli and Romanian ambassadors. Normally talks at the Society draw forty to fifty people, but this time, Society officials were pleasantly surprised by what became a standing-room only crowd. Rinpoche's discourse covered the history of Shang Shung and the various streams of Bön practice, intriguing parallels with North American Pueblo Indian cultures, particularly in the concerns with purification, the history of the central Tibetan kings, and finally the establishment of Buddhism in the time of the Three Religious Kings. (see Teaching page 2)

On the following morning, Fabio Andrico, who had arrived the previous day, led a small group of seminar participants in a three hour introductory session of Yantra Yoga. That afternoon, Rinpoche gave the first of three talks of a short but intense introduction to the Dzogchen teachings and practice. The teachings are pared down to essential elements which for new people require a bit of time to absorb and amplify, and for older students serve as potent reminders of what they may have learned but have not yet fully

embodied in their years of practice. About forty people attended the three sessions, and as usual, they were an internationally diverse lot.

The following day, February 15th, Rinpoche, Rosa, Fabio, and three local students flew to Burma for a brief tour of the Burmese monuments in Rangoon, Mandalay, and the multifaceted architectural jewels of Pagan. The following week, Rinpoche and his party flew to Singapore and points beyond to continue offering the teachings to all who are willing to come and hear. In late March, we can again look forward to Rinpoche's presence, as he plans to spend a few more days resting in a beachside bungalow before he returns to Italy to take up once again the rigorous teaching schedule in Europe. ■

SPECIAL PRACTICES & ASTROLOGY ISSUE

CONTENTS

- 2 ANCIENT WISDOM
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- 4 SACRED MUSIC FESTIVAL
- 5 STORY OF VIMALAMITRA
Jim Valby
- 5 BOOK REVIEWS
- 7 A COURSE IN TIBETAN MEDICINE
Martina Micelli
- 8 INTRODUCTION TO TIBETAN ASTROLOGY
Dr. Thubten Phuntsok
- 10 SPECIAL PRACTICES CALENDAR
- 12 A PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY
John Bellezza
- 13 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CONTACTS
- 14 COMMUNITY NEWS
- 18 INTERVIEW WITH LOUISE LANDES LEVI
- 19 HOW I MET THE TEACHINGS
- 20 SMALL DETAILS OF EVERYDAY THINGS
John Shane

NAMKHAIR NORBU RINPOCHE'S SCHEDULE 1998-1999

RUSSIA

April 20-22 Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Exam, Moscow
April 23-27 SMS 1st Level training
May 1-5 Moscow retreat
May 8-10 SMS 1st Level Exam
May 11-15 SMS 2nd Level Training

POLAND

May 22-24 Polish Retreat
May 26-29 Visit Paldanling land

GERMANY

June 5-7 German Retreat *

AUSTRIA

June 10 Lucid Dream Conference*
June 12-14 Austrian Retreat

MERIGAR, ITALY

June 25 His Holiness Sakya Trizin Zhegpa Zhidat Teaching
June 26-28 His Holiness Sakya Trizin Vajra Kilaya Teaching

MERIGAR, ITALY (continued)

July 24-28 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, General Retreat
August 14-24 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, General Retreat
August 28-30 SMS III Level Exam
September 31-4 SMS IV Level Training

FRANCE

November 20-22 Paris Teaching*
November 27-29 Karmaling Teaching

PORTUGAL

December 4-6 Portugal Retreat *

BRAZIL

December 12 Public Talk, San Paulo
December 18-20 SITIO Retreat *

ARGENTINA

Dec. 28-Jan. 4, 1999 Tashigat Retreat

* Venues to be announced.
Use International Contacts List for details.
** To be confirmed



February 1998

I would like to try to explain a little about the origin of the Dzogchen teachings. In general, I teach Dzogchen teachings and the meaning of Dzogchen. Particularly I would like to talk about how the teachings developed and have been diffused in Tibet.

You already know that Tibet is a very isolated country. Twenty or thirty years ago almost everyone thought Tibet was like another planet. It is a country that has been very difficult to reach and therefore it has not been easy to have contact with the Tibetan people — geographically it is very difficult. Even in this modern world of communication if we go to Tibet we can still have many problems. For that reason, since the beginning, Tibet developed spiritual knowledge and teachings. There was not very much possibility to develop more on a material level. That is the truth, something concrete, and because of that everyone in Tibet is interested in the teachings. Since ancient times there have been many teachings called Bön, even before Buddhism.

Today we consider Bön a kind of school, only one tradition, but it was not that way in ancient times. Before Buddhism grew in Tibet, all kinds of spiritual teachings and systems were called Bön. Bön really means chanting, in the ancient language of Tibet, as in the chanting of mantras. Some people consider that chanting mantras means to do something spiritual, and that is why they called it Bön. In the real sense, there are so many different styles of teaching, ways of performing spiritual knowledge, and particularly the ways in which people believe. It is all different.

We already know that in most countries in the world there were many primitive people who had primitive spiritual knowledge, most of which we call Shamanism. What is Shamanism? Shamanism is a common name but doesn't mean one school or one tradition. Within Shamanism, even in small countries here and there, there are completely different belief systems. The only characteristic common to all Shamanism is that it deals with nature. When we speak of Buddhism, for example, the main point is the mind and the nature of mind. In Buddhism we are going deeply into this field of the mind. With Shamanism and ancient Bön the knowledge is related to circumstance; where people live influences how they believe. If the people live on a mountain, and that mountain has owners or what we call the local guardians, or protectors of the tribes; if there are two tribes or ten tribes then they have two or ten guardians. There is no universal view.

In Buddhism we say Buddha is the teacher and he manifested in different ways. For example, in the Tantric style we have the Kalachakra and we believe that the Kalachakra is a manifestation of Buddha Sakaymuni. That is universal for people who believe in Tantric Buddhism. Some kind of deity or god or something universal doesn't exist in Shamanism. The people believe in different kinds of spirits or tribes. Most of these people who believe this way have lost their countries; big countries like Australia, the United States, South America. In ancient times they were all Indian-like people, but there was no contact between tribes and they were always fighting. They believed only in the spiritual dimension of their individual tribes. Bön was the same way in Tibet. There were many kinds of Bön. There were many powerful spirits governing not only the mountains, but huge areas, so when they were dividing the regions, the classes of beings and spirits became bigger as the tribes became bigger; this is all related to local guardians and nature.

So in Tibet, in ancient times, there were many kinds of Bönpos; some did sacrifice, killed animals, made offerings, made their spirits happy and felt if their spirits were happy they could have benefits. Their knowledge and understanding is a kind of relationship between the people and the local guardians; the spirits and people living in that country. The spirits are the owners of the trees, rocks, and mountains. People create problems with the spirits by cutting trees, destroying rocks and creating problems in the waters; then the spirits get upset and create provocations and problems for the people who then have had fortune and problems. If they succeed to deal with the spirits in a perfect way, they become rich and have no problems because the local guardians and spirits are pacified. The Bönpo believed in this way and the priests performed many rites for wealth, good crops, etc.

Some of the Bön knowledge became deeper and deeper because they had contact with India and Oddiyana and some of the Bön priests received deeper teachings. The priests changed and integrated aspects of their way of doing practice and particularly their way of believing. In ancient Bön there was a medical system and there were Bön physicians. They cured people mainly with rites but also discovered herbal medicines, minerals and natural things of the countryside. They knew how to use these things; some of the Bön physi-



P. BARRY

Ancient Wisdom

The History of Bön, Buddhism and Dzogchen in Tibet

Excerpted from a Public Talk in Thailand

cians developed clarity and had such knowledge and understanding through their practice.

For example, there is one tradition of Bön called *phywa gshen*. *Phywa* means glory, wealth, and sometimes means fortune. In any case, they believe in the deity of this *phywa* called *Phuwer*: a young boy eight years old who holds a lamp. The lamp represents light and the light represents clarity. They believed with *Phuwer* they could get this kind of wisdom and increase their clarity. So they did this practice of *Phuwer* and in the beginning maybe one or two tribes were integrating that practice, then many followed and the practitioners developed because there was something very real. Then they began calculating astrology and astrology of the elements. They became very expert in these fields and in that period there was no astrology like today, but they knew constellations and positions very well. In that way they developed this kind of clarity.

It was very strange when I arrived in Italy at the University to study and do research, because I discovered that *phuwer* is a word in the Latin language that means boy. I thought this was very funny. The Greco-Roman society had very ancient knowledge and understanding that was very similar to the ancient Bön. We don't know what kind of relationship they had in ancient times, but that is an example; somehow it developed that way.

In the beginning of Tibet there were many of these kinds of Bön traditions. Tibet has an almost 4000 year history, in a real sense, because there is this kind of Bön tradition. In Bön there was a very famous teacher called Tonpa Shenrab and today almost all of Bön is now integrated into the Bön lineage coming from this teacher. Tonpa Shenrab created the first writing of Western Tibet, near Kailash, which in ancient times was called Shang Shung. In the time of Shang Shung Tibet did not exist as it is today, and within all of Shang Shung there were many different tribes. The tribes of Shang Shung were unified under this teaching and with this teacher, and also there had been a king of Shang Shung and many tribes unified under the first king. This king became the protector of the tradition of Shang Shung and Bönpo. Then Bön and the Shang Shung king collaborated and became more and more powerful. There were then eighteen very famous Shang Shung kings in different parts of Western Tibet. Later the Tibetan kingdom started and the first Tibetan king was called Nyatri Tsenpo. It is thought that Nyatri Tsenpo lived at the time of Buddha Sakaymuni.

At the beginning of the Tibetan kingdom Shang Shung was separated from the Tibetan kingdom because in that period most of Tibet had been governed by Shang Shung. Following that, almost thirty generations of Tibetan kings governed Tibet but there was no Buddhism, only Bön, which came from Western Tibet or Shang Shung. The Tibetan kings were not very satisfied following this Bön tradition, because in doing so they continued a relationship with the king of Shang Shung, and Tibet was trying to become independent of Shang Shung. The shadow of Shang Shung remained and Tibet could never become totally independent and strong, so after seven generations the first king of Tibet started to eliminate the Bön priests because he said there was no space for both the king and Bönpo. He told the Bönpo to go away. He eliminated the Bönpo monasteries; there were kinds of monasteries called *leog mkhar*, not really monasteries, but kinds of temples for performing rites. Some *leog mkhar* were for the practice of magic and for someone having this special power these special places were needed for practice.

I left Tibet in 1958 and returned for the first time in 1982. Tibet was closed until 1978 when the Chinese opened it a little, and there was communication from Tibet. For example, my

father, mother and family were all in Tibet and I didn't know if they were still alive or dead; I didn't know anything. So in 1982 I went back.

At that time I met an old practitioner of Bön who came from South Tibet. In South Tibet there is a region called Konpo, where there is a big mountain called the Mountain of Bön. It is called the Mountain of Bön because the founder of Bön, Tonpa Shenrab, came to Tibet and spent a lot of time at this mountain. The Bönpo consider this a very sacred mountain. This old Bönpo lived at the mountain, and when he came to Lhasa he came to visit me. The Bönpo people like me very much because they think I am protecting them because I do a lot of research and speak a lot about Bön. So they think I am a very good person for them. Many Tibetan Buddhist Lamas and monasteries think that Namkhai Norbu is Bönpo. Many people feel I am Bönpo. I am not Bönpo, but I am doing research, and when you do research you can't have "your" position otherwise you can't do any research. I don't have a position of Buddhism or Bönpo and I do this research because I think it is very important for understanding Tibetan history and the

source of Tibetan culture. Bönpo is very important because it is the origin and for that reason for many years I did research about Bön and Shang Shung.

So, that old Bönpo man said "I heard you are a very good person, you are doing research and protecting Bönpo. I am very happy to meet you." Then we became friends. He said he had

three old books of Bönpo that he had put in a rock during the cultural revolution and then later had taken out. He still had the books. "If you would like to see, I will bring them to show you," and I said yes. One day he brought them to me. There are three books. One is a big volume all handwritten, another is about thirty pages which is a kind of guidebook of the Bön mountain, and the big book in Bön is called *Ju thig*, which is another kind of Bön, related very much with divination and astrology. The small book explained how to build an ancient temple of Bönpo called a *chog*. These are really very ancient books and there were many mistakes with language. In the beginning I couldn't understand them, but in re-reading them I could.

The small book is very interesting because it is related to a visit I had made to the Indian tribes in North America, the Navajo and Hopi, where I had seen many ancient Indian places and dwellings. Very interesting places. In the Southwest there is something called a kiva. A kiva is round and under the earth. The Indians said it is a place for their ancient practices. It is entered at the Southern point; the medicine man lives on the North side and faces the South. The Indian people explain it that way. Later in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I saw that there was another tribe who built the kiva this way, but they didn't have a lot of knowledge of the kiva. They make a hole under the earth, cover it with earth, there is a small door, they go under through this door and they make a kind of smoke inside and with this smoke they purify. I asked them what they did inside and they said they do purification with the smoke. Then I asked them if they have a rite to say or do, and they said they had but it is secret and wouldn't explain it. I asked at what times they go inside and they said when they go hunting, for example, if they kill a deer.

When I read this book of Bönpo and how they built this *chog* it is precisely like the kiva, so this is very interesting. There is very much a connection between the Bönpo, Tibetan and American Indian traditions; a very strong connection but we don't know how. In this Bönpo book they explain how to build this *chog*. There is one stove under the earth and two stoves above. These upper stoves do not exist now in the American Indian tradition, and since everything was destroyed in ancient times we don't know precisely what was up there. In the *chog* above there is this shape of a half moon, and on the top there is a triangle which is open and you can see the sky. Inside there are two entrances; the person enters on the left side and leaves on the right when they are finished. Inside the Bönpo priests do the rites sitting on the North side facing South, and in the center are five places. On these five places there is a very big pot that has shapes of eagles' faces and inside the pot there is water and maybe twelve or thirteen different ingredients. They cook all this and it's called *dbal chu*, and it is very famous in ancient Bön. *Dbal* means fire and *chu* means water. So they are boiling and doing practice and mantra and visualization and the water becomes sacred and very powerful. Only people who have negative provocations or very dangerous illnesses use this water to overcome it. That is the Bön idea. When the sick people go inside the *chog* the priest makes the fire and smoke called *sang*; the sick person drinks this water, the priests throw this water on the sick person, and believe that at least for one year this person will not have problems. Afterwards everyone is satisfied and goes out. This is what was explained in this small book and I found this very interesting.

There is a lot of this kind of knowledge in the Bönpo tradition. In the period of the first Tibetan king twelve different kinds of Bön developed. They are not the same, and each is very different and even more developed

continued on page 3



Teaching continued

continued from page 2

later. The Bön priests were becoming very powerful and people were afraid of them. They were afraid because the priests were powerful and everyone depended on them, including the king. Supporting the Bönpo was the king of Shang Shung and this made problems for the Tibetan kings. After seven generations of Tibetan kings there was a king called Trigum Tsenpo who destroyed all the Bönpo temples and expelled many Bönpos from Tibet. For that reason, still today, when we do research we find a little pure original Bönpo at the borders at Gyalrong, between China and Tibet, or Dolpo in Nepal, or some other borders, because when the Bönpos were expelled that's where they continued their traditions. This Tibetan king succeeded only for thirteen years because he was murdered, so his ministers continued to govern for thirteen years. This king didn't like Bönpo and destroyed it, but he had no culture for governing to replace it with. Bön was the only knowledge in Tibet, so he couldn't govern. Later Bön began again with the famous King Songtsen Ganpo who introduced Buddhism to Tibet.

Songtsen Ganpo is considered an emanation of Avalokiteshvara; people believed that was why he introduced Buddhism and that could be the case, but more likely historically it seems other kings tried to eliminate Bönpo but couldn't succeed. Songtsen Ganpo was very clever and developed a relationship with Nepal, India and China. Then he invited Buddhism to Tibet. Then Tibet became a strongly established Buddhist culture and Songtsen Ganpo started to destroy Bönpo and substitute Buddhism. Not only did he succeed, but he murdered the king of Shang Shung, took Shang Shung and unified all of Tibet. He then became a famous Tibetan king and since that time Buddhism increased in Tibet.

In the beginning Buddhism began with more general Buddhist teachings like Sutra. Buddhism was introduced and developed in the way that Buddha Sakyamuni taught in Bodhgaya. Later, after five generations from Songtsen Ganpo, there was a famous king called Tritson Detsen who invited Shantarakshita from India. Shantarakshita taught Sutra and tried to teach more in the Mahayana style, but had no success. He had many problems because Tibet was a totally Bönpo society and Sutra does not correspond with Bönpo tradition. He stopped teaching Buddhism and gave advice to the Tibetan king and told him to invite Guru Padmasambhava. Guru Padmasambhava came and gave mainly Tantric teachings which are related more to the principle of energy. So when Padmasambhava explained with energy and practices, etc., the Bönpo people easily integrated with that. Padmasambhava never destroyed the Bönpo tradition, but transformed it a little in the Tantric Buddhist style. That is how Buddhism developed a little differently in Tibet from in other countries, and the characteristic Tantric system of Tibet developed. For this reason many people refer to Tibetan Buddhism as Lamaism because it has a certain characteristic. The knowledge and teaching of Buddha is not a culture; it is knowledge and understanding. Understanding must communicate with culture, but culture depends on the country and the country has its own culture, knowledge and attitudes. So Buddha and Padmasambhava introduced the teachings in that way, without trying to change the Bönpo tradition and attitudes. They introduced all knowledge and understanding through the Bönpo traditions and attitudes. In that way they introduced knowledge and understanding and developed what is now characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism.

Through this teaching Guru Padmasambhava introduced global teachings. Firstly with the lower Tantra: in Tantrism there are the higher and lower Tantras. Sutra means the teachings of the Buddha — the event of one day or time, how and what the Buddha taught — that is one Sutra. The meaning of Sutra means the conclusion of one event. That is not the principle of Tantra. Tantra is not taught principally by Buddha Sakyamuni physically. Buddha taught Tantra through manifestations. Manifestations meaning something more related to the energy level, not the physical level. There are only some lower Tantras that Buddha taught in the dimension of deva, but not dimensions here.

We say Buddha taught the Kalachakra somewhere in India but that doesn't mean the Buddha taught it physically. If we say that the Buddha taught the Kalachakra physically, that makes for a very strong contradiction because that means that the Kalachakra must be Buddha. The manifestation of the Kalachakra, the joyful form, is male and female union, yab and yum. That is the path, and the manifestation of the Kalachakra is a the symbol of that path. So how can Buddha Sakyamuni be yab and yum? That's impossible. So we can understand that Buddha taught not on the physical level, but through manifestations.

When a teaching comes through manifestations it means that no one can receive it, it cannot be received on the physical level. If there is some manifestation of Sambogakaya then ordinary people can't receive it; they have no capacity for that. To have contact with Sambogakaya we must develop somehow and have a certain kind of realization. Then we can receive that kind of teaching and it is called Tantra. The meaning of Tantra is not the conclusion of one event like Sutra. Tantra means continuation without interruption, continuing always. So what does that mean? It means that is our real nature, our real potentiality. And what does it mean, continuing in our real nature? We can

understand if we observe ourselves just for a few seconds. We observe ourselves; what is my condition now in this moment, what I am thinking, etc., we discover immediately "I am thinking something" and then we observe that thought and it disappears. It is empty, nothing. And even if we can't find anything, immediately another thought arises. If we observe that second thought, it disappears, empty. So then, emptiness and movement, emptiness and movement, emptiness and movement, alternating, that is our real nature.

