

# THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

September/October 1998 • Issue No. 46

## The August Retreat

*The last retreat of the millennium  
in Merigar*

by Raimondo Bultrini

"We consider ourselves to be that which we have learned through the education we have received, the role we have in society. But only through the Teaching can we discover who we really are."

And so it began in the hot days of mid-August, one of many journeys in Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's "boat" for the aspiring practitioners of Dzogchen, a boat which gets more and more spacious considering the thousand people assembled in the large Gonpa at Merigar. More than half of them were new students, fascinated, yet apprehensive of Rinpoche's approach to the path for realization, an approach which is not at all dogmatic, but so very "practical".

Perhaps never as in this last retreat (the last in the place of origin for the diffusion of the Dzogchen Teaching of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu until the advent of the second millennium) has the Master stressed this symbol of the boat on a journey towards our longed for final destination. He spoke about it and clearly repeated it several times. Some of us may realize our own nature in a single lifetime while others will take kalpas and kalpas, but we know that the direction is the same for all of us and that we will find ourselves in the same perfect place. The Master said it and implied it. "I won't go anywhere without you".

However, to that promise which was so comforting to us insecure and frightened passengers in his boat, he added comments so clear as to make each one of us deeply reflect on the sense of our actions and our attitude towards the essence of the Teachings we have received.

The connection between the one who indicates the route and supplies the coordinates of the journey is strictly linked - Rinpoche explained - to the way in which these instructions are carried out. And if, outside this metaphor, a Master takes upon himself the responsibility, he is also burdened with the errors and broken samaya of each individual traveler. As a consequence, to deviate, to slow down, to error is human and linked to our limits, but day by day we should create a correct attitude, working with circumstances, practicing the innumerable lessons received in our daily practice.

It was this touching advice by the Master, or else the awareness that time is always becoming more and more limited for having direct contact with Chögyal Norbu Rinpoche, that gave many people a new and apparently strong incentive. An unaccustomed push for souls abandoned to their habitual and automatic acceptance of tensions and neuroses in the seemingly unchangeable course of daily events, solidified and stratified with time, with only rare and incomplete moments



The Great Stupa of Merigar

L. GRANGER

of relaxation related to meditation.

For this refreshing attitude—who knows how long it will last under the weight of the thousands of obstacles which accumulate every day—the key word of this retreat was "presence" for everyone. Continual, relaxed, alert presence, stronger than the tests of life which are only apparently heavy and insurmountable, stronger than the consideration of personal limits and the feeling of helplessness that they generate.

To arrive at the consequent and usual advice on Guruyoga which calls us back to our original condition, Rinpoche started by explaining the Shitro, a teaching which - similar to the term Dzogchen - designates our real state. Peaceful and wrathful is the essence of our dimension whose purity, since the beginning, is described by the term "kadag" and whose qualifications which are ready to manifest with

secondary causes, take the name of "lhundrub".

Rinpoche formally transmitted the Shitro (formally in Dzogchen style using few words directed to the disciple's heart and mind) and explained the practice more directly linked to the essential teaching of Yantig (not only in the dark, explained Rinpoche, but the experience of day and night) besides offering the "lung" of almost all the Dzogchen practices.

On the last day, after a large Ganapuja and festivities as well as a lottery organized to collect funds to finance buying land in Russia and the activities of A.S.I.A., Rinpoche dedicated himself to the questions of his disciples. There were simple questions from the new practitioners at times disarming in their simplicity; then more complex and thought-out ones from students with greater experience of the practice. Rinpoche offered each person

an answer which was helpful not only for those directly concerned but for all.

An appointment for the next retreats, with an explicit invitation for all, particularly the Italians: move, travel a bit. Sometimes it is good to change and money is not always such an insurmountable problem as many think or would like to believe. "During my travels, I meet people," said Rinpoche, "who move around without too much money. And they aren't doing magic tricks".

Translated from Italian by  
Liz Granger ■

## Good News!!!

At an auction in Moscow on October 8, 1998, the Russian Dzogchen Community won the land for newly forming the Russian Gar! (See page 12) ■

### CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM 1998-2000

1998		ITALY	Merigar*. Vesak: May 28-30 (see Merigar listing pg 10)	PACIFIC RIM	page 10)
GREAT BRITAIN	Hay on Wye. Teachings. October 30-November 1	USA	New York City June 4-6 (see New York Dzogchen Community page 10)	New Zealand	Nov. 27-31 (see Rosemary Friend page 10)
FRANCE	Marseille. Teachings. November 7-8 Paris. Teachings. November 20-22 (see Laurent Maurice page 10) Karmaling. Teachings. November 27-29 Hameau de St. Hugon, 73110 Arvillard - France. Tel. +33-479656462, Fax: +33-479257808		Tsegylgar* June 25-July 3 Teaching Retreat (see Tsegylgar listing page 10)	Sydney, Australia	Dec. 17-19 (see Namgyalgar page 10)
PORTUGAL	Teachings. December 4-6 (see Vitor Pomar page 10)		Santi Maha Sangha at Tsegylgar: June 11-13 SMS Base level exam June 14-18 SMS 1st level training July 4-6 SMS 1st level exam July 7-11 2nd level training July 13-15 2nd level exam July 16-20 3rd level training	2000	Retreat Namgyalgar*, Australia Dec. 26-Jan. 2 (see Namgyalgar page 10)
BRAZIL	Sao Paulo. Conference. December 12 Jardim do Dharma. Teachings. December 18-20 (see Muriella and Washington Malaga page 10)		Chicago, Aug. 13-15 (see Lynn Sutherland page 10)	(see International Contacts on page 10 for contact information)	
1998-99			Houston, Aug. 20-22	<b>C O N T E N T S</b>	
ARGENTINA	Tashigar*. Teachings: December 28 - January 3 SMS Base level exams: January 29-31 SMS Training 1st level: February 1-5 SMS 1st level Exams: February 26-28 SMS Training 2nd level: March 1-7 Teachings: April 2-6, 1999 (see Tashigar listing page 10)		Santa Fe, August 27-29 (see Lidian King page 10)	2	TEACHING Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
1999			Santa Fe, Teaching for Tibetans, Aug. 30	3	INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL Publications Committee
PERU	Teachings: April 16-18 (see J. Bustamante page 10)	MEXICO	Colorado, Tara Mandala (see Tara Mandala listing page 10)	4	TEACHING Chögyi Nyima Rinpoche Lopon Tenzin Namdak in Conway
VENEZUELA	Teachings: April 30-May 2 (see Merida Dzogchen Community page 10)	USA (again)	Teaching Sept. 17-19 (see Lennart Aastrup page 10)	5	MASTER BIOGRAPHY: Book Review
			San Francisco Sept. 24-28 (see Carol Fields page 10)	6	ASTROLOGY Dr. Thubten Phantog
			Portland, Oct. 8-10	10	INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS
			Los Angeles, Oct. 15-17 (see Gene Kim page 10)	11-17	COMMUNITY NEWS
			Hawaii, Nov. 10-12 (see Melinda Sacarob		

18-19 REFLECTIONS

20 COUNTING TO A MILLION  
John Shane





In the Dzogchen teaching the night practice is considered to be very important because the night is more or less half of our life. A practitioner of Dzogchen must succeed in doing the night practice. If we succeed in the night practice it means that we can integrate the night time into our practice. This is one reason. Another reason is that we can have more progress in our experience and practice if we succeed in the night practice, because night practice is related to our dreams.

Our mind is always acting and moving—it never stops. Even when we are sleeping our mind wakes up and there is the function of mind. This is why we have so many dreams. If we become aware of dreams then they become another important path for progressing in our knowledge.

*“EVERYTHING IS UNREAL.”*

In general we have very strong tensions and attachments. The root of all these problems is that we believe too much; we consider everything to be real and important. Even though Buddha said, “Everything is unreal,” we believe Buddha but in a practical way we believe more in our attitude. Even though theoretically we know that everything is unreal, in a practical way everything becomes real and then we have many problems of attachment and tensions. Many people say that they are afraid of everything, afraid of living and dying. Why do we have this kind of fear? Because we believe too much, we have too much consideration that everything is real. If you enter just a little more into the knowledge that everything is unreal, your fear will really disappear.

For example when you are dreaming sometimes you can have terrible and tragic dreams. If you are not aware in the dream you feel fear and pain and problems just as if they were real. Maybe when you have this type of dream you wake up suddenly. You think, “Fortunately it was a dream!” Why do you think that way? Because you know that a dream is unreal. When you realize that it is a dream and that the dream is unreal then your fear disappears.

So just like what Buddha said, “Everything is unreal”, means that our life, everything, is like a big dream. You can realize that concretely if you have the capacity to be aware during your dreams. Dreams can influence your life so that you can have a more concrete understanding of unreality. If you do dream practice and night practice and become more and more familiar with it, then your tensions and all these type of problems will diminish. For some practitioners, particularly Dzogchen practitioners, the most important practice is during dreams in the night time rather than in the daytime. In the daytime we can try to do practice and we can do retreats when we have the possibility.

#### SENSE ORGANS

Our existence, everything is too limited by our physical condition. For example if we look at a wall we can see what there is on the wall but we can't see what is behind the wall because our sight is related to our sense organs. We are totally dependent on the organs of our senses. If we close our eyes we cannot see. If we shut our ears we cannot hear. So that



L. GRANGER

## The Night Practice

*An excerpt from a teaching by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu*

means that we are totally dependent [on the organs of our senses]. But it doesn't really mean that our senses are our organs. For example when we talk about our senses we talk about the consciousness of the senses. That is our real consideration of our senses but their function is dependent on their organs. But in dreams, for example, they function in a different way.

We are not always dreaming, first of all we fall asleep. Falling asleep is just like dying. When someone is dying then at that moment there is no presence of consciousness if that person is not a practitioner. [The experience is] something like losing all the functions of mind and everything, like falling into the dark. And then gradually we start to wake up. But what wakes up? Mainly our mind wakes up. Our physical body is dead but the mind is not dead. When our mind wakes up then it is associated with all our consciousness. Of course our consciousness of the senses are no longer dependent on our organs because when we die our sense organs remain with our body.

When we fall asleep our sense organs are asleep on the bed, but the mind is no more on the bed. When the mind is associated with our sense consciousness it is called ‘mental body’ and it depends on secondary causes and it has all its functions with secondary causes. There is no physical body and for that reason there are no problems of the physical level. For example at this moment we cannot pass through a wall but with the mental body there is no problem of the wall. There are so many limitations of our sense organs on the physical level but in the mental body we are beyond these kind of problems. For that reason if, for example, we do a practice in that moment, if we are aware then we can have more clarity because we have no more obstacles on the physical level. So of course we can do more and have more effect from our practice.

#### DEEPENING OUR EXPERIENCES

For example we know that we can have special experiences from a method of teaching but in the daytime when we do practice it is not easy to experience them immediately. But in the dream we can have all these experiences concretely. Having all these kind of possibilities also helps our daytime experiences very much. In the real sense life in the daytime and dream in the night time are the functions of the same mind. For that reason the night practice is very, very important.

If we want to do practice for the state of bardo, for the moment of death etc., then the main practice is that of the night. At the same time in the Dzogchen teaching we may want to use some methods for progressing our capacity of contemplation, like doing a dark retreat or what is called *thögdal* practice in the Upadesa using the light of the day; all these practices are for progressing our capacity of contemplation. We can do them in the daytime but it is very difficult that we have concrete effects from them. But if we are aware in the dream state during the night time, we can use these practices and have these experiences concretely. If you have some concrete experience during your dreams and later you do some practice in the daytime, then you can understand what kind of influence you can have. For this reason this is a very important practice.

#### DREAM PRACTICE

In the tantric tradition in general we talk about ‘dream practice’. In particular there is a tantra called Mahamaya in which the main path is the dream practice. But in the Dzogchen teaching you don't need a particular dream practice because having the capacity to do dream practice depends on your night practice which means you are in instant presence when you fall asleep. If you have that capacity then of course when you are in the state of dreams then the dream also becomes awareness. If you are only pointed on the dream then it is not so very easy that you can really have the capacity to be aware in dreams. When you know what the source or the origin is and you work with that then everything becomes easy. That starts when you go to sleep in your bed. You get into bed and fall asleep and after a while you enter the dream state. For that reason you don't need a particular dream practice - just that is dream practice.

#### GURUYOGA

In general many people ask, “How can we do the night practice and the dream practice? Do we need some particular transmission or not?” The root of all these transmissions is guruyoga. When you have the transmission of guruyoga and you know how to be in the state of guruyoga, then you can do this practice. In the Dzogchen teaching not only this practice but also rushen practice, semzin practice, training in mindfulness etc., all these belong to guruyoga. The root is guruyoga. When you are really in guruyoga with transmission then you can do all these practices and you can learn.

*Merigar, July 27th, 1998*

*Transcribed and edited by L. Granger*

It is very important to be aware in the circumstances of daily life. It is also very, very important that you learn and understand the sense of the teaching, not making mistakes with ordinary concepts. This is one of the many problems that people don't notice. For that reason in the teaching there is what is called *tawa* (lta.ba), *gömpa* (sgom.pa) and *chödpä* (spyod.pa). *Tawa* means point of view. First of all we need the correct point of view. The correct point of view means we understand why we have that view. We have a kind of judgment that we have developed over many lives. The correct point of view means we observe and know our existence and how it corresponds with the teaching.

I will give you a very clear example of how people do not understand the sense of teaching. When I was in Australia I had many problems with some people who had very strong feminist ideas. Then I said, “Feminism is a political idea”. I didn't say, “You can't have that idea”. Sometimes feminism is very useful in a society. Not only feminism, but also democracy, for example. There are many ideas of this kind that are indispensable in a society, otherwise we cannot progress. But that kind of an idea is a political idea. If you are political in a society, you can have that kind of idea. I have never said, “Oh, that is not good”. But when you bring this idea into a teaching, it doesn't correspond.

For example, I went to teach in Melbourne once and explained the knowledge of the Dzogchen Teaching and how we must integrate very precisely. When we finished the teaching a lady came to me and said, “I want to ask you something”. I said, “Please, I am listening”. She said, “Is it possible to do Guruyoga with a female teacher? Because I am female, it is very important for me”. I said, “Of course, you can do Guruyoga with Tara, with Yeshe Tsogyal, with Dakini Mandarava; there are many female forms”. She said, “But in general you always teach Guruyoga with Padmasambhava and Garab Dorje; all male forms”. Then I said, “I am sorry, I am also a male, and I am giving the teaching. But what I can do, I am male by birth”. I said, “You can do that. It is possible to use many female forms”.

For example, some people say, “I am female, I like to practice with Tara and female forms,

## About Feminism

*An excerpt from a teaching by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu*

*in Gutenstein, Austria, June 14, 1998*

the idea of male and female in the principle of the teaching. In transformation, for example, if I am transforming into Vajrayogini, I am transformed into a female, even if I am a male. If you are transforming into Vajrapani, you are transformed into a male form. At that moment you must be a manifestation of a male form.

Some people ask, “When we have yab yum, or male and female, if I am female, should I feel male or female?”. That means that in Sambhogakaya one is still maintaining a very precise idea of sex. Of course, you also feel male or female, both are your manifestation. It's not that you are manifesting as a male and you take a female manifestation from outside. So, I ask people not to bring this kind of idea into the teaching and mix it, otherwise the teaching does not remain pure.

Some people have a misunderstanding and say, “Oh, Namkhai Norbu is against females”. When Namkhai Norbu is in a state of contemplation there is no male and female. I know how it must be in a state of contemplation and I am trying to communicate and make it understood. This is one of many kinds of misunderstandings that is mixed with our concepts. Even when we are trying to be in a state of contemplation, in instant presence, another part of us tries to keep our dualistic vision very precisely. So, we must function in that way, we must free all these kinds of ideas. That is the reason that in the Dzogchen Teaching the teacher says, “You don't accept or reject anything, but you feel free”. That means free from all our complicated dualistic mental concepts. If you try to proceed in that way, integrating your existence in practice as much as possible in daily life, relaxed in the state, you will have no problems. You will have progress.