In the Sutra teaching, when we speak of our nature, we say emptiness — shunyata — in the Mahayana style. Shunyata is our real nature. But in Tantrism, our real nature is not only shunyata but also movement, also that potentiality. Shunyata without potentiality has no value. There is the saying of Saraha, a famous Mahasiddha, "Without compassion shunyata has no value." What does compassion mean? It means movement. There exists not only emptiness, but movement. So, this is our real nature, that continuation is the path. The teaching of Tantra



F. BARRY

means a teaching for discovering that, through transmission, through empowerment, etc. Then we can enter and discover that. In which way can we get in that state, through which method? The method of Tantra is called transformation. Transforming. Why? Because in Tantrism we transform; our real nature is always that Tantra. Tantra is our real nature, but that Tantra can manifest in different ways, like the pure dimension and the impure dimension — the impure dimension is like samsara, the pure dimension is like nirvana. Even manifesting pure or impure, it doesn't change anything; our real nature is just that. Not changed. For that reason when we have emotion, we consider that emotion is something bad, particularly in the Sutra teaching. In the Sutra teaching emotion is considered something like poison and that's why we renounce and reject it. But in Tantrism we know if we are distracted or conditioned by emotions, of course that is negative, but the nature of emotions is wisdom. It is the same, there is no difference.

So, in this case then, through method there is knowledge. Instead of renouncing or throwing emotions away, we can transform them. We say the five emotions can manifest as five wisdoms and the five aggregations can manifest in transformation like the five Dhyani Buddhas. This is characteristic of Tantric methods. In Tantrism there are also higher and lower Tantra and the gradual and non-gradual methods. All these transmissions were given by Padmasambhava. Of course he transmitted the essence of these teachings; it doesn't mean he transmitted all these Tantric books, the original books and instructions, etc. He couldn't do that in a short time, so he gave advice to his students. Researching in India you can find these kinds of original books for higher and lower Tantra, for gradual and non-gradual Tantric transformational methods that were then introduced in Tibet. Padmasambhava gave that advice and later, many translators went to India and brought back these original teachings to Tibet. In that way they translated and developed the teachings.

With Dzogchen particularly, Padmasambhava transmitted the essence of this essential teaching. Dzogchen teaching is different from Tantra. The Tantric method is transformation and the Sutra method is called the path of renunciation. When you follow Sutra you renounce many things; you renounce the ordinary world and life and become a monk or nun. You live in a different way and that is called renunciation. Tantrism is not renunciation, but transformation. Dzogchen is different again; it is called the path of self-liberation, not transformation or renunciation. What does that mean? *Dzog* means perfected and *chen* means total. Totally perfected means our real nature. Our real nature is the total perfection of all of our potentialities, for example, like Buddha. Buddha has many qualifications. We already have all these potentialities of all these qualifications. Everybody. All sentient beings, just like Buddha. It doesn't mean we have everything physically like Buddha. It means potentiality; the potentiality of all manifestations. The root of potentiality is light or color; five colors. When we develop lights in five colors those five colors represent the essence of the five elements. When elements develop more on the material level then we have the five elements like fire and water, something concrete; but their nature is light.

So, that means when we say perfected potentiality, it means that we have potentiality from the beginning, everything is perfected. Then why doesn't it manifest? It depends on the circumstance. First of all, for ordinary people, we are ignorant of our

real nature. We don't know how our real nature is. Even if we have the knowledge of our potentiality, we are still living in a material body, a material world which has been produced by our potentiality of karma for many lives. If we are not diminishing or purifying that karmic aspect of our material level then it is not possible that it manifests.

Self-liberation can be explained a little by the example of the mirror. In the mirror all can manifest. Good or bad; everything. In front of the mirror are objects, so for example if we are looking in the mirror we understand there is a reflection. Why are there reflections? Because in front of the mirror there are some objects that are reflecting. So that reflection and object are interdependent and for that reason they are reflected in the mirror. We examine the mirror; we judge and look and that way we know the reflections are unreal and not really concrete. But that understanding of the unreal nature is only an intellectual knowledge. We feel that the object that is reflected is not unreal; it is something concrete and therefore we have attachment to it. That means we have an intellectual understanding. A non-intellectual understanding means we are not looking in the mirror and seeing subject and object. We are just being the mirror; we are not looking in the mirror. If we are really being the mirror then what are the reflections for us? So now we are the mirror. We have that potentiality of manifesting reflections and to reflect. So in this case the reflections for us are only a qualification. A manifestation of qualifications. Why? Because we have that potentiality of manifesting everything without making any program. In general we need a program. When we use a computer there are so many programs. It seems the programs are infinite, but in the real sense all the programs are very limited. We can't go anywhere outside the programs. It is the same with a television, we can change many channels and see many things, but everything is programmed. For having reflections in the mirror we don't need any program. It is sufficient only if there are some objects in front of it. If we are walking around with a mirror and looking in it, we can see all the countryside. If it's big or small, how it looks, color, shape, and everything. That means the mirror has the potentiality of manifesting everything infinitely, without depending on any kind of program.

So similarly we have our potentiality. We have infinite potentialities. This is the meaning of Dzogchen. So, self-liberation means that having realization in a Dzogchen way is not to depend on something like an antidote for overcoming problems or transforming. It means just having knowledge and understanding; that is our real nature and that is being in the state. When we are being in that state then we are being like a mirror and if we are really being in that state of the mirror then we have self-liberation. If there are reflections, bad or good reflections, for the mirror it doesn't matter. The mirror is not happy or sad, it is only a manifestation. In that way we have self-liberation. How can we get in that state? For that there is the Dzogchen teaching. You can follow and learn the transmission and teachings, then you can become aware of that situation and you can get in that state in the end. In Dzogchen, realization means that. Dzogchen is the path of self-liberation and therefore is different from Sutra and Tantra teaching.

Dzogchen teachings were developed in Tibet and are something like the essence of all traditions and schools. In all traditions and schools there are many, many Dzogchen practitioners but Dzogchen has not been developed like the monastic structures. In Tibet there are many powerful and gigantic monasteries, but monasteries are not very much a part of the Dzogchen tradition. In the monasteries, though, there are many Dzogchen practitioners. Sometimes good practitioners, monks who are practicing Dzogchen, escape from the monasteries and go to live in the mountains or some other places. Therefore it's very difficult to find good practitioners of Dzogchen; they are not presenting themselves very often like high lamas, or high teachers, or making wonderful presentations. Some Dzogchen practitioners are living like farmers in the countryside and some are living like ordinary people. There are some very elegant practitioners in monasteries, for example the famous 5th Dalai Lama was a great Dzogchen practitioner and even though he was a great Dzogchen practitioner he integrated into his position as the Dalai Lama. He became the king of Tibet and head of all the Gelugpa traditions of that period. There are so many aspects to Dzogchen practitioners. For example, one of my root teachers is called Changchub Dorje and he is a very important Dzogchen master, but in his life he was not considered a very important Dzogchen master because he lived very simply. He lived in a small village; he was not a monk; he dressed like the country people in a very normal way, and he was a doctor. Most people went to him to get medicine and because they thought he was a good doctor, not a teacher of Dzogchen. Only a few people knew he was a great teacher of Dzogchen and they followed him. That is an example. There are many Dzogchen practitioners everywhere.

If you are a practitioner there is no need to show anything. There is a Dzogchen Tantra that says the Dzogchen teaching will live and develop for a future time when people live in a more hurried way, and there is no time and place to do practice or study. In this case, for example, the Sutra teaching, etc., will slowly, slowly disappear. Even though these other forms disappear, Dzogchen will remain until the end of the world. We have this explanation in the Dzogchen texts and this is because we do not have that much to do outside. Knowledge and understanding—that is what is communicated. This is the difference between Dzogchen and other traditions.

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeit

His Holiness Sakya Trizin

will give teachings on the Zhenpa Zhidral
(Beyond the Four Attachments)
and the Initiation of Vajra Kilaya
June 25-28, 1998 at Merigar

H H. Sakya Trizin was born in Tsedong, Southern Tibet in 1945. He is descended from the Khon royal family, one of the most ancient Tibetan spiritual families, and is the forty-first in an unbroken lineage of lamas that stretches back to 1073 AD. He is the head of the Sakya tradition, and the title 'Sakya Trizin' means 'Holder of the Throne of Sakya'. He became the head of the Sakya at the age of seven upon the death of his father, and has received an intensive training in the study and practices of the Sakya tradition. While still a child, he completed a seven-month retreat.

Amongst his main teachers were: Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro, Ngawang Lodro Shenpen Nyingpo, Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, and Khenpo Appay Rinpoche.

In 1959, at the age of fourteen, he left Tibet during the Chinese military takeover and went to India. He then studied with H. E. Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, who instructed him on the Rime collections, the 'Gyude Kundu' (Collec-



VIKRAMSILA FOUNDATION

tion of Tantras), and the 'Lamdre'. As well as holding the three main Sakya lineages of Sakya, Tsar and Ngor. H. H. Sakya Trizin holds the complete teachings of both the Iron Bridge and Great Perfection lineages of Nyingma, given by Drupchen Rinpoche and Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche respectively. He is also holder of the Lamdre

teachings, which cover the Hinayana, Mahayana and Mantrayana paths. He has founded numerous monasteries throughout India and East Asia, and established his seat in exile at Rajpur, U. P. India, near to which he founded Sakya College, the school of higher philosophical studies where training is given in logic, philosophy and psychology. He is fluent in English, and since 1974 he has made several world tours teaching in Europe, the USA and Southeast Asia.

The retreat will start on June 25th at 10 am.

The cost is Lit. 200,000 with discounts for members. A child-minding service is available on request.



HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA IN MASSACHUSETTS A PUBLIC TALK, MAY 9TH

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY - GOSMAN CENTER
SOUTH STREET
WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS, USA
FOR INFORMATION CALL:
(617) 423-6398
(617) 423-6000

HIS HOLINESS IN MADISON, WISCONSIN

MAY 13TH
FREE PUBLIC TALK
6:30 PM
KOHL AUDITORIUM
CONTACT: (608) 262-1440

MAY 13TH, 14TH AND 15TH
LAM RIM TEACHINGS AND AVALOKITESHVARA EMPOWERMENT
DANE COUNTY EXPOSITION CENTER
CONTACT: (608) 262-1440

The World Festival of Sacred Music was designed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the intention to create a meaningful way to welcome the new millennium. Clearly our 20th century society is laden with disharmony and strife. Even though science and technology have impacted society with great benefit, His Holiness feels that by drawing on the profound self expression of music, we can find a way to help encourage unity and harmony on our planet. Therefore His Holiness has created the idea of the Sacred Music Festival as a tool to help alter our limited world view to one of universal responsibility.

(The following is an edited version of a publication of Tibet House, New Delhi, India)

We are on the threshold of a new millennium. In three brief years, this century will end and a new century will dawn. Humanity will enter the new millennium with hopes and aspirations: for the well-being of future generations, for an end to conflicts, and for the dawning of universal peace and understanding.

Yet there is a widespread feeling of concern about the consequences of many actions taken during the 20th century that have created serious threats to our common human heritage and to the eco-system that sustains all life on our planet. What is needed, above all, is the universal acceptance of a new vision of the ancient concept of the interdependency of life, of the need to move from disharmony to harmony, from competition to cooperation, and from inequality to a universal access to the needs of all life for a life of fulfillment.

It was in this context that His Holiness the Dalai Lama felt that a World Festival of Sacred Music would be an appropriate and meaningful way of ushering in the new millennium.

There has been a yearning for self-realization, for harmony and unison that has found expression in art, literature and, most profoundly, music. Drawing on this expression of man's most innermost reflections from different parts of the world, major religious as well as

indigenous and tribal traditions, His Holiness felt music would articulate most eloquently the messages of peace and harmony towards humanity, the earth, and underline the universal responsibility we all carry.

The original concept of the Festival of sacred Music has now crystallized into a global festival that will be held in all the major con-

tinents of the world drawing energy from the songs of the shamans of the northern region to the earth worshipping sounds of the Australian aborigines to Christian hymns of praise to the Gospel music of the African Americans.

Tibet House, the Cultural Center of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and His Holiness' Foundation for Universal Responsibility,

have been entrusted with the task of trying to make the concept into a workable reality. It is an ambitious and exciting project. It has captured the imagination of many who would be willing to give their time and talents to make this a truly global event.

The initial planning of the global Festival of Sacred Music envisages five major festivals on five continents in October and November 1999. Europe, America, Africa and Australia will host 30 to 40 groups who will participate both from the host continent and outside, each festival opening with the chanting of a special group of 100 Tibetan monks. The Grande Finale, the Asian Festival, will be held in India with the participation of some 50 to 60 groups. His Holiness the Dalai Lama will inaugurate all the festivals, blessing each continent with his presence.

A Core Secretariat has already set up at Tibet House and the Continental Committees are in the process of being constituted.

The Global Organizing Committees are scheduled to meet this year to plan each festival in greater detail.

A tentative budget has been worked out to indicate the costs that will be involved in putting together this global quest for unison. A total of 10 million US dollars will be required, broken up under the four major heads: Core Secretariat: 2 Million Continental Committee: 6 Million

Continental Festivals: 6 Million (4 x 1.5 million)
Global Festival: 2.5 Million

This is a vast project that needs the participation of many people of goodwill from every corner of the globe to share in the effort to usher in a new millennium. If you are interested in participating please contact:

Tibet House
1 Institutional Area, Lodhi Rd.,
New Delhi, 110 003, India
Tel: 91 11 461-1515
Fax: 91 11 462-5536 or
The Shang Shung Institute of America
PO Box 277, Conway, MA
01341
Tel: 413 369-4928
Fax: 413 369-4165
Email:
SSIUSA@compuserve.com



World Festival of Sacred Music A Global Quest for Unison

Sponsored by Tibet House, The Cultural Center of
His Holiness the Dalai Lama and The Foundation for Universal Responsibility
of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

OBJECTIVE: WHY THIS FESTIVAL?

To usher in the new millennium and foster understanding, universal responsibility and universal harmony that is so sadly lacking at the end of the millennium.

WORLD FESTIVAL OF SACRED MUSIC FACT SHEET

CONCEPT/CONTENT: WHAT IS THE FESTIVAL? WHO WILL TAKE PART?

The festival will consist of a series of performances of music which will represent the world's heritage of sacred music. This will include not only the world's major religious traditions but that of the indigenous people's of the different continents as well. Appropriate contemporary expressions of sacred music will also find a place in the festival. The opening of each festival (see Venue below) will be blessed by the presence of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and auspicious chanting by a special choir of 100 Tibetan monks.

CHARACTER: WHAT WILL BE THE NATURE OF THE FESTIVAL?

The festival will not be political in nature, nor will it be commercial nor in fact even religious. It will be a celebration of the deepest reflections of mankind down the ages with a view to inspiring us to create a saner and better world in the millennium.

VENUE(S): WHERE WILL THE FESTIVAL TAKE PLACE?

The festival will take place in the continents of Europe, America, Africa, Australia and Asia. The first four will be the Continental Festivals, satellite events, leading up to the fifth which will be the main or Global Festival. While each Continental Festival will have predominantly the music of that continent, there will also be a representation from the other continents as well.

ORGANIZATION: WHO WILL ORGANIZE THE FESTIVAL?

There will be a Global Committee headed by the Director of the Tibet House (The Cultural Center of His Holiness the Dalai Lama) and His Holiness's Foundation for Universal Responsibility to lay down the guidelines and

oversee the whole festival. The organization of the Continental Committees, the chairman of which will be appointed by the Chairman of the Global Committee and will be a member of the Global Committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES: WHAT WILL THE CONTINENTAL COMMITTEES DO?

The Continental Committees will be responsible for identifying and organizing participants both in their own continent as well as in the other continental Festivals. They will be responsible for the entire organizations of their continental festival including setting up of a special non-profit body (in due accordance with the laws of the country where the committee is headquartered) which will be the legal entity responsible for the festival, selection of venue(s), government and other sanctions, site arrangements, hospitality, etc. Each Committee will also be responsible for fund-raising, not only for the Continental Festival of their particular Continent but also for the Global Festival (it is expected that 67% fund raised will be used for the Continental Festival and 33% for the Global Festival).

PROGRAMS: WHEN WILL THE FESTIVAL TAKE PLACE?

The Festival is scheduled to take place over the months of October and November 1999. The festivals are scheduled in the following order: Europe (7 days), Africa (3 days), The Americas (5 days), Australia (3 days), Global (7 days).

Lives of the Great Masters



The Story of Vimalamitra

by Jim Valby

This hagiography of Vimalamitra is adapted from Longchenpa's account in his "rdzogs chen snying thig gi lo rgyus chen mo rin po che". The story of Vimalamitra's birth, education, and meetings with his Dzogchen Masters Shrisingha and Inanasutra was presented in Mirror issues #42 & #43.

Then the learned Vimalamitra lived for twenty years in the East Indian town Kamaru in a temple of King Senge Zangpo. He resided in a bamboo summerhouse without food or clothes in order to accumulate the prerequisites for the king. And the king, with the sustaining power of his learned teacher, naturally practiced meditation and obtained the most excellent servants, enjoyments, and so on. Even his kingdom enjoyed a bounty of good fortune.

Then King Dharmapala of the West Indian town Bigyal requested Vimalamitra to teach Dharma. Vimalamitra taught some Dharma to this Western Buddhist king so that he could acquire the prerequisites.

Five hundred miles due north of Bigyal was the Rabtu Nangjed Cemetery. Vimalamitra lived in an iron stupa called Nampar Gyalwar Khorwa Jig in the middle of a mile-long meadow amidst a very dense forest. The tiers were built from copper, precious stones, and gold, and the anthers of the jeweled lotus were made from bamboo. The bottle-shaped section was made from sky-blue jewels and the upper part of the pillar was made by sorcery. The circular section was made from thirteen different kinds of jewels and the parasol was formed by the unified intertwining of various jewels. The sun, moon, and flame shone in great natural purity.

Near the side of the Stupa was a water course in which young Nagas washed themselves. To the south were figures of worldly gods completely encircled with bamboo

stalks and railings. Within the fenced area was a small mandala-like turquoise-blue lake with a yellow film of gold dust. Here the yellow king of the Nagas, Sasrung, lived inside his straw tent with a mountain-blue awning. The precious wish-fulfilling gem was centered amidst seven menacing snake-heads upon his head. He held a bottle and a snake in his two hands, rode a green sea demon, and was attended by eight families of Nagas whose duty it was to continually harass sentient beings.

Some Dakinis in the cemetery shook their blood-red hair and wore animal horns. Others, wearing a full complement of headdress jewels and carrying human corpses in their hands, rode bronze beasts. Others, wearing Garuda feathers on their white faces, held jeweled flasks filled with gems in their hands, and rode tigers. Others, with the filthy hair of demonesses, rode on infants and young men. Innumerable others held pale-white animal canopies and made all kinds of noises. By their own power, uncountable others congregated there amidst the corpses eating human flesh, drinking blood, gnawing on bones, and eating lungs, hearts, intestines, and other organs. There were also innumerable beasts of prey like tigers and lions. Even the plentiful winged creatures, such as herons and falcons, were only desirous of flesh and blood.

Day and night, Vimalamitra engaged in one-pointed practice on his path of yogic discipline. He would practice riding a lion while holding a trident, riding a buffalo while holding a human corpse aloft as a banner, and riding an elephant carrying a red dagger. He also rode a jackal holding swords in his two hands and rode different birds, such as falcons and owls, while holding two canopies in his hands.

Once he changed his body color and clothes and brought the Dakinis

under control. Practicing in this way he made a living experience of the Nyingthig Teachings for seven years, bringing instant presence to its full measure. Meditating on the Body of Phowa Chenmo, he brought three thousand persons to the apex of the gradual Buddhist method. To teach the Dharma to the king, he transformed himself into a being with nine heads and twelve hands holding canopies and rode a lion around the cemetery. For thirteen years he even practiced riding a Garuda with himself transformed into a lion.

Later Vimalamitra copied the most secret books three times in the Rabtu Nangjed Cemetery. He gave one copy to the King of the Nagas who inhabits the extensive golden-sand lake in the western region of Orgyan. Offering a prayer for the benefit of fortunate humans who would come in the future, he hid it so that it was invisible.

Another copy of the books he left with the Dakinis at the overhanging rock called Sergiling on the outskirts of the town Regden in the rough terrain of Kashmir. Leaving the books with them for the benefit of subsequent fortunate humans, he sealed them with the stamp and mark of the Dharma Master and made them disappear.

The third copy of the books remained in the bamboo summerhouse in the cemetery. These fundamental explanations were present to help the Dakinis who lived there to clear their obscurations. Because these books remained there, time and again the children of the gods offered clouds of praise. Cymbals resounded, different kinds of flowers rained down, and many different stanzas of "good luck" resounded in the brilliant sky. As well, the king of the Nagas and the demons soared through the sky, trees were decorated with flowers, fruits, and leaves, and it rained various jewels. So with the natural blessings of these infallible ultimate instructions, in this region and its surroundings, the continuity of disagreeable things like disease and desire was interrupted in all directions. Greed and craving left the cemetery.

The unfailing Dakinis emanated from the radiant clouds and demigods became learned in the methods of behavior. All the Dakinis became educated in purifying those who need training and all bowed before this Sacred Practitioner who was engaged in the glorious practice.

At this time in the Indian town Kapilavastu, the Dharma Protector, King Indrabhuti the Younger, an embodiment of Lord Maitreya, lived in a temple with five hundred pandits. The most learned and accomplished from among these, Vimalamitra - a special kind of transformative being - had lived and taught in the temple for sixty years.

At the same time in Tibet, King Trisong Detsen, an embodiment of the Bodhisattva Manjusri, had built the massive and glorious Samye Temple and was propagating the Holy Dharma.

Tingzin Zangpo remained in contemplation for seven years and seven months in the temple. Having completely purified his fleshy eye, he could see all four continents simultaneously. This great priest of the Myang family advised the king with these words:

"Your Majesty! In the Indian town Kapilavastu, King Indrabhuti has five hundred pandits residing in his temple. If you invite the one learned in the goal-oriented Guhya-

BOOK REVIEWS

THE TIBETAN ART OF PARENTING

Anne Hubbett Maiden and Edie Farwell

Wisdom Publications 1997
185 pp.



The title of the book is *The Tibetan Art of Parenting*. It is not called a way, a method, or a skill. Parenting is described as an art form. Art is something that emerges from a creative core. How does that concept arise within the Tibetan culture and how does it make the Tibetan way of life so special, so different?

The two authors Anne Hubbett Maiden and Edie Farwell have traveled to live in Tibetan communities in India to observe the spiritual, cultural, and folkloric aspects of Tibetan parenting. They have taken great care to gather information that gives true insight and is rich in inspiration to the art of parenting wherever children, newborn babies and parents may be.

Both authors help preserve and document a body of knowledge that might be in danger of getting lost as Tibetan people have resettled far from their homeland. Custom and habits that stem from the highlands fit differently in the strong heat of southern India — or in the city of Seattle.

What the authors have discovered though, is that much of what makes Tibetan parenting so unique is still preserved. The respect and reverence for the Buddha nature in each child is at the core of Tibetan family life. *The Tibetan Art of Parenting* describes the process of maintaining that awareness of the spiritual presence within the child and within the parent in everyday moments. The art is to remain connected. Consciousness permeates all the different chapters of the book: Preconception, Conception, Gestation, Birthing, Bonding, Infancy and Early Childhood.

In the beautifully illustrated book, with endearing photographs of parents, grandparents and children, one finds quotes from ancient texts like the Ambrosia Heart Tantra, references to the work of a number of well known Tibetan doctors like Dr. Lobsang Dolma, with quotes from her work *Lectures on Tibetan Medicine* and her daughter's (Rinchen Dolma Tsering) book *Daughters of Tibet*.

They make reference to the work of Dr. Yeshe Donden on obstetrics and offer quotes from the work of Prof. Namkhai Norbu from his *Introduction to Tibetan Medicine* called *On Birth and Life* surrounding the description of the three phases of human growth in the womb: the fish phase, the turtle phase and the pig phase.

As H.H. the Dalai Lama states in his foreword:

"It is in our own interest to create a world of love, justice and equality, for without a sense of universal responsibility our existence

and survival are at a perilous precipice. The qualities to create such a world must be inculcated right from the beginning when a child is young. We cannot expect our generation or the new generation to make the change without basic foundation. If there is any hope it is in the future."

Just reading the stories told about the families chosen to describe the Tibetan way of parenting holds a hope and a good feeling about the future of the people living their life with that inner sense of karma, past and future lives.

The spiritual aspect of life gives the book its depth and is its true richness. *The Tibetan Art of Parenting* describes fundamental Tibetan medical concepts and numerous techniques and treatments for specific conditions for both the mother and child. There is a fascinating description of the development of the fetus according to a classic Tibetan text. It is interesting to note the treasure spirituality brings to medicine and vice versa; how medicine and science have in some cases modified an ancient belief. Colostrum, the initial lactating fluid from the mother's breast after childbirth was considered to be toxic (impure) by belief, yet, according to science we now know that it holds precious antibodies from the mother for the newborn. According to the book it appears that these changes are readily accepted by Tibetans.

A story is being told about a young Tibetan mother, Palmo, who had lost a child under tragic circumstances. A stillbirth. The mother used all the coping tools to find peace after her loss — she remembered the law of karma and reincarnation; she found solace in mantra and meditation. Our culture needs these reminders of choices other than guilt and despair when there is loss — especially of a little one.

There is a beautiful description of Palmo, a year later, giving birth to a baby boy. We are invited to part take in the whole sense of spiritual dimension throughout the arrival of the new family member.

The description of how the newborn babies are being shielded from too many external influences — how rituals and practice keeps them sheltered — speaks well to the intuition encountered in mothers with their two week old babies in the supermarket and feel that intuitive protective sense for the baby. The description of the bonding time with all the family members is tender, as well as the description of the Grandmother teaching the toddler the first gestures of spiritual respect in a temple. The setting resonates with the Dalai Lama's statement that if there is any hope it is in the children and the future.

Tibetan tradition fully expresses the reverence for the sacred nature of newborns and rooted in the understanding that many difficult moments in life turn to be teachers in the human evolution towards all encompassing wisdom. This is a good book for many people; mothers, nurses, midwives, young people thinking of having a family and health care providers. Anyone, really anyone, involved in birth or being born.

by Verena Smith

Book Reviews continued on next page

continued on page 14

BOOK REVIEWS (continued from page 5)

**SWEET ON MY LIPS
THE LOVE POEMS OF
MIRABAI**
Louise Landes-Levi
Cool Grove Press, NY
1997. 91 pp



Among poets universally there prevails a passionate tradition of the poet as the 'outsider.' Defying cultural particulars, this tradition boldly asserts even beyond the cataclysmic "rise and fall of civilizations" to coin Herodotus' famous epithet. While entire civilizations may come and go, with the names of its despots, warlords, local heroes and heroines lost for naught, mere fragments of verse have survived centuries as fresh utterance.

Such was the case for Mirabai, the 16th century Rajasthani princess whose songs are still sung today in an unbroken lineage of bhakti yoga or devotional love throughout the sub-continent of India, strangely immune to ancient rivalries of caste, religion and tribe.

Much has been made of Mirabai's 'outsider' qualities by contemporary Western translators of her work, drawn, no doubt, from the biographical details of her life — her abandonment of court intrigues in favor of the life of a wandering sadhu, the subsequent perils and attempts on her life by her politically motivated in-laws, and her uncompromising determination as a devotee of Krishna. "If I cannot write a letter/How shall I touch his lotus feet?"

For those of us long familiar with the work of Louise Landes-Levi, a translator and scholar of Mira's devotional work, it might seem that she herself embraces the 'outsider' principle with great vigor assuming the persona of what Zen poet, Jane Hirschfield likens as a "person of no rank" in her recent article on poetics in the American Poetry Review (APR Vol. 25 #3). In a poem dedicated to the obscure German poet Else Lasker-Schuler (1869-1945) in Louise's most recent collection, *The House Lamps Have been Lit, But...* she writes "Siamo Uguali" (we are the same), of the poet who died homeless and abandoned, most of her work destroyed by the Nazis. However, in my estimate, what makes these translations of Mirabai so remarkable is not so much this simpatico recognition among poets across time and space, but that for the first time these poems are rendered in the context of their original transmission by one who is herself an initiate, tantric practitioner, and acarya of poetics. In her preface to *Sweet on My Lips*, she writes, "The aesthetic formulae are manifestations of enlightened mind and methods of realization. The subtle body on mantra empowers the verse — raising the poet and the poetry to its own level, in much the same way that Krishna draws Radha (or

prakrit, the relative state where we live) with a knowledge of the non-dual state or absolute."

Whenever possible Louise uses the original Sanskrit word instead of the currently fashionable preference for English vernacular. This is in keeping with her affiliation with the methods of translation espoused by Rene Daumal. Twenty years ago she wrote in her introduction to Daumal's *Rasa* (NDP350, P.2), "In Sanskrit the word is not only a tool of poetic expression, but it is in its esoteric usage, the poet's mirror and the mirror of the gods. The Sanskrit alphabet is a sacred formula whose function is, in addition to the complexity of its own compositional forms, the direct reflection of the sacred world and its powers." While these translations of Mira's poems may at times express more formality in comparison to the more upbeat popular translations by Robert Bly or Andrew Schelling, the use of the original Sanskrit infuses the poems with possibility to connect with the bhakti experience itself.

Included in this publication are a number of erudite and exquisitely written essays on the music, tantric origins, and methods of translation. Among the most fascinating is a first hand account of the translator's journey to India and her initial introduction to the very lineage of the original poems in 'On the Sacred Word, Poetry, and

the Art of Translation.' The translator also provides an exhaustive bibliography, commentaries, photos, musical notations, and not the least, many relevant references to her own relationship with her master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

I'm very happy that Cool Grove Press has at long last brought this important work to fruition by publishing it. As a poet, scholar, translator, musician/performer, and practitioner in our midst, Louise Landes-Levi

is a treasure well known to all of us in the Dzogchen Community. She is as at home in a number of European cities as the streets of New York's lower East Side where we've shared many a meal. The strains of her Seranghi hint at familiarity with other dimensions as well. Her humor is legendary as are her intricate survival strategies and amazing trans-continental correspondence. And always her words are sweet on our lips.

Jacqueline Gens

LAHAUL-LADAKH WITH SEY RINPOCHE (NGAWANG GELEK NAMGYAL)

21 days - July 1 - 21, 1998
Pilgrimage & Teaching Retreat
in the "Land of the Dakini"

Sey Rinpoche, the reincarnation of Pema Chögyal, is the son of Apha Rinpoche and the great-grandson of Togden Shakya Shri, one of the greatest yogis of this century.

Together with Sey Rinpoche during the pilgrimage we will visit sacred places empowered by the presence of great yogis such as the mahasiddhas Padmasambhava and Ghandapa.

Some of the places we will visit include Tso Pema (Himachal Pradesh), and Keylong (Lahaul) close to Mount Drilburi. Then we will continue on to Ladakh where we will visit Alchi, famous for its temple frescoes, the marvelous monastery of Hemis and Gotsang hermitage which has a particular connection with Gyalwa Gotsangpa.

The heart of the pilgrimage will be a five day retreat with Sey Rinpoche in the "Land of the Dakini" at the foot of Mount Drilburi which is sacred to the mahasiddha Ghandapa. Sey Rinpoche will give teachings on Mahamudra and instructions on the practice of Phowa. During the pilgrimage Sey Rinpoche will lead daily sessions of meditation.

Further information is available from:

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Taught by
**Dr. Thubten
Phuntsog**
from Tibet

Part one of a three
year program.

The Foundation Course will address the nature, prevention and treatment of disease according to Tibetan medical science.

The three year course will be based on the fundamentals of Tibetan medicine on the basis of the Four Medical Tantras (rGyud bzhi).

There will be 75 hours of instruction each year.

The curriculum will include:

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- The relationship of foods and tastes to health
- Methods of investigating channels and fluids
- Methods and rules for preparing medicinal mixtures: ointments, powders, decoctions and tinctures

THE DATES OF THE FOUNDATION COURSE FOR THIS FIRST YEAR ARE:

WEEK I Monday MAY 18 to
Saturday MAY 23, 1998
OR
Monday JUNE 15 to
Saturday JUNE 20, 1998
WEEK II Monday JUNE 22 to
Saturday JUNE 27, 1998

FEE: WEEK I \$ 425.00
WEEK I & II \$ 850.00
\$100 deposit required to reserve your place.
EARLY REGISTRATION: \$400 per week
Postmarked by:
April 25 (for the May 18 course): \$400
OR
May 18 (for the June 15 course): \$400
May 18 (for week I & II): \$800

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A Course of Tibetan Medicine in Merigar

by Marina Micelli

On February 2nd the three year course on Tibetan Medicine organized by the Istituto Shang Shung began. The principal lecturer for the course was Dr. Thubten Phuntsog, who comes from East Tibet and is a professor at the Department of Tibetan Studies at the Central University of Nationalities in Beijing, China. Dr. Phuntsog was invited by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to hold this course and, for this year, he will remain at Merigar until the beginning of April. Besides his lectures, the doctor is preparing a text on Tibetan medicine to be used during the course and which will be used, along with the lessons, to prepare for the exams.

Dr. Phuntsog condensed the first year of studies into fifteen days and taught at a very brisk rate. The lessons were translated from Tibetan into Italian by Elio Guarisco, who also left little breathing space to those following the course with his fast and immediate translations taking meticulous care that the meaning of the terms was not changed in translation. The lectures were recorded both on audio and video cassette, in Italian and English, thanks to the simultaneous translation of Elisa Copello. They are available from the Istituto Shang Shung for those who are unable to follow the first year of lectures.

This first year course, attended by twenty-seven students from Italy and other European countries, regarded the Physical Condition and its Pathological Changes and covered the following subjects: the History of Tibetan Medicine, the Principle of the Four Elements and the Three Humours, the Symbolic Trees of the Root Tantra, General Physiology, the Blood Vessels and the Connecting Channels, the Vital Breath and the Generative Essences, the Metaphors and the Proportions of the Human Body, Human Categories, Physical Decline and Pathology.

During the lectures, Dr. Phuntsog was always very clear even though the topics were, at times, very complex and from the beginning of the course demonstrated his expertise not only as a doctor but also as a scholar. In fact, he explained the causes and the reasons that led to different interpretations of the Tantras of Tibetan medicine in the existing commentaries, some of which are very well-known such as the "Blue Beryl", and step by step he underlined various points of the history of medicine, therapeutic methods, embryology, etc., in which erroneous interpretations and/or translations are found, as well as in the Western texts on Tibetan medicine.

Speaking about the history of medicine he emphasized the importance that the uninterrupted transmission from master to disciple has had and continues to have in keeping the medical teaching alive. He said that the origins of Tibetan medicine go back to the Bön period preceding the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet and only many centuries later, came together with the systems of medical knowledge coming from China, India, Nepal and Persia. Even the theory of the four elements derives from the ancient concepts of the Bön.

Knowledge of Tibetan medicine, he stated, derives from empirical knowledge accumulated during the course of centuries and from deductive logic. The experiences and clarity linked to the development of spiritual practice have helped to identify curative properties which were not recognized by logical procedures. Some medicines have certainly been identified in this way although it is not a general rule. In this way the doctor attributed a scientific nature to a form of medicine which risks being too mixed with mysticism when it is identified with the Buddhist teaching.

Dr. Phuntsog outlined all the subjects that would be dealt with in the three year course of Tibetan medicine by means of the classical method of the symbolic trees with their two trunks of health and illness, the two hundred and twenty-four leaves, two flowers and three fruit. It is much easier and more interesting to make a journey when one has a map even if, at a certain point, all of us hoped that the autumn would make the last leaves fall.

He told us that in order to recognize and cure illness first of all it is necessary to know the body well, otherwise one is like a blind person and gets lost in the dark. Hence the importance of



Dr. Phuntsog at Merigar L. GRANGER

embryology, of physiology etc., of the subjects dealt with in this first year.

But why is it useful to study Tibetan medicine? Dr. Phuntsog told us that if one has a real understanding of what is taught in the first year of the course, even if we do not use Tibetan medicine to cure others, it will be useful for us as individuals because it will permit us to be aware of our bodies and to keep them in good health. Only in a healthy body can the two flowers of absence of illness and long life blossom and then only from these can the three fruits of the principles of life, riches and happiness spring forth.

The doctor explained that illnesses such as AIDS and other bacterial or viral illnesses should be considered not only as a consequence of external aggression but also as a consequence of its interaction with the body constituents. So it is fundamental that they are kept in a balanced condition by taking care of diet and behavior.

Most of the lectures were held in the Merigar Gonpa under the gaze and protection of the Masters of all the Buddhist traditions, the Protectors of the Teaching and the mantras of liberation written on the roof. This fact definitely contributed to keeping the students attentive and concentrated in spite of the many hours of lessons each day which tested the resistance of those who were no longer used to sitting on a school bench for hours.

Besides those who were doing this course for the first time there was a small group of 'repeating' students, of which the author of this article is one, who had followed the previous three year course of medicine held at Merigar by Dr. Pasang Yonten Arya. Why did we wish to do the course again? The answer is not easy. Tibetan medicine is not something that can be learned in three years and so we wanted to deepen this knowledge also with lecturers who come from Tibet rather than India and who thus represent different traditions. But this is not the final answer. All the students who were repeating the course follow the teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and know, study and genuinely feel that Tibetan medicine can contribute to the journey that has begun with the Teaching. It is as if, in helping to keep the body more in contact with the earth, that Tibetan medicine allows the mind to meet less obstacles; everything finds its place and aim and many questions find their answers.

As Tsok Nyi Rinpoche said during the Christmas; the breadth of centuries-old Tibetan medicine has acquired wisdom and balance. This wisdom and balance are perceived and acquired in greater or lesser quantity according to the capacity of the individual, of he or she who has the luck to come into contact with it. I think that this is the ultimate reason which has made Tibetan medicine so fascinating.

For those who came to Merigar for the first time for this course, I hope that Merigar may continue to see them for many many years. ■

Dr. Thubten Phuntsog was born in 1955 in the area of Pelpung (Dege County) in East Tibet, in a family linked to the second Kongtrul, Pelden Khyentse Ozer.

From the age of six until he was twenty he privately studied various subjects such as medicine, poetry, astrology, history and Buddhist logic and philosophy with some of the masters affiliated to Pelpung Monastery. In particular he studied traditional Tibetan medicine with Yonten Phuntsog who was the personal doctor to the second Kongtrul.

From 1975 to 1982 he practiced Tibetan medicine in the hospitals of Pelpung. From 1982 to 1986 he deepened his knowledge at the Dege Institute of Tibetan Studies (currently situated in Darzendo).

From 1986 until the present he has held two posts: the first that of doctor and professor of Tibetan Studies at the Tibetan Department of the Central University of Nationalities where, amongst various subjects, he teaches literature, philosophy, medicine, poetry and astrology; the second that of professor at the medical department at the Institute of Tibetan Studies in Sichuan province.

Dr. Thubten is the author of various publications in Tibetan including: The Grammar of Tibetan Language, Calculations for the System of the Tibetan Lunar Calendar, History of Tibet, The Six Yogas of Naropa, and numerous articles on Tibetan history, medicine and literature. ☉

Merigar's very own Alix ('green thumb') De Fermor visited Tibet last summer to attend the inauguration of the Tibetan School in Dangche and to visit the construction site of the hospital in East Tibet. On her way she stopped for two weeks in Chengdu waiting for the permit to proceed. One morning she and her traveling companion Martha Heinen had a strange encounter.