*English transcript by Irmgard Pemwieser; Edited by Naomi Zeitz*



# Formation of an International Gakyil

On Wednesday, August 19, 1998, during the Summer Retreat, there was a meeting of the members of Gakyils from different nations with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at the Gonpa in Merigar, Italy. During this meeting, Rinpoche explained his ideas to start an International Gakyil that could function as a coordinating team for the various activities within the Dzogchen Community. As Rinpoche expressed, within our Community at an international level often time, efforts and funds are wasted because there is not enough communication between the various Gakyils and Gars. Rinpoche's thoughts were that this International Gakyil should be a small group, with only one person for each color, in order to facilitate the collaboration. The members of the International Gakyil should stay in close contact with Rinpoche and each other mainly by using E-mail. They should act as a bridge between the different Gars and Gakyils without taking any of their responsibilities or interfering with their autonomy.

At this meeting there was a general consensus about the idea of forming this International Gakyil. In the discussion that followed, several people expressed their ideas about how this new Gakyil could function. Apart from coordinating tasks on the field of collecting and distributing various financial funds, problem solving activities were also mentioned. This new Gakyil could act as a platform for the various Gars and Gakyils to consult in case of difficulties; especially the "bridging function" of facilitating

the communication which was mentioned as very important. For example, many people in poor countries have difficulties with finding jobs, while others in richer countries have difficulties in finding skilled workers. In this respect, the new Gakyil could try to initiate activities, to build platforms or to inspire people to perform actions by which this communication could be improved. Also, this new Gakyil could have an important function to assist Rinpoche with the coordination of his journeys and with the invitation of other Masters. In this respect, it will inform the various Gakyils about the requirements needed to guarantee the Master's well being and comfort. With regard to the various projects of preserving in digital, video and audio format and transcribing the various teachings that Rinpoche has given, this new Gakyil could try to help to coordinate this work, e.g. by the creation of an international database.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche then appointed the following persons as the members of the first International Gakyil:

Fabio Andrico (red), Loek Jehee (yellow), Christiane Fiorito (blue).

This new International Gakyil considers it important first of all to reflect upon the various possible activities that it could perform on the fields of "red", "blue" and "yellow". These projects and activities will be presented to the Master and the Community when the ideas are into a more concrete stage of development. For the moment it suffices

to say, that in general the International Gakyil does not consider it as its task to perform or to manage the various projects itself. It rather wishes to inspire others to do so, by initiating working groups or advisory boards or by stimulating the various Gakyils.



The three members of the International Gakyil will collaborate together as closely as possible. Decisions will be made on the basis of consensus between these members and in close connection with Rinpoche, in accordance with Rinpoche's wishes. To get started, a small fund for the new Gakyil should be arranged, to cover communication expenses and to buy some necessary hardware (easy communication is an essential basis for the functioning of this new structure).

In order to avoid that the new Gakyil gets overloaded with individual requests, each Gar should appoint one person that is responsi-

ble for the communication with the Gakyils in the specific area at one side, and to keep contact with the International Gakyil on the other side. This person should gather and filter the requests for information or collaboration within the Gakyils and inform the International Gakyil where in the community help is needed in terms of funds, working skills or communication.

Since the nature of the function of this new gakyil is mainly that of coordination and information, in order for it to function it really needs collaboration. Therefore, it is necessary that the Gars take responsibility to coordinate all the Gakyils of their area, so that the flow of information can really be alive.

During an initial "brain storming" process within this new Gakyil, many projects came across our minds. As mentioned earlier, within the very near future we will inform you in more detail about the various projects and activities that the International Gakyil concretely wishes to start.

The Yellow International Gakyil would like to make it very clear, that Sustaining Members should not be charged any admission price whenever visiting retreats organized by the Dzogchen Community.

The International Gakyil has noted that in some cases announcements of retreats have been already made, in which admission prices for Sustaining Members were mentioned.

Since this is explicitly not Rinpoche's intention, we would like to request those Gars and Gakyils to

change their policy with respect to the above, and to adjust their price policy according to Rinpoche's wishes (see also Rinpoche's words below).

Of course Sustaining Members can always be asked to kindly give a donation when they visit a retreat. Most of them will be glad to do so, since it is good custom to offer something precious on entering a sacred Mandala. However, this remains entirely their own decision, they can never be obliged to do so. Thank you.

Here follows the words of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, as he has spoken recently in Germany:

"It is wrong that Sustaining Members must pay. In any part of the world Sustaining Members must pay nothing for the retreat with masters".

"The retreats within the international Community should be accessible, concerning the fees, for everybody who is interested. The fees should have a level which is oriented to the needs of the particular Gar or Gakyil that organizes the retreat. But the fees should have a moderate level everywhere in the world. Arrangements for poor people, especially if they are members, should be possible. The reductions for members on the fees should be 30% for Ordinary Members. The retreats should be free for Sustaining Members, no matter where in the world the retreat takes place, because we are one Community at last and not individual communities in each country!"

## International Publications Committee

by Igor Legati

During a meeting held at Merigar on August 22nd, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu renewed the International Publications Committee created in 1990 which had not been very active in the past.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu pointed out that the Committee has the duty to coordinate all the publications of his teachings and to check that the texts published are correct in content as well as in style.

In particular Rinpoche appointed Adriano Clemente and Jim Valby to be in charge of the contents of the texts. The other members of the Committee should know their own languages well and, above all, see to the literary style of the publications.