Chengdu ... early morning fresh and slightly rainy ... At our breakfast corner in front of the Lhasa Hotel we are greatly enjoying our usual boiled rice water and onion momos - the best thing to start a new day! This morning I even permitted myself the luxury of a 'made in England' strawberry jam. Everything is going smoothly when suddenly a magnificent mustached trout unexpectedly jumps out of his pre-culinary aquarium behind us and majestically lands on Martha's foot, creating total confusion! "Help me, Martha!" the fish seems to implore. "I wasn't born to finish up in a frying pan!" Obviously the fish is playing his last card.

With a lot of trouble because the fish is as slippery as a bar of soap we finally manage to grab it and put it back in the aquarium. But ... the karmic link has been established: Martha, deeply moved by the desperate attempt of the fish decides then and there to save it from its tragic gastronomic destiny. She resolutely steps out of the restaurant to buy a plastic bucket with a lid and then buys the fish who is unwillingly housed in his new provisory residence. He strikes his head and tail to and fro while the lid tempestuously rises up and down.

Martha telephones Phuntsog to find out how to say "river" in Chinese while I try my best to contain the suicidal ardor of the fish to the great joy of the hotel doorkeeper and the passers-by. Martha arrives and we start the long walk towards the river through the crowds of Chinese with our bucket and the jumping fish.

Sometimes Martha pronounces the famous key-word in her fluent Chinese though it seems that it is not always understood. Sometimes they do indicate a direction but nonetheless we keep on going because nothing will prevent Martha from accomplishing her mission. Her absolute faith in the strong wind of karma will inexorably push us in the right direction. After all if faith is enough to move mountains, surely it can lead us to some water!

The weather gets hot and humid and I suggest taking a taxi. Finally we stop a motor-rickshaw

The Long Walk of the Chinese Fish

by Alix De Fermor



Alix in Tibet

GIACOMELLA OROFINO

and Martha, in her splendid Chinese gives the address once again. Our young driver seems to be quite bright and a sporty type, racing his rickshaw like a formula one, swerving between the taxis, cars and whatever can be found in a Chinese street and proving that, in China, the priority belongs to the boldest and — believe it or not — that it seems to work out.

The trip is a crazy experience — I hang on to the bucket, teeth clenched, trying to keep the lid on while our fish gets wilder and wilder and water splashes all over. Martha grabs hold of me every time we swerve in order not to lose my company. I'm afraid the fish will soon be dry when we finally reach a bridge where a big official demonstration is taking place. We stop the rickshaw for the procession and the band - trumpets, drums and lots of red flags. The loudspeaker vomits a high-pitched speech - I feel I'm in the middle of a Kafka-like scene. "Look, Martha. We can't go there in all decency with our bucket and just drop the fish from the bridge, can we? They'll arrest us and besides, it's too high for the fish. He will never survive the drop!" She agrees.

The only thing left for us to do is to expose the situation to our driver who by now, seeing us laughing to the point of tears must be really worried about our mental health. A gentle tap on his shoulder and a lift of the lid for a second. At the sight of the big, by now immobile fish, the driver opens "des yeux de poisson frit" (his fish-like eyes) and stares at Martha who, with a wiggling gesture of her arm, explains that we want to bring it to its natural environment. A broad smile of total understanding illuminates his face and he nods, starts up and takes a smaller side street which ends up along the river bank. Triumphant I get up - too fast - for with a sinister crack the precious strawberry jam crashes down. Who cares! We are near our goal now and ready to

pay any price!

I climb over the gate which separates our fish from his aquatic freedom. The bank is green with slime and slippery. I carefully step forward as if walking on eggs. "Don't fall in the water, my friend," chuckles Martha. That I won't do, it would be the last drop.

I gently tip the bucket and the fish swiftly and instantaneously disappears into the depths of the yellow river. A little applause from some passers-by who have been watching the scene and listening to the comments of our driver and it's all over!

007 and 008 return to their hotel in triumph. ■

Introduction to Tibetan Astrology

THE ORIGINS OF TIBETAN ASTROLOGY

Elemental Astrology or Jungtsi is the oldest field of knowledge originating in Tibet. It mainly uses three kinds of symbols: the 8 parka or trigrams, the 9 mewa or numbers and the 12 animal signs. The various combinations of these three symbols with the five elements of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water, is the framework for astrological calculations. The parka are the oldest astrological symbols, while the mewa, the numbers and the animal signs are based on the trigrams.

The parka or trigrams symbolize the cycle of increase and diminution that rules life both in the external world and within the body once a particular realm and its inhabitants has come into being. This cycle is determined and moves on the basis of the combination of the elements so that when the elements are harmonious there is increase, when they are not in harmony diminution, culminating in disintegration, begins.

The origin of the trigrams or parka is linked to the ancient culture of the Bön, the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet. Nowadays, astrological calculations based on the parka are common practice in all the new schools of Tibetan Buddhism, such as the Gelug, the Sakya and the Kagyu as well as in the ancient Nyingma school. Modifying their terminology to suit the Buddhist frame of thought and language, these schools also adopted many rituals of the pre-Buddhist Bön culture - for example the rituals of the gtos, the mdos, the yas and the glud as well as the ritual of the sang (during which juniper and other fragrant herbs are burned for different purposes, including the propitiation of local deities).

But despite such wide and conscious appropriation from the Bön culture, there was a time in Tibetan history when the culture and the followers of Bön were widely persecuted by the Buddhists mainly for political reasons.

Since most of the Tibetans were fond of Bön rituals and often took recourse to them, the newly introduced Buddhist culture had no choice but to assimilate them in some way. In this process of assimilation, unwilling to acknowledge the Bön origin of elemental astrology and other rites, they considered the elements of astrology and rites resembling those found in the Indian culture to have been imported from India, while those resembling the Chinese culture to have been imported from China.

However, many astrological and ritual features were unique to Tibet and were not found in either China or India. For this reason they acknowledged them to have originated from or been systematized by a historical figure called Kong tse phrul gyi rgyal po whom the Buddhists, later on, considered to be a manifestation of Manjusri, the bodhisattva who represents wisdom. Since Kong tse phrul gyi rgyal po was born 600 years before the Buddha, it was difficult for them to call him a Buddhist, so they did not say that he was a Buddhist nor admitted he was a Bönpo.

During the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries some Tibetan scholars began to claim that the parka came from China. In the 18th century leang skya rol pa'i rdo rje, and the Mongolian scholar Thu'u bkvan cho kyi nyi ma and other scholars, mistakenly identified Kong tse phrul gyi rgyal po with Confucius, saying that they were one and the same person. However, many reasons prove beyond any shade of doubt that Kong tse phrul gyi rgyal po and Confucius were two different people. (This topic was more fully discussed during Prof. Thubten Phuntsog's conference at Merigar on January 17th 1998.)

In my opinion when we research the ancient origins of a particular type of knowledge, it is hard to speak of it exclusively in terms of knowledge belonging only to a particular group of people. Astrology in particular is a very ancient discipline which is common to many groups of peoples. For example in

From a lecture by Professor Thubten Phuntsog
First part of a weekend seminar at Merigar, 21-22 February, 1998

most parts of the world, people refer to the days of the week, Sunday, Monday etc., with the names of the planets. Of course different languages uses different words for the planets, but they clearly refer to the same thing; for example, in English we say "Sunday", in Tibetan, Za nyi ma, or 'the sun day or planet'.

In elemental astrology the days are also associated with the elemental properties, for example Sunday with Fire, Monday with Water, Tuesday with Fire, Wednesday with Water, Thursday with Wood, Friday with Metal and Saturday with Earth. Before the people of Tibet had a written language they indicated the days of the week with symbols. For example in Tibet Sunday was symbolized by a drawing of a sun, Monday by the moon, Tuesday by an eye, Wednesday by a hand, Thursday by a wooden purba or three bladed wooden dagger, Friday by a sword or trident and Saturday by a penis.

Now let us see how the Bön texts explain the origin of the parka by means of a mythological tale which represents the process of the formation of the world in eight stages: 1. the stage in which the pure part of the elements manifested as space; 2. the stage in which the impure part of the elements manifested as earth; 3. the stage in which the mountain arose to connect space and earth; 4. the stage in which the wind through the stony valleys of the mountain arose; 5. the stage in which fire was produced by the movement of the wind; 6. the stage in which the meeting of wind and fire brought about the rain; 7. the stage in which wood or the tree arose, based on the interaction of wind, fire, water and earth.

This process as well as the outer world is symbolized by the drawing of a golden turtle, whose head represents the direction south.

1. The pure essence of the elements emerged from the mouth of the turtle as vapor and transformed into the 'old father of existence' (Sipa yab rgen), the first and most ancient trigram, Khen, symbol of the sky. He is described as a old man with white hair, dressed in yellow silk, riding a dog and holding a crystal wand in his hand.

2. The impure aspects of the elements emerged as the dung of the turtle and fell and became 'old mother of existence', (Sipe yum rge ma) Khon, the second trigram that symbolizes the earth. She is represented as a old lady with white hair the color of a conch-shell, with a hundred wrinkles on her face, dressed in white silk, holding a hoe in her right hand and a wooden stick in her left and riding a sheep.

3. The old father and mother of existence married and from their union came the eldest son, the third trigram, Ghin, who symbolizes the mountain connecting sky and earth. The eldest son is represented by a figure resembling a monk, holding a sacred book in his hands and riding a rose-colored ox.

4. Then the wind blowing through the stony mountain valleys gave rise to the fourth trigram called Zon. This trigram is symbolized by the eldest daughter represented as a young woman dressed in yellow silk, riding a dzo, and holding in her hands a balloon-like round bag made of skin.

5. The action of the wind produced the fire element symbolized by the trigram Li which is represented by the youngest daughter of the old father and mother of existence. She is rosy in color, with a horse's head, dressed in red silk, holding a ladle full of blood in her right hand and a torch in her left.

6. From the encounter of air and fire arose the sixth trigram called Kham which is symbolized by the grandson of the old father and mother and represented as a black-colored man, with

long hair, dressed in black, holding a leather ball full of water in his hand and riding a black pig.

7. Then from the interaction of the fire and wind arose the rain which fell thus originating the trigram Zin symbolized by the tree. The trigram Zin is represented by the grand-daughter who is greenish in color, dressed in green silk, riding a green donkey, with her hands crossed on her chest and holding a plant.

8. Through the function of the element fire which melted the earth, its pure essence, metal (gold, silver, copper, etc.), manifests, associated with the trigram Da. The trigram Da is the youngest son of the old father and the old mother and he is represented by a young warrior wearing a helmet and armor, holding a sword and a lance in his hands and riding a goat.

Therefore making a brief summary - the first trigram, Khen, is the father, Khon is the mother, Ghin is the elder son, Zon is the elder daughter, Li is the younger daughter, Da is the younger son, Kham is the grand-son and Zin is the grand-daughter.

According to the tale, the trigrams Kham and Zin came about in this way. The elder son, Ghin wishing to find a bride, circled Mount Meru, the 'axis mundis' three times in a clockwise direction; Zon, with the same wish circled the ocean three times in a counter clockwise direction. The two of them met in the midst of a vortex of wind in the country called srin po gdudg pa can gyi yul, which means 'the country inhabited by wild cannibals', in a place called ye le dgung sngon or 'primordial sky'. In the midst of the vortex they did not recognize each other and engaged in an incestuous relationship. From their union was born a son, the trigram Kham, and a daughter, the trigram Zin.

This incestuous relationship was a tragedy that caused a disturbance among various classes of non-humans, in particular between the Devas and the Nagas, who became drunk with mental confusion (because existence had been defiled by the incestuous relationship) and coupled between themselves thus giving birth to the Eight Classes of demons and gods. Following this the beings of the six classes of existence were born, the hell beings etc., and illnesses and suffering arose among these classes.

This suffering which struck the inhabitants of the world came to the attention of the old father, the trigram Khen, who called out asking what was happening. A reply came from the sky saying that what was happening was the result of an incestuous rapport of the elder son with his sister and that it would be beneficial if the family did not remain together but split up to reside in the eight directions. Li, the younger daughter, with the wish to re conciliate the family, approached the old father, Khen, apologizing for the misunderstanding between the two trigrams, Ghin and Zon which had caused the suffering troubling the world. The old father, however, misunderstood her words, got angry and the problems within the family did not come to an end so the members of the family took up residence in the eight directions. Each one took his or her property to their direction and these belongings (including rocks, pieces of wood and so forth) were the very substances that, later on, became used in the rites to pacify the damage caused by an unfavorable combination of the elements or of the trigrams.

Finally the old mother, who was born in the earth sheep year, died at the age of 226 in the wood dragon year. She was buried in the earth the following year, that of the wood snake. At that time there was no funerary ritual to appease the Eight Classes and to balance the elements of the family, and, as a consequence, the old father who was born in the earth dog year and lived for 253 years, died the following year, the metal pig year. In a similar fashion, as the result of the lack of proper funerary rites, Zin, Zon and Kham sudden-

continued on page 12

INDIVIDUAL ASTROLOGICAL ASPECTS

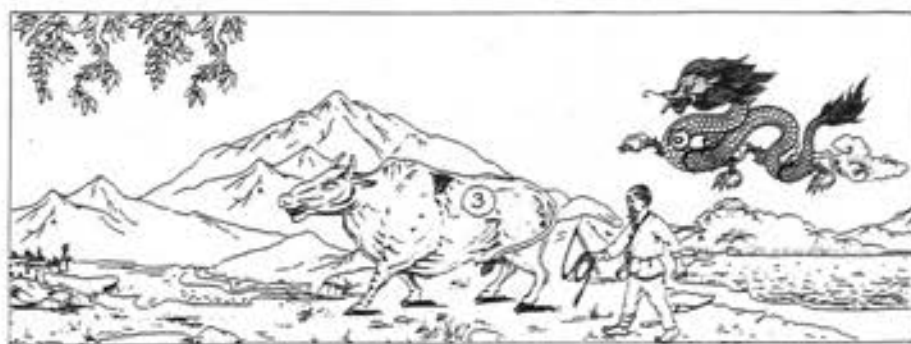
	1998 EARTH TIGER	1997 FIRE OX	1996 FIRE MOUSE	1995 WOOD BOAR	1994 WOOD DOG	1993 WATER BIRD	1992 WATER MONKEY	1991 METAL SHEEP	1990 METAL HORSE	1989 EARTH SNAKE	1988 EARTH DRAGON	1987 FIRE HARE	1986 FIRE TIGER	1985 WOOD OX	1984 WOOD MOUSE	1983 WATER BOAR	1982 WATER DOG	1981 METAL BIRD	1980 METAL MONKEY
SROG	●	●●	○●	○●	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○○	○○○	●●	●	●	●●	○●	○●	●●	○○	○○
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	1959 EARTH BOAR	1958 EARTH DOG	1957 FIRE BIRD	1956 FIRE MONKEY	1955 WOOD SHEP	1954 WOOD HORSE	1953 WATER SNAKE	1952 WATER DRAGON	1951 METAL HARE	1950 METAL TIGER	1949 EARTH OX	1948 EARTH MOUSE	1947 FIRE BOAR	1946 FIRE DOG	1945 WOOD BIRD	1944 WOOD MONKEY	1943 WATER SHEEP	1942 WATER HORSE	1941 METAL SNAKE
SROG	○○	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○○	○○○	●●	●	●	●●	○●	○●	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○○	○○○
LUS	○○	○○	○●	○●	○○○	○○○	●●	●●	○○	○○	○●	○●	○	○	●●	●●	○○	○○	○○○
DBANG THANG	○	○	○●	○●	○○	○○	●●	●●	○○○	○○○	○	○	○●	○●	○○	○○	●●	●●	○○○
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LHA	○●	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○○	○○○	●●	○	○	●●	○●	○●	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○○	○○○

The Chinese Ox Prognostic for the Earth Tiger Year 1998

27th of February 1998-16th of February 1999

by Dr. Thubten Phuntsog, Professor at the Department of Tibetan Studies at the Central University of Nationalities in Beijing



The method of divination called the 'Chinese Ox Prognostic', connected to elemental astrology, is a way to determine yearly events using the metaphor of an ox, a shepherd, and dragons. In Tibet it is widely used by local farmers and nomads, however it is well known that this prognostic gives useful advice on the nature of a particular year that is relevant to everybody on our planet. It is clear, makes use of simple words and is easy to understand.

The Ox Prognostic was introduced from China to Tibet by Situ Dharmakara (1700-1774), the eighth in the line of incarnations of Situ Rinpoche. He first came into contact with this method when traveling in the 'Jang region of eastern Tibet close to the Chinese border. There he met a renowned Chinese astrologer under whom he deepened his knowledge of Astrology. At a later date he translated two volumes of material related to astrology from the Chinese into the Tibetan language.

It appears that in China the Ox divination was mainly used to determine government stability and instability and the situation of the family. However, in Tibet, undergoing some modification, it became interpreted mainly as an environmental prognostic to aid land cultivation and cattle breeding in nomadic regions. In the nineteenth century Jangchen Drubpe Dorje, changed Situ Dharmakara's system of determining the age of the shepherd accompanying the ox, from one based on the sign of the year to one based on that of the first day of spring, thus the discrepancy between the Ox prognostic as it is presented in the calendar of Pelpung and that of Lhasa.

In ancient China the prognostic was represented in bas-relief made of clay or paper-mache; in remote villages more simply as a drawing on paper. In Tibet it used to be affixed to the gates of monasteries and government castles along with an explanation of it on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. In Tibet it soon became a widespread prognostic for the new year probably because it could be easily understood just by looking at the drawing even if one was illiterate.

It furnishes indications concerning the quality of the harvest and of cattle breeding, business opportunities, possible conflicts, danger of epidemics and weather conditions.

This year the prognostic, done in accordance with Kongtrul Lodro Taye's 'Compendium of Good Explanation on White Astrology', indicates the following:

In the year 1998 because the color of the ox is green, strong winds will blow and the vegetation will flourish. Harm will not injure and diseases will not effect people or cattle although wind-related ('lung') disorders may effect humans.

Because the color of the head of the ox is yellow, the earth element will bring damage to the site of governments, and of those of high social status. This damage will manifest in the first month of each season.

Because the color of the horns, the ears, the mouth and the tail of the ox are black, the general well-being of the country will suffer.

Because the belly of the ox is yellow, the harvest will be abundant in high places and in the valleys.

Because the legs of the ox are red, in the last month of each season, fire will cause damage in the valleys and red-colored cities.

Because the mouth of the ox is open, people and cattle will reproduce in great number.

Because the tail swings to the left, the cattle of the nomads will be favored by fortune, while humans will be rejected by it.

Because the shepherd follows after the ox, the summer will come late.

Because the shepherd, this year, is an old man, old people will be prosperous and lucky but the young will experience problems and difficulties. In particular it will be a negative year for children.

Because the shepherd's left and right plaits are tied at the back of his head, auspicious signs will manifest throughout the country.

Because the dress of the shepherd is blue and his belt yellow, it indicates that this year will yield good profits for the business man and for anyone who engages in trading; there will be no rivals or enemies.

Because the shepherd's whip is made of wool, governments will exercise minimal decisional power and people will have the decisive say.

Because the shepherd wears his right shoe but keeps the left one attached to his belt, on the right hip, this indicates that male energy will be more active and female energy latent and men will thus be favored.

Because the first day of the lunar month is that of the wood boar and the oxen are three, summer will be late and as a consequence cereals will have more nutritional power.

The ox is accompanied by six dragons, an even number, therefore the amount of rain will be suited to a good harvest.

Translation by Elio Guarisco

INTERPRETING THE ASPECTS

Srog, the life force, is the wind that maintains life. The life force element is analyzed to determine whether there is danger to one's life or not.

Lus, body, comprises the elements that makes up the body. The body element is analyzed to determine whether one will be effected by disease or not.

Dhang thang, or capacity, represents one's power to accomplish tasks and one's potential strength. The capacity element is analyzed to determine the fluctuations in one's financial situation.

Klung rta, or fortune, the elemental potency that assists the life force, the body and in particular the capacity. Fortune is analyzed to determine the presence of enemies, conflicts, court cases etc..

Lha is the potential of the elemental properties (air, fire, earth, water) of the body of the person.

The fortune is the main element analyzed for learned persons.

The capacity is the main element analyzed for women.

The body is the main element analyzed for children.

The life force is the main element analyzed for men.

If the life force is marked by black dots, one should engage in long life practice and liberate animals that are on the verge of being slaughtered.

If the body element is marked by black dots, one should keep moral precepts and construct votive images (*tsatsa*).

If the capacity is marked by black dots, one should practice generosity and make offerings to a community of practitioners.

If the fortune is marked by black dots, one should invoke the warrior deities (*dgra lha*), and put up prayer flags.

If the *lha* (*bla*) is marked by black dots, one should practice the rite of bringing back the *lha*; recite the Sutra of the Deity with the White Parasol.

When all the dots are black or white it is beneficial to do some purification such as prostrations, going on pilgrimage, making offerings in sacred places, carry out beneficial actions for the community of practitioners and give to the needy.

Those born in the Tiger year will experience a critical year; they should avoid negative situations and do long-life practice as much as possible. The year will also not be very favorable for those born in the year of the monkey, the horse, the dog, the pig and the snake; those born in the year of the ox and the sheep will experience interferences. ☉

FOR THE EARTH TIGER YEAR

1979 EARTH SHEEP	1978 EARTH HORSE	1977 FIRE SNAKE	1976 FIRE DRAGON	1975 WOOD HARE	1974 WOOD TIGER	1973 WATER OX	1972 WATER MOUSE	1971 METAL BOAR	1970 METAL DOG	1969 EARTH BIRD	1968 EARTH MONKEY	1967 FIRE SHEEP	1966 FIRE HORSE	1965 WOOD SNAKE	1964 WOOD DRAGON	1963 WATER HARE	1962 WATER TIGER	1961 METAL OX	1960 METAL MOUSE
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●●	○○○	○○○	●●	○	○	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○○	○○○	●●	○	○	●●	○○

1940 METAL DRAGON	1939 EARTH HARE	1938 EARTH TIGER	1937 FIRE OX	1936 FIRE MOUSE	1935 WOOD BOAR	1934 WOOD DOG	1933 WATER BIRD	1932 WATER MONKEY	1931 METAL SHEEP	1930 METAL HORSE	1929 EARTH SNAKE	1928 EARTH DRAGON	1927 FIRE HARE	1926 FIRE TIGER	1925 WOOD OX	1924 WOOD MOUSE
●●	●	●	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○○	○○○	●●	●	●	●●	○○
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●●	○	○	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○	○○	●●	○○○	○○○	●●	○	○	●●	○○





"...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

The most important thing we can do to help maintain the good health of our precious master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, is to keep our samaya as pure as possible and to correct all errors by performing Ganapuja with our Vajra Brothers and Sisters.

WORLD TIME TABLE v2.0

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

ANNIVERSARY OF PADMASAMBHAVA

Fri. 3rd July 1998

16:00 (-11)
17:00 (-10) Hawaii
18:00 (-9)
19:00 (-8) Fairbanks
20:00 (-7) San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver
21:00 (-6) Denver, Salt Lake City, Pagosa Springs, Edmonton
22:00 (-5) Lima, Quito, Chicago, Mexico City
23:00 (-4) Caracas, San Juan, Santiago, New York, Conway, Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana, Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa

00:00 (-3) Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bermuda

Sat. 4th July 1998

00:30 (-2.5) Newfoundland
01:00 (-2)
02:00 (-1)



LOSAR TIBETAN NEW YEAR 2125 EARTH TIGER YEAR

1st Month, 1st day Fri. 27th Feb. 1998 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 Mon. 2nd March 1998 This 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. Therefore 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 Thu. 5th March 1998 This is an important day for doing the practice of Ekajati, so try to do the Long Tun either collectively or personally. If you don't have that possibility then try to do the Medium Tun and in either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

1st Month, 10th day Sat. 7th March 1998 This is the day of Padmasambhava so you can do a Ganapuja with an intensive practice of the Long-life mantra connected with the Guruyoga of Guru Padmasambhava. Usually it is best to do this together with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If it is not possible, you can do a Medium or Short Tun, reciting the Long-life mantra as much as possible.

1st Month, 15th day Fri. 13th March 1998 FULL MOON. The first full moon of the Tibetan New Year is the very important anniversary of the Great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje. It is also a special day of Buddha Shakyamuni, the day he performed many miracles, and it is the anniversary of the Master Marpa as well as that of Shenrab Miwoche, the founder of Bon. Therefore, on this day when it is 8 o'clock in Oddiyana, it is good for all Dzogchen practitioners to practice at the same time, practicing the *Agar Lama'i Naljyor*, Guruyoga with the White A. You can do this practice collectively or alone.

SEE THE UNIVERSAL TIMETABLE

1st Month, 25th day Mon. 23rd March 1998 This is the anniversary of the lady Master Ayu Kadro, so it is good to do the *Agar Lama'i Naljyor* and since this is a Dakini day in general it is a good day to reinforce our energy. Try to do a Ganapuja with the transformation into the Dakini Simhamuka.

1st Month, 30th day Sat. 28th March 1998 DARK MOON. This is a good day to do *Namchos Shitroi Naljyor*, the practice of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or personally.

2nd Month, 6th day Thur. 2nd April 1998 This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

2nd Month, 10th day Mon. 6th April 1998 This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, 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 Wed. 8th April 1998 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 *Guruyoga Agar Lama'i Naljyor*, the Guruyoga of the White A.

2nd Month, 15th day Sat. 11th April 1998 FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for Long-life practices and in particular the practice of Union of Primordial Essences. The best time for this practice is from 7 to 8 o'clock in the morning.

2nd Month, 20th day Fri. 17th April 1998 This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), a disciple of the first Do Drub Chen Rinpoche and a master of Nyagla Padma Duddul. It is therefore a good day to do *Agar Lama'i Naljyor*, the *Guruyoga* with the White A.

2nd Month, 25th day Tues. 21st April 1998 This is a Dakini day so try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters.

2nd Month, 30th day Sun. 26th April 1998 DARK MOON. On this day, which is the birthday of the great Tertön Loter Wangpo, try to do the *Agar Lama'i Naljyor*, Guruyoga of the White A.

3rd Month 3rd day Wed. 29th April 1998 On this anniversary of Karma Pakshi, a great Master of the Karma Kagyud and a Dzogchen practitioner, it is beneficial to practice the *Agar Lama'i Naljyor* collectively if possible but otherwise alone.

3rd Month, 4th day Thu. 30th April 1998 This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

3rd Month, 10th day Wed. 6th May 1998 This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava so try to do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union" early in the morning or at sunset. If you have the possibility it is beneficial to combine this with a practice of Ganapuja collectively.

3rd month, 15th day Mon. 11th May 1998 FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for Long-life practices, and in particular for the practice of the "Union of Primordial Essences". It is best to do it early in the morning if you can. This is also the anniversary of the day when Buddha Shakyamuni first gave the teaching of Kalachakra so it is good to do a Ganapuja or Long Tun in the evening.

3rd Month, 25th day Thu. 21st May 1998 This is a Dakini day as well as the anniversary of the fifth Dalai Lama, a great Tertön and practitioner of Dzogchen, so it is a good day to practice *Agar Lama'i Naljyor*, Guru Yoga with White A in the morning and Ganapuja with an intensive practice of Ekajati in the evening.

3rd Month, 30th day Mon. 25th May 1998 DARK MOON. This is

a particularly good day for practicing the Purification of the Six Lokas. As it is also the anniversary of the great Tertön and Dzogchen Master Sangyas Lingpa, try to do the *Agar Lama'i Naljyor*.

4th Month, 6th & 8th days Sun. 31st May & Tue. 2nd June 1998 These are important days for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

4th month, 7th day Mon. 1st June 1998 This is the anniversary of the birth of Buddha Shakyamuni, an important day for all Buddhists, so try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

4th Month, 10th day Thu. 4th June 1998 This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. If you can, try to do a Ganapuja, otherwise you

can do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

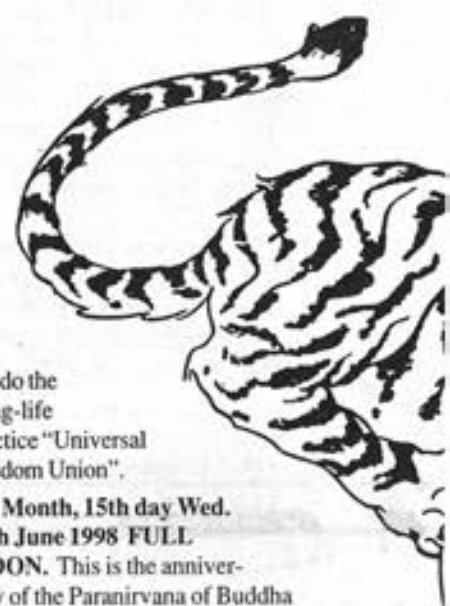
4th Month, 15th day Wed. 10th June 1998 FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of the Parinirvana of Buddha Shakyamuni, as well as an important day for the Long-life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Therefore try to do this practice early in the morning, and in the afternoon or evening do a Ganapuja.

4th Month, 25th day Fri. 19th June 1998 Dakini day. This is the anniversary of Ngor Chen (a great Master of the Sakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the *Guruyoga Agar Lama'i Naljyor*, collectively if possible or otherwise alone.

4th Month, 30th day Wed. 24th June 1998 DARK MOON. This day is the anniversary of Nyag-la Pema Dud-'dul (1816-1872). He was one of the Masters of Changchub Dorje, the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma "*Tsedrub Gongdus*" which two of his disciples, Ayu Khadro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Therefore you should try to do this Long-life practice, *Tsedrub Gongdus*, Union of Primordial Essences". The time to do it is the early morning. Later in the day or in the evening you can do the Guruyoga of the White A, *Agar Lama'i Naljyor*.

5th Month, 1st day Thu. 25th June 1998 This is the anniversary of mChog-gyur gLing-pa (1829-1870) a Nyingmapa Master of Dzogchen, one of the most important Rimed masters of the XIX Century. Try to do a practice of *Agar Lama'i Naljyor*.

5th Month, 10th day Sat. 4th July 1998 Though many masters affirm that the date of the anniversary of



TIGER YEAR

the 'birth' of Padmasambhava is the tenth day of the sixth month of the Tibetan calendar, the great master Jig-med Ling-pa confirms that the tenth day of the fifth month according to the Tibetan calendar is the anniversary of the birth of Padmasambhava.

This year, when it is 8.00 am in Oddiyana, on Sat. 4th July, we Dzogchen practitioners all over the world will perform the practice of Guruyoga with Tundrin or Tungyas, according to our opportunities, and those who have the possibility can also add Ganapuja.

SEE THE UNIVERSAL TIMETABLE



5th Month, 14th day Wed 8th July 1998 This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or

Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 15th day Thu. 9th July 1998 FULL MOON. This is a special day for the Long-life practice of Amitayus, so you can do the Long-life practice "Union of Primordial Essences" early in the morning. If you cannot do it at that time, it is still good to do it later in the day. It is also the 'Dzam-gling spyi-bsang' (Lit. smoke puja of the world in general) so if you know how to do it, you can do the Sanqod (bsang-mchod) in the morning.

5th Month, 24th day Sat. 18th July 1998 There is no 25th day this month so we celebrate Dakini day on the 24th. This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible. If you have the possibility it is beneficial to add the Ganapuja.

5th Month, 30th day Thu. 23rd July 1998 DARK MOON. This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the Purification of the Six Lokas either collectively or alone, preferably in the early morning. Otherwise you can do a Medium or Short Tun.

6th Month, 4th day Mon. 27th July 1998 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 Saranath, 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 Sun. 2nd Aug. 1998 This is a special day of Padmasambhava and also the anniversary of Yeshe Tsogyal the main consort and disciple of Padmasambhava so if you have the possibility, it is beneficial to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters, if not you can practice Guruyoga with Padmasambhava and the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

6th Month, 14th day Fri. 7th Aug. 1998 This is the anniversary of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339), a famous master of Dzogchen Upadesa. On this day it is good to do *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, Guruyoga with the White A.

6th Month, 15th day Sat. 8th Aug. 1998 FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of Gampopa, the main disciple of Milarepa. Therefore it is an excellent day to do *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, Guruyoga with the White A. It is also a good day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences".

6th Month, 25th day Mon. 17th Aug. 1998 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 Tun 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 Sat. 22nd Aug. 1998 DARK MOON. This is a very important day to do purification practices, especially the "Purification of the Six Lokas". If you have the chance, you can also do a Short, Medium or Long Tun.

7th Month, 9th day Mon. 31st Aug. 1998 This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

7th Month, 10th day Tue. 1st Sept. 1998 This is the anniversary of Jomo Menmo (1248-1283), a very famous woman Tertön, reincarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal. She was the consort of the great Tertön Guru Chowang. It is also a very special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Therefore it is an ideal day to do *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor* in the morning and a Ganapuja and Long-life practice associated with Padmasambhava, "Universal Wisdom Union" later in the day.

7th Month, 15th day Sun. 6th Sept. 1998 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 practice *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, the Guruyoga with the White A early in the morning if possible, or later in the evening when you are free. It is also an

excellent day for the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava, with a Ganapuja if you have the possibility.

7th Month 19th day Thu.

10th Sept. 1998 This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

7th Month, 25th day Tue. 15th Sept. 1998 This is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of Pagmo Drugpa (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 Tun 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 Sun 20th Sept. 1998 DARK MOON. This day is ideal for purification practices. Try to do either the "Purification of the Six Lokas" or the *Namchos Shitroi Nalgyor*, the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or on your own.

8th Month, 10th day Thu. 1st Oct. 1998 This is a very special day of Guru Padmasambhava, therefore do a Ganapuja with the Guruyoga and the Long-life practice of Guru Padmasambhava "Universal Wisdom Union" collectively. Otherwise you can do a Medium Tun on your own.

8th Month, 15th day Mon. 5th Oct. 1998 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, but if you cannot it is still good if you can do it later in the day or evening.

8th Month, 19th day Fri. 9th Oct. 1998 This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th Month, 25th day Thu. 15th Oct. 1998 This is a Dakini day, and also the anniversary of two great Dzogchen masters, Rigzin Kumara-ja, who transmitted the Dzogchen teachings to Longchenpa and to the third Karmapa, and of Rigzin Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755), a great Dzogchen master of the Nyingma school. It is therefore an excellent day to do *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, 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 Tun later in the day, with an intense practice of Simhamuka, or a Ganapuja, if you have the possibility.

8th Month, 27th day Sat. 17th Oct. 1998 This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th Month, 30th day Tue. 20th Oct. 1998 DARK MOON. This day is excellent for practicing the "Purification of the Six Lokas". Otherwise you can do

the Medium or Long Tun.

9th Month, 3rd day Fri 23rd Oct. 1998 This is the anniversary of Rigzin 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 *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, the Guruyoga with the White A.

9th Month, 10th day Fri. 30th Oct. 1998 This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. It is also the anniversary of the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa and of Tertön, a previous reincarnation of Sögyal 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 Tun. You can do this in the usual way or, if you have the possibility, you can do a Ganapuja.

9th Month, 15th day Wed. 4th Nov. 1998 FULL MOON. This is a good day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences", either collectively or personally according to your possibilities, early in the morning and in the evening a Ganapuja.

9th Month, 22nd day Tue. 10th Nov. 1998 This day is the important celebration of Buddha Shakyamuni's descent to earth from the realms of the Divinities. It is called *Lha bab dus chen*, 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 Tun on your own.

9th Month, 25th day Fri. 13th Nov. 1998 This is a Dakini day and the anniversary of the very important Dzogchen master Adzam Drugpa (1842-1924). He was a disciple of Jamyang Kyentse Wangpo and a master of some of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's masters, including Changchub Dorje and Ayu Kadro. He was also a previous incarnation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. It is therefore a very important day to practice *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, the Guruyoga with the White A, according to your possibilities.

9th Month, 30th day Wed. 18th Nov. 1998 DARK MOON. This is a good day to do *Namchos Shitroi Nalgyor* 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 Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible. The best time for this practice is around eight o'clock in the evening.

10th Month, 10th day Sun. 29th Nov. 1998 This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, therefore do a Ganapuja with the Guruyoga and the Long-life practice of Guru Padmasambhava "Universal Wisdom Union" collectively. Otherwise you can do a Medium Tun on your own.

The 11th day of this month is an important day for the practice of Ekajati but since there is no 11th day, on the preceding day, the 10th, try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

10th Month, 15th day Thu. 3rd Dec. 1998 FULL MOON. This day is considered to be the day to honor the Lord Buddha in general, and it is one of the best days to do the Long-life Practice with the Dakini Mandarava particularly. Therefore try to do the Long-life Practice, "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Generally the best moment to do this kind of practice is at 7-8 o'clock in the morning. But if you don't have this possibility, then do it in the afternoon or later in the evening when you are free.

10th Month, 25th day Sun. 13th Dec. 1998 This is a Dakini day, and the anniversary of Tsongkhapa (1357-1491), who made a synthesis of the previous schools and founded the Gelugpa school. Try to perform a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters or the Medium Tun personally. In either case recite the heart mantra of the Dakini Simhamuka as many times as possible.

10th Month, 30th day Fri 18th Dec. 1998 DARK MOON. This is an excellent day to practice Purification of the Six Lokas.

11th Month, 8th day Sat. 26th Dec. 1998 This is a particular day for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a Long or Medium Tun with intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

The Special Practices Calendar will be continued in the next issue.



This paper reviews archeological discoveries made at gNam mtsho and Dang ra g.yu mtsho in the last few years. During the course of seven expeditions to gNam mtsho and Dang ra g.yu mtsho the author has documented a variety of archaeological sites which with few exceptions are attributed to the pre-Buddhist period in Tibet. These attributions are primarily derived from oral histories.

A Preliminary Archaeological Survey of gNam mtsho and Dang ra g.yu mtsho

by John Bellezza

Part V of a series about the lost city of Zhang Zhung

DANG RA KHYUNG RDZONG

On the east side of Dang ra g.yu mtsho, between Gangs lung and g.Yu bun dgon pas, is Dang ra khyung rdzong, surmounting a group of castellated formations overlooking the lake. This is one of the most famous Zhang Zhung monuments in the Bön tradition. According to Bön history this fort was the residence of the Lig mig rgya king who was assassinated, paving the way for the Yar lung kingdom to annex the Zhang Zhung kingdom (Norbu 1995: 27).

Even at a much earlier stage in the history of the Zhang Zhung, Dang ra khyung rdzong is supposed to be where the adept Thad mi thad ke practiced rDzogs chen with his consort sMan gcig g.yu lo ma (Karmay: 47). Thad mi thad ke is among the 13 lineage transmitters beginning with the rgyal gshen (royal priest) Mu kri btsan po (Karmay: 74) which could date his life back as much as 2,000 years.

Dang ra khyung rdzong is also where sacred treasures were discovered by the gTer tons gyen mi nyi'od and jMa ston srol 'dzin (Ramble: 95, 96; Karmay: 168). If the scanty historical record surrounding the fort is accurate, it establishes that it was a leading cultural nexus in the region for many centuries.

Today, however, little of its putative former glory is detected. The highest rock formation at Khyung rdzong is a dome-shaped pinnacle called Khyung ri, which local tradition attributes as the place where the Lig mig rgya kings built their palace. The summit of Khyung ri is very narrow and couldn't possibly have supported a gigantic palace. An examination of Khyung ri revealed only the

most minimal of ruins. This paucity of ruins might be explained by the fort having undergone complete annihilation in war, by virtue of its fame. Who might have destroyed it and when it might have been destroyed are questions that only add to the enigmatic history of the region. Next to Khyung ri is a tall, reddish outcropping called Brag Böng ya, the dwelling place of local protector deities, which has no architectural remains; but around other crags are several seemingly insignificant ruins. There are a number of caves at Dang ra khyung rdzong, including one where the lama bLa chen dran pa nam mkha' is said to have meditated.