In brief the members of the Committee are responsible for all the publications of Rinpoche's teachings in their own countries and languages and consequently will work in collaboration with the blue Gakyil of their own country and with other practitioners who are dealing with Dzogchen Community publications.

The publications of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teaching should keep to the following criteria: all books, both those for use within the Community by practitioners as well as those destined for the general public should be:

- directly authorized by the Master
- the proofs should be submit-

ted to the Publications Committee to guarantee a double control of content and style.

Simple literal transcriptions of oral teachings do not require direct authorization from the Master but their publication is equally subject to the approval of the Committee.

The coordination of final translations and transcriptions destined for publication has been entrusted to Igor Legati at Shang Shung Edizioni at Merigar.

Several other interesting points came up during the next meeting of the Committee in the presence of the Master.

Shang Shung Edizioni at Merigar is to be in charge of copyrights of books for the general public. In order to translate Community books into other languages, private publishing houses must make a regular contract with Shang Shung Edizioni in which a clause will be inserted stating that the translation must be approved by the author and the editor of the text. Members of the Dzogchen Community who wish to translate and publish for their own local Community the books of Shang Shung Edizioni or of other publishing houses within the Community are not required to pay royalties but should ask for the authorization of the Committee and communicate their intention to the original publishing house.

During the meeting there was a general opinion which favored unifying as much as possible all the

publications of the Dzogchen Community under the Shang Shung Edizioni (or Editions, Ediciones etc.) trade-mark. It would be better if each country tries to legally register the Shang Shung trade-mark for their own editions.

It is also advisable that the graphic format of internal booklets be improved, above all for works translated directly from the Tibetan.

Members of the Committee are also responsible for continually updating the list of retreats given by Rinpoche in their country and of drawing up an index for each retreat containing the topics of the teachings day by day. All the lists will be made available to the Committee in order to help with transcriptions of teachings and compilations of texts on specific topics. Transcriptions of the teachings should not be given to new people to do and should be based on the words of Rinpoche and not on those of the translator.

Jakob Winkler accepted the task of compiling a glossary of Tibetan terms in both phonetic transcription and Wylie. This glossary will be indispensable to make the language of publications and indexes uniform and to facilitate automatic research in the archives by computer.

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Lopon Tenzin Namdak K. BAUTERLEN

## Lopon Tenzin Namdak at Tseggyalgar

by John LaFrance

Everything fell into place perfectly from July 31st through August 8th, for Tseggyalgar's annual summer retreat. A diverse group of Dzogchen Community members and newcomers came together from around the world and across the USA to practice and receive teachings from Lopon Tenzin Namdak. Participants came from Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Italy and the UK, as well as California, Louisiana, Illinois, Florida, Hawaii and most of the Northeastern states. All together one hundred and twenty people participated in some or all of the very full daily schedule.

At 7 am each day groups of beginner and intermediate Yantra Yoga practitioners had instruction from Paula Barry and Michael Katz. Then, after a breakfast under the tent, a session of sitting/contemplation occurred prior to the arrival of Lopon. Each day for six days, Lopon provided instructions on accessing the natural state. In addition to teaching two sessions each day, Lopon made himself available for many private interviews and participated in a Ganapuja on August 1.

After the morning teaching everyone enjoyed a wonderfully catered meals under the tent; no meal was repeated in the eight days. After lunch, groups joined to hear explanations of practices from older students, to study the SMS base, to learn the melodies for Base level practices and or just to connect with each other. Then after the Lopon's afternoon teaching the day concluded with a Tun of naggon followed by Vajra Dance.

On Tuesday afternoon, most retreatants traveled to the sacred land at Buckland. Tours were given of the nearly completed Guardian cabin, the area where new retreat cabins will be built, the giant hole for the Stupa and, of course, at the top of the hill, the dance mandala. The bright sun and warmth were matched by Lopon's happy face and spontaneous teachings about the Naga, the elements and Lungta. One newcomer to the land said the mandala was exactly as he'd pictured it. Others felt the wonderfully powerful energy of the place. The day ended with a Short Tun and Vajra Dance.

Lopon departed on Thursday after lunch to many happy waving people urging him to return soon. Then a group of twenty-three people returned to the land, intent on helping Jim Smith construct the concrete foundation for the Stupa. This was truly wonderful. The entire endeavor unfolded very naturally; everyone taking on a role and working together seamlessly, effortlessly. In two hours of hard work the first form was completed just in time for a refreshing rain. Some drank beer and others swam in the pond oblivious to the weather.

Amazingly, the same process was repeated Friday afternoon, with seventeen well coordinated workers. The work went so fast that we were running out of dry cement before the form was completed. Jim jumped in his truck, raced down the hill to the nearest town, got the only three bags of cement in a local store and raced back up the hill just as the mixers were being turned-off. With the addition of a few bricks to the mix, the three bags were just enough to finish the job.

The week ended Saturday with a noontime Ganapuja. There was unanimous praise for the retreat, the teaching and the welcoming energy of the sangha. Six newcomers became Tseggyalgar members and many others pledged very generously to support Lopon's work and the matching fund for Tseggyalgar's capital improvements. We learned that with some basic organization, lots of cooperation and a light spirit, collaboration unfolds naturally. ■

## Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche Teaches in Tseggyalgar

by Paula Barry



T. LESSER

With the leaves just beginning to transform themselves with Fall finery, and the air just cool enough to cover our summer clothes with Autumnal sweaters, we at Tseggyalgar had the good fortune to welcome Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche for an evening of teachings.

Born in 1951 as the eldest son of the great meditation master Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche. Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche was recognized by the Eighth Gyalwa Karmapa as the 7th incarnation of the of the 18th century Drikung Kagyu Mahasiddha, Gar Drubchen. Rinpoche studied extensively with the Karmapa at Rumtek. There he was advised to turn his efforts towards instructing Western practitioners in Tibetan Buddhism. His principal teachers have been His Holiness the 16th Karmapa, H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche.

In 1976 Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche became the abbot of the newly established Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery in the Katmandu Valley which is now an enclave of 180 monks. For the past seventeen years, Rinpoche has also conducted annual fall seminars there based on the theories and practices of Tibetan Buddhism. These seminars draw interested Westerners from around the world. Rinpoche also travels several months each year and currently heads three centers in the West; in Denmark, America and Germany where he has many devoted disciples.

In recent years Rinpoche has established Ranjung Yeshe Publishers who, under his guidance have produced a growing number of books on Tibetan Buddhism, including

such titles as, "The Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen", "Song of Karmapa", "Mirror of Mindfulness", "The Bardo Guidebook", and "Indisputable Truth".

As the time for the teaching drew near we filled our newly redecorated Gonpa with offerings of flowers and fruits of the season, and teas and sweets for all who would come. Disciples arrived from near and far. Many were long-time students of Rinpoche, many had had teachings from his father and many perhaps had the good fortune to be introduced to the Dharma for the first time that evening. It was striking and moving for us old-timers here at Tseggyalgar to see so many young and dedicated Dharma practitioners on the path.

Rinpoche taught that night, with the assistance of Erik Pema Kunsangs superb translation, on three points: 1. Weariness and the Will to be Free. 2. Love and Compassion. 3. The True View. There is an excerpt of these teachings in this issue of the Mirror (see page 4), but if we can summarize his Teaching here we can say that the basic cause of the suffering of Samsara is our clinging to the concept of a self or ego.

How fortunate we all were, as a new season began, to gather together at a minute point in time, in our Gonpa in its tiny place in the universe, with good intention and mindful presence, to understand, through Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche's patient explanation, how to discover our true nature.

Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche  
P.O. 1200  
Kathmandu, Nepal ■

Welcome to all of you who have come here. There are many people I already know and it is very nice to see you again. Tonight I would like to speak on the three points. The first point is weariness and the will to be free. The second is love and compassion. The third, the true view.

Concerning weariness and the will to be free; what do we need to be free or weary of? As sentient beings our minds have many shortcomings and we need to be free of these. We could explain these shortcomings in detail and they would number 84,000, but in short there are three. The three poisons which are attachment, aversion and dullness.

The Buddha, being very compassionate and wise, taught people on their individual level, in accordance with their respective capabilities, inclinations, and faculties and gave various levels of teachings. The first level was more general and superficial, the second level more subtle, and the third level was extremely subtle. The first level of teaching demonstrate how the attitude of clinging to oneself lies at the very root of all karmic actions, disturbing emotions and delusions. This ignorant attitude of ego-clinging is the very root cause of suffering and the Buddha taught that we need to train in the opposite of that: the knowledge of realizing egolessness and thereby attaining freedom. This is the state of an arhat. This is the first level of teaching the Buddha gave to those followers called sravakas and pratyekabuddhas.

With renouncing, becoming weary, I therefore mean that we need to give up negative emotions, and among the negative emotions the most difficult to be free of is the atti-

## Teaching on the Three Points by Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche

September 1, 1998 Tseggyalgar Conway, MA USA

tude of clinging to a self. To reiterate, the very basis for the creation of karma and suffering, for selfish and the mistaken way of perceiving things lies in this ignorant attitude of clinging to a self. That is the most important thing to be free of. That is why the Buddha taught that the primary training at the beginning stage is to train in the knowledge of realizing egolessness and attaining freedom.

To explain this in a little more detail; egolessness covers two aspects - both the personal identity as well as the identity of things. Already at the first level of teachings the Buddha taught that these two aspects of identity are empty of their own existence; a true existence. How can this be laid bare? By dissecting things.

Firstly, concerning what we call 'things', objects, like the cup or the table - the Buddha taught to dissect it into smaller parts, and at this level, when reducing what the thing is into smaller and smaller parts it is finally reduced to the smallest part like an atom. At that level the thing itself cannot be found anywhere and it has simply vanished from being held in mind and therefore cannot be said to truly exist. However the atom is believed to have ultimate existence.

Next, about the 'me', the personal identity, even though that word has no real basis any-

where it still seems as if there is a moment of consciousness that connects into a stream or continuity of mind and is made out of single instants. Even though on a causal level there is no real personal identity, it still seems there is an instant of consciousness, so small, and which connects together the previous with the following to form continuity. These instants are so short that they are held to be of ultimate true existence.

Later on in the Mahayana teachings, all of that - both the objects and the personal identity - was refuted by the statement that "all phenomena from the aggregate of forms up to and including omniscient enlightenment possess no true existence. Everything is emptiness, not only emptiness but devoid of all mental constructs, such as being and not being, both and neither."

To truly be free, we need to be free of the not knowing, the ignorance of not understanding our true nature. Because it is through not knowing our natural state that we get involved in our mistaken ways of perceiving and through which we create negative karma and an immensity of suffering. The attitude of clinging to a self - because the self does not exist - is an error, a delusion, and momentary ignorance. It's a mistake, a disturbance, a big fault. But nevertheless, being momentary, it

can be cleared away. Thanks to its momentary nature it can be cleared away.