G.YUNG DRUNG LHA RTSE

Under the lamas gShen rgyal lha rtse, Lha sgom dkar po and Ol sgom gun 'dul a retreat center was founded at g.Yung drung lha rtse, located just south of 'Om bu. It was founded during the renaissance of Bön in the 11th to 13th centuries and became a thriving center of the Zhang Zhung snyan rgyud tradition of rDzogs chen.²⁴ A number of caves are found



Foundation wall 1.85 meters thick at Gangs lung lha rtse (Dang ra g.yu mtsho) PHOTO BY J. BELLEZZA

here some of which have recently been reactivated as retreat venues. Small structural remains are located at the uppermost part of the site.

'OM BU ZHANG ZHUNG MONASTERY

No fewer than three monasteries are known in 'Om bu, the largest village of Dang ra g.yu mtsho, which has 100 homes and is endowed with fairly broad agricultural lands. The only monastery still active is one built around 1890 in the Iron Tiger Year (Bod ljongs nag chu sa khul gyi lo rgyus: 586), in the upper part of the village. Until the Cultural Revolution, another dgon pa built centuries ago existed in the middle of town. The site of this larger and older monastery has been completely effaced by the construction of new homes. Apart from these two monasteries built in the Tibetan period there is the site of a third one, which is understood to have been founded in the Zhang Zhung period. It is located at the edge of the escarpment behind the village. Traces of it are barely detectable. Barring a thorough archaeological investigation, little of substance can be said about this long-neglected site.

GANGS LUNG LHA RTSE

On the south side of Dang ra g.yu mtsho at a place called 'Bum nang chu, located near the foot of Gangs lung lha btsan ri,²⁵ are the region's most enormous ruins. So monumental are these remains that rather than an isolated fort, Gangs lung lha rtse might represent the vestiges of an ancient township which might well have been several times the size of present day 'Om bu. According to local savants a Zhang Zhung citadel of premier importance existed here.

The citadel centers around two benches which rise above a walled vale that incontrovertibly was farmed in the past. The lower of the two benches contains a number of foundations just sticking out of the hardened ground. These massive walls are made of granite and are 1.85 meters in thickness. Approximately 90 meters in length are exposed, marking the layout of what in the past were buildings of monumental proportions. In the middle of this bench are the only standing walls on the site, measuring 18 meters square, with walls 1.75 meters thick built of granite blocks. On the upper shelf are ruins level with the ground in a dense aggregation covering approximately 600 square meters. There are also signs of other structures at Gangs lung but evidently these weren't as large as the ones found on the two benches. Other than its name and ambiguous period of construction, nothing else could be learned about Gangs lung lha rtse historically. Its great age is indicated by the manner in which the ruins have been engulfed by the obdurate ground. Its size alone makes it a very worthy candidate for exploration.

Notes:

²⁴ This is a summary of an account of g.Yung drung lha rtse kindly supplied by sLob dpon btsan 'dzin mam dag.

²⁵ Gangs lung lha btsan ri is one of the eight peaks in the rTa sgo rin po che group called rTa sgo mched bdun rol brgyad (cf. Zhang Zhung Hri pa gyen med).

To be continued in the next issue. ■

Introduction to Tibetan Astrology

continued from page 8

ly. As a result of this the world enjoyed peace and prosperity for many eons.

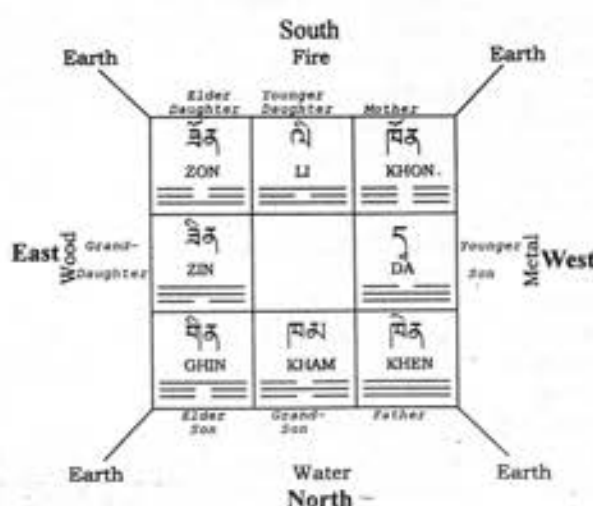
Following this period of prosperity, the world began to decline and all its inhabitants experienced an augmentation of mental affliction. At that time the Sage Yod po appeared who recounted the legend of the origin of the parka and became the first Tibetan to explain astrological calculations. After many centuries in a period in which no form of writing existed, the teacher of astrology named Sa bdag nag po started to indicate the parka, the mewa, and the animals with white and black pebbles.

After many centuries, the Prince Shi kha then tse born (2551 BC.) in the year of the metal rabbit, established the rules of governing using astrological calculations. In 1957 BC in the wood monkey year, the astrology Master Sa bdag rlung rgyal was born, who taught the sage nGnon po. On the basis of the instruction of his teacher, the latter elaborated a way of astrological calculation using the combination of the twelve animal signs with the five elements. He associated colors with the five elements: green for wood, red for fire, yellow for earth, white for metal and black for water and then associated these elements to the parka and animal signs by way of different dots of color.

In 1557 BC. in the year of wood mouse, another master of astrology, Ze'u kong 'phrul chung was born. He applied the mother-son-friend-enemy relationship to the field of medicine for the

first time. After that Da, Li and Ghin discussed the matter and created the rite to appease the Eight Classes of demons and gods and to balance the elements within the fami-

ly. In the wood mouse year in 1197 BC., a famous astrologer, Kongtse sphrul gyi rgyal po, was born. On the basis of his astrological knowledge and on the request of four of his most intelligent students he composed 357 treatises on the rituals of the gto, mdos, yas and the gljud, which have the function of balancing the elements and pacifying the disturbances caused by the Eight Classes of spirits and gods.



In 417 BC. in the wood mouse year, Nyatri Tsenpo, the first Tibetan king, was born. When he became king of Tibet, the so-called 'community of astrological practitioners' developed and propagated astrology widely. At that time, on the basis of the observations of the southerly and northerly movement of the sun, the observation of the stars and the migration of birds, the rain, clouds, wind and snow, the community prepared the solar calendar of 360 days mainly for the sake of the farmers and nomads.

There are many details regarding the development of the elements, how disturbances manifested and how substances were used to pacify the imbalance of the elements but we would need a week simply to explain them. This is a mythological story not a real one, nonetheless its symbols could be considered to be an invaluable field of research.

This information concerning the mythological origin of the trigrams as well as the mewa or numbers can only be found in the Bön texts; one does not find similar explanation in the astrological treatises of China or other countries. In fact, when Chinese astrological experts are asked about the origin of the parka or trigrams they do not have a very clear explanation and sometimes refer to a particular race of people called Yi who lived on the border between China and who were originally Tibetans with customs and beliefs closely linked to the Bön culture.

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Lives of the Great Masters

continued from page 5

mantra, he will spread and propagate the teachings of the Guhyamantra in Tibetan regions."

Truly delighted upon hearing this, the king said "I'll do so" and gathered together the most intelligent men from the Tibetan regions: Kawa Paltseg from the Phanyul region of the Central District who was the son of Kawa Loten and Broza Dorje Cham, and Cogro Lui Gyaltsen from Dargong of the Rulashab district who was the son of Cogro Gyaljung and Broza Dze-ma.

Inviting them to drink and dance, he placed jeweled caps on their heads saying:

"Oh sons of good lineage! You can speak well, so I entrust you with two commands. So that the teachings of the very profound goal-oriented Guhyamantra may be spread in Tibetan regions, go to the Indian town Kapilavastu where there are five hundred pandits in the temple of King Indrabhuti. Offer him these seven golden letters of introduction and these nine measures of gold dust, indicating that they come from the king of Tibet. As a return gift, please request that he send the most learned pandit - the one who knows the teachings of the goal-oriented Guhyamantra. Now go!"

Following the king's commands, two translators journeyed to India. Bowing to King Indrabhuti, they offered the Tibetan king's golden letters of introduction with the gold dust and made his above-mentioned request. Very pleased, King Indrabhuti said:

"You two Tibetan Bodhisattvas may stay in my guest house."

At reception time, King Indrabhuti visited his pandits and said:

"Oh you very learned men! The

Tibetan king has sent some very beautiful gifts, and as a return present, he wants us to let him have from among us he who is most learned in the teachings of the goal-oriented Guhyamantra."

The teacher Buddhaguhya said: "Please bring the envoys here who made this request."

The king returned escorting the translators who were both filled with devoted respect upon seeing the qualities of Vimala's person. Simultaneously the eyes of those above gazed down upon Vimalamitra and the eyes of those below looked upward. Understanding their unanimous decision, Vimalamitra stood up and uttered the sounds: "Gha Gha Pa Ri".

The two translators interpreted the words in two ways. Cogro said:

"An arrow resting on the bowstring hits the target if the archer is able to pull with his thumb."

Kawa said:

"People dependent upon ferryboats are transported to the far side of the lake if the ferryman is able to convey them."

Thus they gave the same interpretation to Vimala in different words.

Vimala said:

"King, if you agree to the unanimous decision and allow me to go, I will go to bring benefit to Tibet."

Carrying the most profound secret Nyingthig Texts, Vimalamitra set out accompanied by attendants including the venerable Sai Nyingpo.

That night many Indians had disturbing dreams: Indian flowers, fruits, trees, and crops were going to Tibet; the sun and moon moved to Tibet.

The Dakinis who lived in the Silwa Cemetery wept. All the king's clocks and astrological castings were confused.

In the morning a large crowd of Indian people gathered in front of the royal palace, and comparing

dreams said:

"They're all similar."

Some shouted one thing and others shouted other things. One woman said:

"Let's go to the king! Have the king's pandits all gone to Tibet?"

Because of the omens and the fact that the learned pandit would soon begin teaching the goal-oriented Guhyamantra in Tibet and India was now without the secret books, the king replied:

"Vimala left for Tibet yesterday before noon."

Some Indian people dispatched swift runners to post rumors at all the Tibetan highways and crossroads to the effect that the two Tibetan priests were carrying evil sorcery books from the border tribes, and that if they arrived, the Tibetan kingdom would disintegrate.

At that time, after guiding Vimalamitra, the two translators arrived at glorious Samye and, full of joy, said to the king:

"This pandit is an accomplished transformative being who has taken form to benefit sentient beings. He knows the entire Tripitaka, and in particular has internalized the experience of the goal-oriented Guhyamantra. Without leaving a single book behind in India, he has arrived in Tibet."

The king said to Vimalamitra:

"This evening you may stay in Butsal Serkang. In the morning we'll pay respects."

So Vimalamitra stayed in Butsal.

About that time some mischievous Tibetan ministers read the posted rumors. Hearing that the pandit had already arrived in Samye, they came before the king saying:

"We hear that there are mounds of various sorcery books from the border tribes in here. The king must not allow him to stay here."

In the morning the two transla-

tors came before the kings saying:

"We wish to see you."

The king disapprovingly replied:

"Hey you two! This pandit is not suitable. Because he has come with various evil sorcery indoctrination, I must examine the matter for a few days."

The two translators became quite depressed.

On the third day, Vimala arose from his place in Butsal. Bowing he said:

"Vairocana, embodiment of form! To your divine form the God of Wisdom bows down."

When he bowed, the clay image became a pile of dust. Quite amazed, the two translators reported the incident to the king. The king said:

"Well, all this is just the evil doings of sorcery."

So the translators were very unhappy, and thought to themselves:

"We both worked so hard to invite this remarkable teacher from India. How can the king do this?"

After three more days, Vimalamitra again arose saying:

"Vairocana, embodiment of form! To your divine form the God of Wisdom gives consecration."

When he placed his cap upon the heap of dust, the statue appeared in Indian form even more beautiful than before. When the statue emitted light, the two translators reported the incident to the king. He was quite impressed, and sent swift messengers throughout the Tibetan kingdom to announce a meeting for the third day of the first month.

During this month, in the Utse Rigsum courtyard, a high turquoise throne was constructed on the right for the king and an even higher gold-studded throne was constructed on the left for Vimalamitra. When all the Tibetans had assembled, the king prostrated before the pandit, and everyone could see the

colorful lords of the three families sitting in a circle on the white silk on the king's breast. The instant Vimalamitra snapped his fingers and said: "OM A HUM" everyone could see the colorful Buddhas of the five families in the king's jeweled crown. Even the common Tibetan folk were full of praise.

At that time Vimala was three hundred years old. None of this was intended for the king and his ministers, but for those who required education. When Vimala met with the embodied king and his ministers, one thousand and eighty years had elapsed since the Buddha's Parinirvana.

At that time Vimalamitra did not remain in the holy sanctuary, but he sat teaching Prajnaparamita and Madhyamika. While Vimala was absent during the hot part of the day, a beggar came to the base of the throne for public speaking. Unseen by others he wrote down some enigmatic words. When Vimala returned to the throne and was rearranging the cushions, he saw the words and asked: "Who has been here?"

The monks who were listening to the teachings said:

"No one has been here."

A small boy said:

"Recently an old beggar has been wandering around here."

After Vimalamitra said "Fetch the beggar", his attendants found him sitting in the home of the regional liquor merchant, and returned with him as instructed. At Vimala's request he said:

"I am Gyudra Nyingpo, a disciple of Vairocana of Pagor."

He was an expert in the five Vinaya traditions.

At that time Vimala taught him the thirteen Semde instructions on presence, and with Gyudra, just like mother and son, developed identical vision, meditation, and behavior, and studied those works which

continued on page 19

Tashigar's Origins

The Fruit of Good Intentions

by Alicia Caballero

On a sunny Sunday morning a beautiful young woman called Betty Touceda came to Tashigar. "I had been the owner of this land once. May I walk around for a while?" she asked. I went walking with her all around the Gar and she looked very touched. "This was my beloved place, my paradise", she said and with tears in her eyes started telling me the story about the origins of the land.

"At the beginning of the century Ramon Touceda, my grand uncle, came to Argentina from Galicia, Spain, as many immigrants did looking to make a fortune. After many years of hard work he became rich, married and started to enjoy the prosperity he had achieved through his great effort. This was the moment when he could materialize his dream to build the 'New Galicia' in the American land. He traveled all around the country and finally found a place in the Cordoba hills. He bought a big piece of land in the place called El Durazno, near Tanti. (This is the land that was to become Tashigar).

It was a bare mountain but Senor Touceda didn't care, he was completely determined to transform it to fulfill his dream: 'I will transform this land into a wonderful place', he announced and the work began. He brought engineers in to forest the land with exotic trees and flowers never seen in that region. They dedicated many years to help the plants adapt and grow. Then, Senor Touceda brought animals from a zoo in Buenos Aires; fifty species of wild and domestic animals were brought there to live together in



Touceda Family

freedom. It was an amazing experience and they survived! Senor Touceda loved children but didn't have any of his own, so he built a house for his brother who had five children." (This is the main house that became Rinpoche's house.)

Time passed, the Touceda children grew and grandchildren came. One of them is Betty Touceda who came that Sunday and told this story. Her parents didn't like the secluded nature of the mountains and preferred to remain in Buenos Aires, but they would send the children alone to the land for summer vacations. The house was filled with

the noise of children every summer.

Since Senor Touceda loved all his grandnieces and nephews he made everything for them to enjoy. Early in the morning there was horse back riding across the mountains, then there would be lunch outside on the big patio. In the afternoon at sunset was the time the children liked the most; Senor Touceda would go to the little room - where the dark retreat cabin is today - close his eyes and start counting while the children hid all around the place in the dark. Then the adults went looking for them while their little figures ran away trying not to be caught, like a noisy night flock.

For New Year's celebrations Senor Touceda used to prepare a big party for his family, neighbors and friends. There was a big barbecue with music and dance for the 'gauchos' from the region.

"I want my friends to come here and enjoy", he said. He never suspected his words would invoke friends from all over the world to come in the future. When he died his nephews sold the land to a Senor Loureiro. "We, the children, were still too young to resist their will and we lost our paradise", said Betty with sadness. Mr. Loureiro and his wife lived for ten years on the land but didn't change anything. They sold it to the Dzogchen Community in February of 1990.

Mr. Touceda's spirit remains in Tashigar every summer making reality the things he dreamed with his good intention. ■



INTERNATIONAL

COMMUNITY NEWS

DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY OF ITALY 1998 MERIGAR PROGRAM

RETREATS WITH NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

JULY 24-28 FIRST SUMMER RETREAT
The retreat begins Friday July 24th at 5 pm. The costs are 200.000 lire (or 50.000 lire per day) with the usual reductions for members.

AUGUST 14-21 SECOND SUMMER RETREAT
The retreat begins Friday, August 14th at 5 pm. The costs are 350.000 lire (or 50.000 lire per day) with the usual reductions for members.

PRACTICE AND TRAINING

- MAY 1-3** PRACTICE RETREAT OF THE COMPLETE DANCE OF THE VAJRA
MAY 15-17 INTENSIVE PRACTICE RETREAT ON THE FOUR IMMEASURABLES
The retreat will start on Friday May 15th at 9 am and will consist of four sessions a day.
MAY 24 PRACTICE RETREAT OF THE DANCE OF THE THREE VAJRAS
JUNE 5-7 PRACTICE RETREAT OF THE COMPLETE DANCE OF THE VAJRA
JULY 5 PRACTICE RETREAT OF THE DANCE OF THE THREE VAJRAS
JULY 15-21 TRAINING COURSE FOR TEACHERS OF THE FIRST LEVEL OF VAJRA DANCE

Held by Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo
The courses will start on Wednesday July 15th at 10 am. The cost is Lit. 420.000 without discounts. Participants should know both the female and the male part of the Dance of the Six Lokas as well as those of the Dance of the Three Vajras. To register for the course participants should be up to date with their membership fees and send a written application letter to the secretary of Merigar before May 30th. Candidates will be notified. According to the instructions of the Master it is advisable that those who wish to qualify to become Dance of the Vajra teachers participate in more than one course of first level training.

AUGUST 28-30 SANTI MAHA SANGHA THIRD LEVEL EXAM
AUGUST 31-SEPT 4 COURSE OF THE FOURTH LEVEL
The costs are 200.000 lire without discounts.

Please note the following:
In the gar where a fourth level course takes place, Rinpoche will no longer give courses of the precedent levels. Practitioners who are interested in courses of the first three levels, need to direct themselves to another gar. For instance, the Base and First Level exams and the related courses of the First and Second Level will take place in Russia, April 1998, and in Tashigar in February 1999. Furthermore, the exams of the Base, First and Second Level and the related courses of the First, Second and Third Level will take place at Tsegylgar in the summer of 1999.

JULY 31-AUGUST 6 TRAINING COURSE FOR YANTRA YOGA TEACHERS OF THE FIRST LEVEL (PLEASE NOTE THESE DATES HAVE BEEN CHANGED)

Held by Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti
The course starts at 10am on July 31st. The cost is Lit. 420.000 without discounts. The course is reserved for advanced practitioners who already teach or intend to teach Yantra Yoga. To register for the course participants should be up to date with their membership fees and send a written application letter to the secretary of Merigar before June 30th. Candidates will be notified.

AUGUST 7 - 13 DANCE OF THE VAJRA COURSE - FIRST PART
Held by Prima Mai
The course will start on August 7th at 10 am. The cost is Lit. 280.000 with 30% discount for members. Please book before June 30th with a deposit of Lit. 50.000. If there are not a minimum of 15 participants the course will be canceled.