Because of clinging to a self there is a holding of duality and because of fixating on duality there's attachment and aversion. And yet, what one feels attachment or aversion to doesn't really exist to begin with. That is the ignorance - a misunderstanding.

Sometimes we want to be free, we feel saddened by this world, thinking, "This place is no good." So we think that we'd better go and sit somewhere where we can eat lousy food on an uncomfortable seat. But that kind of behavior is not true renunciation. True renunciation is to understand that the very root of delusion and all problems is the attitude that is ignorant and clings to itself. That is what we need to free of. "I" is just a label made by a thought that has no basis anywhere and doesn't really exist. What does it mean? Sometimes people think this body is me, that's what I am.

(Dialogue with audience:)  
CNR: What is your name? (asked to someone in the audience) Student: Dick.

CNR: Are you Dick?

S: Perhaps not.

CNR: When did you learn that?

S: Just in that moment.

CNR: So, I'm not a bad teacher, (much laughter) Some think that the name is "me", "I" am the name. Like Dick is "me". Some think that Dick is "my" name. Some people think that this body is Dick's body, some people think that this body is "my" body.

Sometimes people say the body, the name and the mind, all three of these belong to

continued on page 7





## Garab Dorje, Sukha the Zombie

by Jovanovic Zeljka

*After I have passed into nirvana,  
In the Western land of Oddiyana,  
The divine lady of Dhanakosa  
will bear a fatherless son, Vajra-He,  
Who will uphold the genuine teaching.*

(The Root Tantra of sgra thal' -gyur)

Once there was an island called Dhanakosa in Oddiyana, West India, which was inhabited solely by creatures called 'kosa', who had bodies like those of men, the faces of bears and claws of iron. This island was encircled by many wonderful trees, including sandalwood. That is why, it is said, it was called Dhanakosa (Treasury of Wealth). In Dhanakosa there was a great temple called Sabkarakuta, which was surrounded by six thousand eight hundred small temples. It was a place perfectly endowed with splendor and wealth.

On this island there was a king named Uparaja, and his queen, Alokabhasvati. Their daughter Sudharma was ordained as a nun and lived in a tiny thatched cottage on an island covered with golden sand, where she practiced yoga and meditation.

One night, she dreamt of a white man who placed a crystal vase sealed with the syllables OM A HUM SVAHA upon her head. Soon after that she gave birth to a son. Being a pure nun, she was so upset and ashamed that she cast the baby into a pit of ashes and sang in distress:

*To what race does this fatherless child belong?*

*Is he other than some mundane demon?*

*Is he a devil? Brahma? or yet something else?"*

Three days later she found the child healthy, happily playing with ashes. She was convinced that the child was an incarnation. She took him to the palace and bathed him. Many dakinis appeared and made offerings to the wonder-child. Spontaneously and without learning, the child recited essential tantras out of his clarity.

When he was seven, he asked

several times and finally convinced his mother to let him debate with five hundred learned panditas, and defeating all of them, instructed them in Dzogchen. The panditas gave him the name Prajnabhava (The One Whose Being is Wisdom). The King was so pleased that he named the boy Garab Dorje (Joyous Vajra, or Imutable Joy); because his mother had once thrown him into the ashes he was also known as Rolang Dewa (Sukha the "Zombie"), and Rolang Thaldog (Ashen Zombie).

Later, Garab Dorje went to a mountain called "Where the Sun Rises", and on the terrifying precipice called Surjaprakasha, where the frightening spirits roamed everywhere, spent the next thirty-two years living in a small hut and practicing meditation. During that time, in a vision, he received from Vajrasattva all the texts and complete oral instructions of 6,400,000 Dzogchen verses.

Garab Dorje had many powers, such as the ability to walk through rocks, stone and water. Many people saw him surrounded by light, and were inspired to have faith and devotion. Garab Dorje attracted many disciples, including the pretas and dakinis, as well as many learned scholars.

Then, on the summit of Mount Malaya, together with three dakinis (Vajradhatu, Pitasankara and Anantaguna), he spent three years recording the teachings of Dzogchen. On one occasion, Garab Dorje went with a spiritual daughter of Rahula, who had psychic powers, to the great Sitavana cremation ground near Vajrasana (Bodhgaya), and taught many fearful dakinis and savage beings. At that time, Manjushrimitra had a vision of Manjushri, who gave him the following prophecy: "If you want to attain

Many of us have tried, more or less painfully, to communicate to our parents, with their habitual perspectives or prejudices, the content and importance of our Buddhist vision. Sometimes, this has led to lengthy discussion, even to sincere attempts at understanding. The first of these two books records exactly such an encounter, albeit at a level which made it an important intellectual event in France, and now, in English, Italian and other translations, more widely still.

These conversations between a Buddhist monk and a Western philosopher are unusual if not unique in the history of ideas. They explore fundamental questions of human existence and the ways they are approached in eastern and Occidental thought. To add vitality to their discussion, the philosopher is the monk's father.