SEPTEMBER 7-13 DANCE OF THE VAJRA COURSE - SECOND PART
Held by Adriana Dal Borgo
The course will start on September 7th at 10 am. The cost is Lit. 280.000 with 30% discount for members. Please book before July 30th with a deposit of Lit. 50.000. If there are not a minimum of 15 participants the course will be canceled.

SEPTEMBER 20 PRACTICE RETREAT OF THE DANCE OF THE THREE VAJRAS
Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy
Tel. 0564 966837, fax 0564 968110, email merigar@dueffe.it

RETREAT IN BRAZIL

with CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU
DECEMBER 18 - 20

The retreat will be held at a "sitio", which means a small farm in Portuguese. The name of this particular sitio is "Jardim do Dharma" where the first Big Stupa of Latin America is located near a small city called Cotia, 35 Km from Sao Paulo, with a minimum of 40 comfortable accommodations for sleeping and 20 more places for small tents for camping around the Stupa.

THE PUBLIC TALK ON 12TH OF DECEMBER is still in the process of being organized. The information will be distributed as soon as possible.

For any information please contact us at: Tel: 0055-11-69523919
e-mail: INTERNET:wmalaga@uol.com.br
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TARA MANDALA 1998
SUMMER PROGRAM

JUNE 18TH - 20TH
Summer Solstice Gathering and Stone People's Lodges
with Grandmother Bertha Grove

JUNE 21ST
Spring Edible & Medicinal Plant Gathering Walk
with Dixie Neumann

JUNE 30TH - JULY 7TH
Dzogchen Retreat and the Sky-like Nature of Mind
with Tsok Nyi Rinpoche

JULY 18TH - 26TH
Family Retreat & Vision Quest for Teenagers
with Sparky Shooting Star, Tulltrim Allione and Horse Hubbell

AUGUST 4TH - 9TH
Chöd Retreat The Laughter of the Dakinis
with Tulku Sang-Ngag

AUGUST 14TH - 23RD
Dzogchen Retreat
with Azom Rinpoche

Contact:
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PO Box 3040
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
Tel: 970 246 6177
Fax: 970 264 6169
email: 75402.1127@compuserve.com

Making a Dream
Come True

Tashigar

To all International
Dzogchen
Community Members:

This history began a few years ago when some of us were sharing our dreams and discovered almost all of us shared one important one. To live in a place suited to practice - just like Tashigar! Then we began to ask ourselves, why not

Tashigar? We studied a lot of alternatives, made a lot of projects, discussed a lot, but were not yet clear enough so nothing concrete happened.

Last year when I heard Rinpoche's words during the final day of the Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Training saying, "Many people are thinking they would like to build a small house on the land here in Tashigar. I think it's a very good idea and I like it very much. Not only for Tashigar, but for all Gars." I then heard a voice inside of me saying, "OK girl, you have no more excuses", and a lot of feelings came together; happiness, fear, wonder, panic, were all dancing wildly into my heart. Now we should do it!!!

Rinpoche, as always, made the first step, and chose the place for his own house and walked with us all around the land indicating places for future houses,



Ricky's house

for personal retreat cabins, and made propitiatory rites at the various sites. At that very moment, some people chose their own sites with Rinpoche's guidance.

Since then, we have been studying the legality for these kinds of land matters, and now have all the formal legal aspects prepared and ready.

Ricky Sued, one of the Tashigar members, is already living in Tashigar in his new house built on a big rock where we once sang the Song of the Vajra and two rainbows appeared around the sun.

Rinpoche's house is almost ready and will be completed before his arrival in December 1998. Now you can come and begin to make your own dream come true. And in case you still have any doubts, here are the final words of Rinpoche: "We want to enjoy the end of our life, then the rest of life we can enjoy together, doing practice and having a nice life, instead of a sad one. If I have a chance I will enjoy with you. This is my aim."

We will really try to make this happen. Come and let's do it together! For more specific information please contact the people on the International Dzogchen Contact List from Argentina.

Marisa Alonso - Director, Tashigar

Many Thanks!!

The Mirror would like to extend many thanks to Ann and Windy Dankoff of Santa Fe, New Mexico, John Walker of Albuquerque, New Mexico and Richard Kneeland of Little Canada, Minnesota, for their generous donations.

P A S S A G E S



Baby Liam

Born: On January 3rd, 1998, in New York City, a son, Liam, was born to Miranda Simmons and John Shannon. Liam is welcomed by his three sisters, Tatiana 8, Olympia 6 and Uma 2.

Born: We welcome to this human dimension Vaiva (Rainbow in the Sky in Lithuanian) the Daughter of Salvatore Azzolini and Rasa Liktaite, who arrived in Poggibonsi, Italy at 19:35 on March 23.

Died: 45-Year-old-David Ryder, composer and musician, long-time companion of Laura Sidoli of Milano, passed away in London on April 6. He had not been well for some time.



Nicholas Simmons and Anna Gogosi

Married: On February 18th, 1998, Nicholas Simmons and Anna Gogosi were married in Rome. A few days after the wedding they moved to Argentina where they are currently living, not far from Tashigar.

Married: Congratulations to Loek Jehee and Roland Witte who were married at the city hall in Amsterdam Holland on April 6.



Tantra Club

by Jonathan Swinchart

We all have different styles of learning. Some of us learn more readily through reading, others through hearing, while still others understand better by seeing and doing. Most of us use some combination of these, with emphasis on one or another. These learning styles are carried over into the study, understanding and practice of Dzogchen—we each find a unique way of touching the energy through some combination of studying texts, listening to talks and tapes, engaging in ritual practice, sitting in contemplation, joining in the Vajra Dance, and undertaking Yantra Yoga. Each of these modes affects each of us in different ways, and we discover an ever-evolving balance of these activities and their place in the other aspects of our lives.

For me, the written word—particular books, particular writers—has special power, at times an ability to transmit directly the nature of experience or understanding. I first experienced this reading Franklin Merrell-Wolff, an American seeker of the first half of this century who, apparently without a teacher, using the few written sources that were then available, came in touch with the primordial state. While reading his words, I would slip into deep contemplative states that seemed permeated by a kind of understanding that transcended the intellectual style which had always been such an important part of my life. Over time, I learned that to receive in this way, I needed to avoid reading in my habitual analytical mode, I had to give up attempting to understand in the ordinary way what the words meant; rather, I needed to open to the words, to somehow let them enter and allow them, allow the language, to make its own connections. When I am able to do this, it is truly illuminating—I feel understanding, it seems to permeate my whole being, every cell seems to relax and expand, I feel free and open.

This has happened over the years with only a few sources, but when I began reading Norbu Rinpoche's works, they penetrated in this way that seems to be a kind of direct transmission—I understood, it was as if I was being taught from the inside, being presented with information I somehow already knew. What it was that I knew was quite unclear—but it is that ignorance which brought me to the Dzogchen Community, and it is Norbu Rinpoche's teachings that are illuminating that ignorance, providing a context within which to see and, in a subtle non-directive way, organize, past experiences and learnings while moving progressively deeper into the ever more elusive subtleties of the primordial state. The richness of this experience, and the obvious effect of the teachings on my life, is what keeps me going when I look at the amount of work that needs to be done, and the teachings that have to be assimilated, for Santi Maha Sangha.

And this brings us finally to Tantra Club, an apparently simple and ordinary process that contains within it extraordinarily profound potentials. Every Monday night, with very few exceptions, at 7:30, a group usually comprised of about twelve to sixteen people meets around a long table in the library at Tsegylgar. Jim Valby is coordinating the translation of the fundamental Dzogchen texts—the basic sources for the Semde, Longde, and Upadesa teachings. Several years ago, he decided that one way to test the clarity of his translations would be to share them with members of the Community, and get feedback. And so began Tantra Club.

The process is highly informal, but almost ritualistic in its process. The evening opens with a brief, simple, but powerful Guruyoga, Transformation, and Guardian practice, for which Jim each week designates a leader. Then Jim provides a brief

overview of the material that has been covered so far, which includes a number of the Semde lungs and the beginning of the fundamental Longde text.

After handing out copies of the chapter to be covered that week, Jim picks someone randomly to begin reading, with each subsequent page being read by the next person down the table. Then we repeat, continuing around the table, but during this second reading Jim provides a commentary on each verse in the chapter, and sometimes people ask questions or make comments of clarification. One way to use these texts is to read and contemplate them, then observe ourselves in practice, and then to go back to the texts to see how our experience connects with the view presented in the verses.

Unfortunately for me, I have been attending Tantra Club only for about three months. For some time, I thought that a nearly four hour round-trip drive from my home in Connecticut to Tsegylgar in Conway, Massachusetts was somehow unwarranted for a meeting that lasts, at best, an hour and a half. But then one Monday I found myself nearby, and went, and have been back almost every week since. It has been quite an extraordinary experience. The Tantras themselves are amply amazing—they are the most profound writings that I have been exposed to. One and a half hours of this material is usually more than enough—it is impossible to even begin to assimilate the impact of these words, and their power quickly begins to overwhelm my ability to appreciate their depth, the mind goes somewhat numb. Usually, during the first reading I feel hints of internal connections, subtle internal movements that indicate to me that something important is being triggered by the words. The second time through, the analytical mind gets into the act, connecting Jim's commentaries to the words of the verses, making sure that I understand at least the most obvious, superficial, meaning. During this reading, I make a few notes on the pages, reminders of connections that seem to get

made while Jim talks, cryptic comments that I hope I can decode when I read them later. And then, when we have finished reading the chapter this second time, we dedicate the merits, have a little conversation, and go on our way. One of my slight regrets is that I can't join Jim and a few others who follow up Tantra Club with a visit to the Conway Inn for pool and beer—but I have miles to drive, and work to do the following day, so home I head.

But Tantra Club does not end for me at the close of our meeting. During the next days or weeks, I will "read" the chapter again, letting it flow through this neuro-physiological system that is "me", making what connections it will make, bringing together that which is indicated by the words with my experiences in practice. This continual back and forth process—reading, experiencing, checking experience against my understanding of the words, checking my understanding of the words against an expanding experience—has been of inestimable value. It seems to have no end—but then again, this should not surprise because it also has had no beginning.

I would only add that this process does not rest exclusively with Tantra Club. I periodically re-read the materials that Norbu Rinpoche has so generously provided for the Community, and for the broader public in the books that are available for all. It seems to me that much of what is in the texts that Jim is translating is already available in one form or another, perhaps not in as concentrated a way, but available nevertheless. Already Rinpoche has given us gifts of unfathomable richness—while I forget this too frequently, Tantra Club is now providing me with an almost weekly reminder, as well as a way of further exploring their depth. For anyone close enough to Tsegylgar to attend on Monday nights, or for those who are temporarily in the area, Tantra Club provides a unique and powerful addition to the rest of our Dzogchen experience. ■

ASIA continued from page 1

A.S.I.A. is choosing the two Italian doctors to assist Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, who will be in charge of the project, in starting up the hospital, in the organization and the training of the local medical staff assigned to the medical project.

The school will be finished by the summer and ready for the beginning of the next scholastic year after it has been fitted out with school equipment.

We have begun renovating some government buildings which are no longer in use to be used as lodgings for the staff of the school and the hospital as well as the students who will be attending the school.

As regards to the micro-projects, by means of a loan from the project, a society of three people has set up a saw-mill for working with timber, one of the principal economic resources of Tibet.

A second micro-project for buying a truck also supported by a loan has been concluded with a young man from the village.

As far as cultural projects are concerned, A.S.I.A. has helped to organize a course on medicine, astrology and religion at Simda Gonpa college, a Nyingmapa monastery in Jomda County and is in the process of publishing an epic poem of Gesar Ling, the mythical king of Tibet and protector of Buddhism. The publication will be ready before the end of 1998.

These, briefly, are the principal activities of A.S.I.A. in the Dzam Thog project.

Much has been done and remains to be done in order to guarantee the conditions to carry out the projects and to leave something really useful and long-lasting. They are realized with a lot of effort but carrying them out gives faith and incentive for the work still to be done.

To the same goal also goes the support of the entire Community as well as the dedication of people such as Tseringthar and Phuntsog Wangmo who devote themselves so much for Tibet, its culture and its people.

Giorgio Minuzzo is about to return to East Tibet for the third consecutive year as the on-site coordinator of the A.S.I.A. project called 'Program for the Development of the Health and Educational Conditions of the Village of Dzam Thog'. ■

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Namdak Rinpoche

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Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is one of the foremost Dzogchen masters of our time and living heir of the long Bön tradition. Their most profound teachings are the "Oral Lineage of Shang Shung" which dates back to pre-historic times and the ancient kingdom of Oimolungring, otherwise known as Shambhala, and contains the earliest stream of transmission of the Great Perfection.

Lopön Rinpoche, who is considered the greatest living proponent of the Bön lineage has almost single-handedly kept this tradition alive in exile. He founded monastic colleges in India and Nepal, which trained a new generation of Geshe and Lopöns. He has taught at Cambridge, London, and Munich Universities and has given Dzogchen teachings in the West at the invitation of H.H. the Dalai Lama and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.



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An Interview with Louise Landes Levi by Cool Grove Press, Publishers of Mirabai



A. SHELLECK

Cool Grove Press: What made you want to translate Mirabai?

Louise Landes Levi: I went to the University of California, Berkeley in the 1960's. There was a poetic renaissance in San Francisco and a social and political climate which encouraged innovation, especially of the mind and spirit. I was drawn to India, and involved in Indian music, through a geographical coincidence Ali Akbar Khan's school opened in Berkeley at the same time that my interests in music shifted to improvisation and performance. Intuitively I knew that Kabir and Mirabai were the poets I wanted to study. I was interested in 'spiritual' practice and the poetry that accompanied it. I felt that in order to 'find my own voice' I first had to understand the 'voice' of a great devotional poet like Mirabai. In other words, to avoid imitation I wanted and needed to understand. Besides, due to a certain frailty, a latent or concealed mental illness perhaps, I could not use drugs, the gateway of the times to consciousness expansion. So I turned to a still inarticulate idea of 'practice' and I knew that in India certain states were celebrated in some traditions directly through poetic practice. The Great Berkeley Poetry readings and Allen Ginsberg's chanting during one of these alerted me to an ecstatic tradition which I wanted to explore

directly. Later, in India, I learned the Devanagari (or Sanskrit) alphabet through non dual or direct process and translation from texts in this alphabet, or related to it, became a vehicle of that exploration.

CGP: You imply that Mira was liberated. What is the difference in the understanding of a liberated person in the East and West?

LLL: I can only answer subjectively, from my own studies and experience. In general, in the West, we think of 'liberation' in terms of social, economic, or even personal factors, all which relate to the 'I', to the nature of our ego-bound fields of interest and perception. In the East, at least in Buddhist schools and their indigenous predecessors in Tibet, India, Nepal et al., to be liberated implies a liberation from the concept of 'I' or 'self' or an ego-bound perception of reality. One is liberated from the appearance of 'reality' and released into a world in which the ego is no longer the center of one's reference point. Of course, one cannot know these states through the mind, so I offer only my provisional 'understanding' of them.

CGP: What does Tantrism have to do with Mira's life and work?

LLL: In general, in India, at least, the Tantric schools refer to practices which are not included in the Vedic precepts and commentaries. The school of Bhakti or devotional love which flourished in India in the poets (Mirabai was not the only one) resulted from factors which clearly separate it from the prevailing orthodoxy. Considerations of caste, conventional attitudes towards love and seduction, the nature of emotion itself were revolutionized during this period. In the Northeast of India, in communities which survive today, for example in the Baul community, practices directly related to sexuality

and the physical polarities between male and female disciples were used in the pursuit of 'liberation'. Moksha in Sanskrit, as do most words in that language, has a complex variety of meanings. It is both 'liberation' in a directly sexual sense, and liberation as explained above, in the mind. Vaisnavism, in Northwest India, of which Mira is a supreme exponent, did not refer directly to these practices. Instead, the polarity was from what we understand, internalized and the great meetings reserved for the inner chakras and channels, which in the Tantric tradition are male and female, by nature, and whose unification internally, leads to this same non-dual liberation.

CGP: Does Mirabai's life have any relevance to people today?

LLL: The Industrial-Military complex, capitalism itself, with its underlying message that it is morally acceptable to use others for one's own profit, offers the same challenge that the caste-oriented, racially hierarchical and spiritually exclusive society of the sixteenth century India did to its citizens. Mirabai and her contemporaries defied this order. Mirabai was from the warrior caste; her father and grandfather practiced a non-violent revolution of caste and consciousness. They brought to the streets a teaching that had for centuries been reserved for the fair skinned priests and their constituents. I think in some ways the social revolution that occurred in the 60's, however ineffective it may have been to deter certain aspects of the later half of the century, did suggest and invoke an individual freedom and a right to freedom which is the property of the human heart and not of any institution. Mira's realization cannot be qualified by time and space. This realization resides innately in the human mind and can manifest today as it did in the centuries which have passed.

Mirabai of course was a woman. She was the only great female voice of the Vaishnavite tradition and she faced the same difficulties which are,



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in general, faced by women today who wish to free themselves from conventional cultural patterns and the expectations in those patterns.

CGP: Is there a difference between translating this kind of poetry and the other authors such as Rene Daumal and Henri Michaux whom you have translated?

LLL: If you are talking about 'traditional' and 'non-traditional' forms of poetic activity, of course there is a difference. Mirabai's poetic is part of a tradition which exists in the sub-continent and which is devoted to maintaining an energetic potential which, in that tradition, is called 'transmission'. It is believed that such literature has the power of 'sacred' value. There is even a name reserved, in the tradition, for the language in which such texts are written, i.e. Sandhya Bhasa or twilight speech. The poetry of Saraha, the sixth Dalai Lama, and Mirabai are but a few historical examples. We have this tradition in the West as well, but it is less understood as such. This material requires an extremely responsible commitment from the translator, at least I see it this way. Although it may be impossible to translate this kind of activity, in which recognition of the material, is of utmost importance. One is entering a 'lineage' or enlightened tradition in which the word has served as a principal conduit. One has the same responsibility to a so called human mind stream like salt in water, then that consciousness permeates all forms of activity, naturally. But, in the case of realized beings like Milarepa and Saraha, or Surdas and Tulsidas, this relation is even more clear, yet at the same time more subtle, and demands a tremendous effort, that at the same time must be effortless in order to reflect the attainment of the so-called 'author' in question. ■



THE MIRROR

NEWSPAPER OF THE
INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN
COMMUNITY

founded by
Chogyal Namkhai Norbu

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ILLUSTRATION
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PRINTERS
Turley Publishers
Palmer, MA

DISTRIBUTION
Tsegnyalgar at
Conway, Massachusetts

SUBSCRIPTION RATE/6 ISSUES
\$35 available through Tsegnyalgar
\$5,000 lt. lire through Merigar

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There we travel by jeep to lake Manasarovar where we meditate in monasteries on his banks before we begin a four day circumambulation of Mt. Kailash coinciding with the full moon of Buddhas Enlightenment day, visiting sacred caves and monasteries. On the third day we cross the 5,700 m Dolmala pass which represents a symbolic rebirth and the dispelling of a lifetime's sins.

With Tulku Yungdrung Gyaltsen we will explore the hidden ruins and caves of ancient Shang-Shung, visit the Gurudem Bön monastery near Tsaparang and Tirtapuri hot springs, said to be the female counterpart to Mt. Kailash.

We will return to Kathmandu along the northern boundary of Himalaya by way of the forested valleys of Kyirong, extolled by Heinrich Harrer as Tibet's most beautiful, driving through gorges laced with waterfalls into the green hills of Nepal.

Tulku Yungdrung Gyaltsen is one of the few recognized Tulkus in the Bön Dzogchen tradition and a renowned Chod master. One of the highest Lamas in Mustang he is also greatly revered in Western Tibet.

Karl Scherer conducts meditation-retreats in Europe, Asia and America. On this journey he brings both his experience as a Kalyanamitra in the Nyingma tradition and his background as a healer in the Native American tradition.

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HOW I MET THE TEACHINGS

An Interview with Eliane Diallo



E. CAMPANELLI

Mirror: Eliane, where were you born?

Eliane Diallo: I was born in Laos in a small town in the South near the Thai border; Laos was a colony of France at the time. My father was in the military and was stationed there. That's where he met my mother. My mother is Vietnamese. I lived in Indo China until I was three. Then my sister and I came to France for our education. We stayed with the family of the governor of Indo China. The wife of the governor wanted to help us to get an education; her own children had been killed in an accident so she felt that she wanted to do something for other children. She was traditional French upper class, so my sister and I went to a boarding school with nuns. It was in the mountains near Lyons, in the pre-Alps.

Mirror: Were you religious as a child?

Eliane: I was a good little Catholic girl. I never questioned it because that was what I was taught: Hell and Paradise. Some of my friends were really into it, learning catechism and so on. Everything was so strict with a real sense of good and evil.

Mirror: How did you begin to be interested in Eastern religions?

Eliane: It was maybe only about five years ago but Eastern religion was always around me. I was born in Laos and my sister went every day to a small Buddhist temple. She was well known to the custodians of the temple. She had had memories of these people. They didn't treat her well. I saw no difference between the Catholic nuns and this. I didn't want to hear about it. But my sister always kept a little altar to the Buddha. She never prayed but she always offered incense and fruit. I thought it was pretty stupid. Buddhism was always important to her in some way.

At one time she went to India and brought a friend a beautiful statue of a female deity who held an egg in one hand. I thought it was really beautiful. When she went to India for the second time, I asked her to bring me a statue just like that one. When she came back, she had brought me a statue of Amitayus. I was so upset because it was not the female divinity with the egg. My sister was very upset with me. She said that I was so ungrateful and that the statue was an antique and cost more than the other statue. But

I didn't care. She told me that the Amitayus statue was charged; full of power. It had a crossed vajra on the bottom. I rattled it and there was something inside. I was afraid to get rid of the statue because I thought it might bring bad luck if I did. Because I was upset, my sister also gave me a thangka of Avalokiteshvara. But as far as the religion was concerned, I wasn't interested at all. I thought it was all nonsense at the time.

Mirror: Your sister seems to have been a big influence on you.

Eliane: She told me all these stories about India and I really liked them. She gave me a book on Benares. Then, I read about Hindu cosmology in my twenties. I wanted to learn Sanskrit at College but I studied French Literature and English and the course load was too heavy to permit learning Sanskrit.

After college I went to Paris. I still had nothing to do with the teaching but there were always people around me who were. My ex-boyfriend took me to see a Lama but I didn't like it and I don't even remember the Lama's name. I was very cynical. My sister still had this little altar and I was stuck with Amitayus and Avalokiteshvara that I couldn't give away for fear of having bad luck. So I lent the statue to a friend. Soon after, a friend gave me a poster of Vajrapani as a gift. It's as if I couldn't escape it.

Mirror: So what made you finally become interested in the teaching?

Eliane: I was in a relationship with someone that didn't work out. It was really painful, very crazy. Because of my Catholic upbringing, I felt that I wanted to save this person and you can't always do that. I realized that we were always repeating the same actions. It was overwhelming. I came to the States in 1992 for a three month vacation; I just wanted a break. I stayed with a friend in New York. Soon after I met the man who was to become my husband. It was while I was at my friend's house that I read *Cutting through Spiritual Materialism* (by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.) I read it like a book of psychology. It was a clear view of karma. In a way it explained the nature of samsara. I

liked to read philosophy and psychology books like Nietzsche and Jung. I didn't find Jung very clear. Trungpa's books were really down to earth. I wanted to learn about meditation and relaxation. I read *Meditation in Action* (by Trungpa Rinpoche) and I could relate to it on a psychological level. It was a special time in my life.

Mirror: How did you come to Norbu Rinpoche's teaching in particular?

Eliane: I never met any teacher before Norbu Rinpoche. I didn't even know what Buddhism was about. I went to the Open Center and I saw in their catalogue that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was giving a talk on Bodhicitta at the Blood Center. In the brief biography it said that he came from Italy. I wanted someone who was from the Tibetan mountains but I went anyway.

A few months previously I had had a dream of an Oriental man walking down the street with other people, Western people. This dream puzzled me. I knew that the Oriental man was a master but he was in Western clothes.

Now, going to this talk just before we crossed the street to get to the Blood Center, I turned my head and this Oriental man turned up exactly as he was in my dream. I had a déjà vu experience and I said to my husband, "That's the man who will give the talk." The Oriental man walked by and smiled and I knew that I had met a true master. During the talk I started to cry. I turned to my husband but he had fallen asleep. I felt in a weird state; I was crying despite myself. At the end, someone went on stage and said that on the next day there

would be a Buddhist meal. A Buddhist meal! It turned out to be a Ganapuja. I wanted to go out of curiosity. So I went, and Rinpoche read out some things. I felt weird and very self conscious. I thought, "This is like a cult or a sect." And I thought, "What will my friends think?" At the entrance to the puja they gave out a short thun book and I thought that I wouldn't use it. But I kept the book and that night I put it under my pillow and I thought, "Maybe next life, I will know something." Like when you are in school and you think that if you sleep with a book under your pillow, somehow the knowledge will seep into you.

That night I had a very strange dream that was a little scary. I was walking in a forest and I found this altar. It was a little altar. A yellow brocade drape hung on it and there was incense burning. I went behind the altar and a young man was sitting there on the ground. He was scary. Half-naked. Long hair and bright blue eyes. He looked really crazy. He had a little mustache and a goatee. He made a motion with his hand to get me to come closer I thought, "No way!" He was smiling. I had a stone in my hand and I dropped it. It cracked open in two halves and there were six letters etched in the stone. It looked like they were Chinese or Tibetan characters. There was a pit inside like an avocado. This pit was a little slimy. I got scared and woke up. I thought this dream was kind of spooky. It stayed with me. I told a friend about the dream and he thought it was beautiful.

I really resisted getting involved with the teaching for two years. I took a class in Yantra Yoga with Michael Katz because I heard that he was a student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Then I did yoga at a Sivananda Center. The people there were very devoted to their master and I thought that I would like to feel that way about a teacher. Then I thought, "I already met a master."

I found out that there was a beginner's weekend in Conway. Then finally, I went to the first retreat that was held at the school. I didn't really like the retreat. It was too crowded. But something happened at the retreat that was strange.

When I was seventeen, I had had a dream of a kind of sound. In the dream, I didn't have a body and I was myself this music. It was very beautiful, very blissful and relaxed. When I told my friends the dream they asked, "What kind of music was it?" But I didn't know even what instrument it was. Then, at the retreat, when I heard the music of the Dance of the Vajra. I felt that this was the music from that dream although this time I felt very sad and emotional and scared. I still didn't enjoy the retreat situation. I was doing work study and living in the dorm. There were people everywhere and I like to be alone. Being in the room with Rinpoche, all that discomfort fell away, but as soon as the teaching was over I didn't like it any more. I wanted the teaching without what was around it. I didn't want the sangha.

Mirror: How do you feel about the sangha now?

Eliane: Now it's better but I still don't like being around too many people. When I came back to New York from the retreat I still felt that this was it. That this was my life and there was no way back. None of my friends wanted to come with me. I was with these people who didn't know me. My friends were worried at first and now that I am more relaxed they accept it. In New York, I went to Ganapuja practices, but not very often, but I still wanted to see Rinpoche.

It is like a stream that carries you off and you can't stop it. It can seem fanatic, but if you have this experience it becomes your life. So the next time I saw Rinpoche was when I went to India to Tso Pema and Dharmasala. There was a short retreat in New Delhi; I felt that from being in India with Rinpoche in these sacred places that I formed an indestructible bond with him. For me the teaching is Rinpoche. You can read books but Rinpoche is what is alive. You can fall into spiritualism and fantasy about the teaching if you go after it without Rinpoche, but he is like a light that dispels that fantasy. I am very cynical. When my friends ask me, "What is it that you actually get from this teaching?" I can't tell them exactly. What is difficult is that it can't be explained. When I try to explain it, I feel like I have a wooden tongue. ■

Lives of the Great Masters

continued from page 14

became the so-called earlier and later translations.

Then the king and his ministers requested:

"If I offer you a sorcery bowl for Ligarti's thirst, a golden saddle, bridle, and silk saddlecloth on a black horse, a turquoise spoon, and a golden cup inlaid with turquoise, would you please translate some Dharma books?"

Vimalamitra replied:

"The horse and gold are not necessary. If I translate Dharma books for the benefit of sentient beings, I'll do it as well as I can."

Southwest of Utse Rigsum, Vimalamitra translated some com-

mon works which had come from India, like the Prajnaparamita, *rdz rje sems dpa' sgyu 'phrul dra ba*, *dpal yang dag, phur pa, ma mo*, and *gshin rje* with Nyag Jnanakumara. They also translated teachings of the Semde and Longde. He translated the five root tantras of the three cycles with Nyag jnanakumara.

At twilight and dawn, in the central hall of Rigsum, he translated the unsurpassably secret tantra and lung texts for the spiritual enrichment of the king and two of his ministers and for no one else. So for ten years he stayed translating many tantras of the goal-oriented Guhyamantra.

When the king and his ministers asked:

"Because this profound teaching has not appeared before in Tibet, and no practices like this will

appear later in Tibet, please conceal it for the benefit of later generations."

In the Dragmar Cave of Chimpu, Vimala translated the unsurpassably secret Nyingthig Texts from an Indian language into Tibetan, and after deciding to go to China, he concealed them as a teaching provision for later generations, without giving them even to the king and his ministers. After thinking that these books and teachings might disappear because some person at a later time might water down the words of this teaching cycle like a milkman waters down his milk, Vimala concealed the Indian language texts without adding or subtracting anything from the Tantric instructions of the three Thigle Cycles.

So after encouraging a heartfelt

understanding in the king and his ministers for three more years, Vimala journeyed to China to the Chiwa Thubpa Mountain. It is said that Vimala was then three hundred and thirteen years old.

It is also said that as long as the Buddhist Teaching lasts, that Learned One remains embodied as a human being. Every one hundred years an embodied Vimala-Buddha appears in Tibet. That Learned One met with the embodied Buddha Garab Dorje seven times to request secret oral instructions. He met him five times in India on Jakang Mountain southwest of Varanasi and twice in Bodhgaya, reaching certainty in Gyud, Lung, and Menngag of the Sublime Thigle. ■

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Out over the vast expanse of blue-green ocean, the wind is fighting with the tide.

Rain showers down onto the garden of the house we have been renting for the past four years on a little hillside overlooking Hungry Bay—a small cove on the south shore of the island of Bermuda which is almost completely closed off from the Atlantic by a strand of rock covered in mangrove trees. There is only a small gap in the rock, where the breakers surge and swell, and through that one opening the outboard motor driven fishing boats that anchor in the bay fight their way out to gain access to the sea. It's Saturday, and there's no school, but it's too wet to play outside, so the children are restless. Bermuda is semi-tropical, and at this time of year the rain can be so intense that it will completely soak you in seconds.

We have recently bought two guinea pigs as pets. They live in a cage in the kitchen. At the pet shop, the owner told us they were both females, and Susannah and Jessie named them Sugar and Spice. But when, after a few weeks in a cage together at our house, Sugar began to grow very big and very round it became apparent that Spice was a boy and Sugar was a girl, and, well... boys will be boys and girls will be girls, and when boys and girls get together...

Finally, with Susannah and her friend Erica watching, Sugar gave birth to four babies, who were born completely covered in fur, able to see and to walk, and ready to take their mother's milk.

Susannah, at six years old, is now an expert on all things connected with guinea pig birthing and guinea pig baby-raising. On this rainy Saturday morning she is playing with the babies, letting them run up and down her arms inside the sleeves of her cardigan. But she has a project on her mind: she wants to go on an expedition. Her idea is to take a picnic lunch in backpacks and go to the nature reserve at Spittal Pond, about fifteen minutes drive up the south shore of the island.

"If only it would stop raining!" she repeats to herself over and over again, as the guinea pigs tunnel inside her sweater.

Jessie doesn't want to go hiking around Spittal Pond. She wants to go to town. It's not that a nature reserve would be boring for her at twelve years old, but she has recently had an operation on her toe which caused her a lot of pain, and though it's much better now, her foot is still too sensitive for her to want to go for a long walk.

As is often the case in Bermuda, where it is said that you can live through three seasons in one day (there's no real winter here), when the rain finally does stop, the weather changes dramatically as the sun comes out, drying everything off very quickly. So now it suddenly seems like summer, although it's only February and we know from the TV that in New York — only two hours away by plane — it's still winter.

Susannah changes her anti-rain chant to a continuous mantra of "Hooray! Hooray! Now we can go to Spittal Pond!" and she does a little dance round the kitchen with three guinea pigs in her arms. Jo and I make sandwiches and pack drinks into two backpacks — Susannah's small one, and my larger one that my brother bought me for my fiftieth birthday.

It's been decided, in the way

that families spontaneously decide things, apparent order emerging out of apparent chaos without too much debate, that I will take Susannah to Spittal Pond, while Jo takes Jessie to town. This should keep everybody happy.

But since — in order to keep the traffic on the island manageable — each family can only have one car in Bermuda, it is necessary for me to drive Jo and Jessie into town before Susannah and I can go on our expedition.

While I'm in town I manage to persuade Susannah — who is now humming 'Spittal Pond, Spittal Pond' to herself — to let me stop at the copy shop to get some photocopying done for the Tibet Group we have started that meets once a month on a Sunday. It's surprising that even on an island as small as this, there are several people apart from Jo, Jessie and myself who have traveled to Tibet and who are interested in talking together about their travels.

The group has now expanded to include people who haven't actually been to Tibet but who have an interest in the Himalayas, and last weekend we held a buffet dinner party for twenty people at our house to raise money for ASIA's Tibetan school project. Amazingly enough, there are two Nepali families living here, who work as cooks in a local French restaurant, and they offered to prepare a traditional Nepali meal for the Tibet Group and its guests. We all had a wonderful evening.

On a now sunny Saturday morning, after the Tibet Group photocopying is done, Susannah and I are finally ready to head on out of town on our way to the Spittal Pond.

Hamilton, the capital city of Bermuda, is the only real town on the island, and even though it's officially called a 'city', it's really not much more than a small, though pleasant, town. On our way out of it we must pass the roundabout — or traffic circle as the Americans would call it — where Johnny Barnes stands every weekday morning.

Johnny is a tall, dignified elderly black gentleman, who a few years ago suffered a major life-threatening illness. All his working life he was a bus driver, and talking to his passengers he learned a lot about people's problems and difficulties. Faced with the possibility of his imminent death, he decided that he would make a bargain with God: if he should survive his illness, he promised, he would do something every working day for the rest of his life to make others happy.

He did survive, and to fulfill his promise he decided that every workday morning he would stand on the edge of the traffic circle at the entrance to town — the only place on the island where there is a traffic jam — to greet people passing by as they come to work on foot, by motorcycle, or by car.

And so, from 6 am to 10 am every weekday, rain or shine, Johnny is there, his gray-bearded face beaming out from underneath his wide-brimmed straw hat, as he waves exuberantly to everyone,

calling out:

"I love you! I love you! You know I love you! You know I really love you!"

At first, when he did this, the authorities thought he must be crazy, and a puzzled contingent of well-muscled police officers was dispatched to persuade the old fellow to

*He just wants to
remind everyone — in the
stress of the morning rush
hour — that somebody loves
them, no matter what.*

go home. But Johnny persisted. And after he was half-heartedly arrested a couple times, everybody read his explanation of his behavior in the local paper, and public opinion put pressure on the powers-that-be to allow him to continue with his morning activity.

Now, several years later, Johnny Barnes is a local hero and a local landmark, so much so, in fact, that the very same authorities that at first called him crazy have now awarded him a lifetime state pension. You can see his photograph in all the guide books.

He's a very nice man, and very sincere. A devout Christian, as are most of the population — there are hundreds of churches on this tiny island — he doesn't discriminate at all between young and old, black and white, rich or poor, or between the adherents of one faith and another. He just wants to remind everyone — in the stress of the morning rush hour — that somebody loves them, no matter what.

And our kids love him, too. He's been there, on his traffic circle, nearly every weekday morning (except for days on which he was ill) ever since we came here. All the kids who car pool with us actually argue over whose turn it is to sit on the side of the car where the window opens towards Johnny on his roundabout: they all want to be the one to slap hands in a 'high-five' with him as the car moves slowly through the rush hour traffic.

Today is a Saturday, not a weekday, so Johnny Barnes is not there in his usual spot, but as we go by, Susannah hangs her hand out the window just the same and waves to him in her imagination, shouting: "Hi Johnny! You know I love you! You know I really love you!"

When we get to the Nature Reserve, I park the car and Susannah and I walk down the steep trail past the salt marsh to the pond surrounded by trees where the night herons nest.

Then we climb the winding sandy path through the volcanic boulders, up to Spanish Rock, the high outlook point where we have our picnic overlooking the Atlantic. The ocean stretches to the horizon without a break. There is a carving here that was cut into the rock in 1543 by some Portuguese sailors who remained for 60 days on Bermuda — at that time uninhabited — when their ship ran aground on the island.

There is a cave close by that always fascinates Susannah. In it, two centuries ago, Jeffrey, a young black runaway slave, hid in a hole deep inside the rocky cliff against which the wild Atlantic breakers smash and churn. Jeffrey succeeded in remaining at liberty there for two weeks before the slave owners tracked him down by following the girlfriend who was bringing him food. When he was found he was taken away and hanged, as was the dreadful custom of the day.

Susannah, who loves stories, wants to hear this story each time we come here. She has an inquisitive mind and today she wants to know why Jeffrey ran away. It's hard to explain what it means not to have freedom to someone who has known it all her young life. It's hard, too, to take responsibility for beginning the task of bringing into her young and 'innocent' life an understanding of the injustice, the intolerance and the social inequity that exist on this beautiful island and in our beautiful world.

It's hard, but she needs to know. Sixty percent of Bermuda's population of 60,000 is now made up of black people, for the most part descendants of the slaves brought here by the first white settlers, and even a century after emancipation, even now that there is a big and

well-off black middle class on this 'paradise' island with its pink sand beaches and palm trees, there is still a strong undercurrent of racial tension.

Susannah has always gone to integrated schools and has always had black friends, but she doesn't know anything about racial prejudice. She only knows that in her first term there were some (white) kids who said they didn't want to play with her because she has red hair. She knows how much that hurt, and we've tried to explain the pain of racial prejudice to her as best we could, beginning with that incident as an example.

"Was Johnny Barnes a slave, Daddy?" she wants to know now, as we sit on the rock above Jeffrey's cave, imagining the runaway slave hiding down in there. I tell her no, but that Johnny's father may have been at some time, and his grandfather almost certainly was.

She smiles her special secret smile and then calls out the greeting she has heard Johnny Barnes, a black man who has forgiven everybody everything, call out every morning, her voice reverberating around the damp cave down below us:

"I love you, Jeffrey! Jeffrey, you know I really love you! You know I love you!" she yells into the wind.

But there's no answer from the runaway slave's ghost to tell us if he has forgiven all the pain he suffered — unless there's some whispered message from him wrapped up somehow inside the roar and crash of the waves that Jeffrey, too, must have heard during the anguish of the long days and nights that he hid here from his pursuers.

And sitting hunched against the sea wind, with my back against the rock wall and Susannah's hand in mine, I know that, although there are many great causes to which I can, and do, subscribe to try to make the world a better place, it is in just paying attention — really paying attention — to the small, seemingly insignificant, details of the everyday things in my life that I will find the best way to re-discover my own freedom, and to avoid the hypocrisy of high, but un-lived ideals. ♡

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