The partners in dialogue are Matthieu Ricard, once a molecular biologist, now known as Konchong Tenzin, and Jean-Francois Revel, author of well-known books on philosophical and cultur-

Buddhahood, go to the Sitavana cremation ground". He went, of course, and spent the next seventy-five years studying with Garab Dorje. After transferring all the instructions and advice to Manjushrimitra, the master passed into nirvana. Before he dissolved his body into the Body of Light, Garab Dorje left his "Final Testament". It is said that a casket of gold the size of a fingernail dropped into Manjushrimitra's hand. It contained the famous "Tsik sum ne de" (tshig gsum gnad du breg pa), the "Three Principles which Penetrate the Essence": the direct introduction, not remaining in doubt, and continuing in the state, which is the essence of Dzogchen teaching. Garab Dorje also appeared to Vairocana in the cremation ground called "Place of Smoke" (du ba'i gnos), and revealed to him 6,400,000 verses of Dzogchen.

Afterwards, Manjushrimitra divided the 6,400,000 verses of Great Perfection into three series - Semde, Longde and Menngagde.

Manjushrimitra, the main disciple of Garab Dorje, taught many practitioners, countless animals, and "ugly dakinis", and remained in contemplation for one hundred and nine years.

Sources:

*The Crystal and the Way of Light*  
Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

*The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*  
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*Crystal Mirror*, vol. V

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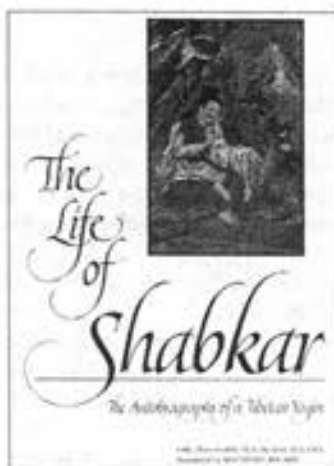
NB: The terms "Sukha the Zombie" and "Ashen Zombie" were taken from Dudjom Rinpoche's source. ■

# BOOK REVIEWS

LE MOINE ET LE PHILOSOPHE: LE BOUDDHISME AUJOURD'HUI  
by Jean-Francois Revel and Matthieu Ricard

NiL editions, Paris, 1997. 405pp.

THE LIFE OF SHABKAR: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A TIBETAN YOGI  
translated from the Tibetan by Matthieu Ricard, with a foreword by HH the Dalai Lama  
State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 1994. 705pp.



al themes, former editor of the weekly Le Point. Ricard is a Nyingma scholar and translator, a disciple of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, a frequent interpreter for the HH the Dalai Lama. Revel, social critic and polemic defender of democracy, is a committed agnostic who regards all metaphysics as void of meaning.

Without their familial bond, the book might easily not have happened, or at least not so harmoniously, given the polar differences between the two men and their respective paths. Ricard, after establishing himself as a young scientist at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, moved to India to study with Tibetan masters, and now 51, lives in a monastery in Nepal. Revel, 73, is a pillar of Parisian intellectual life. "We have always had a friendly and affectionate relationship," Ricard told one journalist. "But we had never talked about these things before. I just never thought he would be interested."

When a French publisher suggested the dialogue, however, Revel proved interested indeed. He traveled to Nepal in May of 1996 and, at a mountain inn above Katmandu, father and son began, morning and afternoon, for days, the conversation recorded here, later to be completed on the coast of Brittany. Mostly, it is Revel who questions Ricard. They touch on philosophy and spirituality, science and politics, psychology and ethics. Does life have meaning? What is mind? What is consciousness? Is man free? What is the value of scientific and material progress? What is happiness? Why is there suffering, war, hatred?

Revel wants to understand, he says, the current popular appeal of Buddhism in the West. Does it fill a void left by Western religions, philosophies and political systems whose "recent evolutions" have been "disappointing?" His doggedly skeptical investigation, however sincere and scrupulous, is inevitably dualistic. He can only mirror the division in Western man. In the end, Revel concludes that "the West has triumphed in science, but possesses neither wisdom nor a morality which are plausible...The Orient can bring us its morality and its directives for living, but they lack all theoretical

foundations...Wisdom is always conjectural. In vain, since Buddha and Socrates, man has strained to make it a science...Wisdom is based on no scientific certainty, and scientific certainty does not lead to wisdom. Nonetheless, the one and the other exist, forever indispensable, forever separate, forever complimentary."

To this, the monk's conclusion gives eloquent reply. "In the course of the last twenty years, after centuries of reciprocal ignorance, a real dialogue has begun to establish itself between Buddhism and the principal currents of Western thought. Buddhism thus takes the place which is due in the history of philosophy and the sciences...Buddhism proposes a science of the spirit, a contemplative science which is more current than ever, and will not cease to be so, because it treats the most fundamental mechanisms of happiness and suffering. It is our consciousness with which we must deal from morning to night, and the least transformation of this spirit has major repercussions for the course of our existence and our perception of the world...In any case, no dialogue, however clarifying it may be, can replace the silence of personal experience, which is indispensable to intimate understanding...Experience is, in fact, the path. And, as the Buddha often said, it is up to each of us to pursue it, until, one day, the messenger himself becomes the message."

That further step is mirrored in *The Life of Shabkar*, translated by Matthieu Ricard. In his preface, HH the Dalai Lama remarks of Shabkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol that, "Regarded by many as the greatest yogi after Milarepa to gain enlightenment in one lifetime, he also lived the life of a wandering mendicant teaching by means of spiritual songs." Says Ricard, in his translator's introduction, "The autobiography...is a simple and moving account of the life of a wandering hermit from childhood until his ultimate spiritual realization. Shabkar describes all the steps of his spiritual path, culminating in the teachings of the Great Perfection, Dzogchen...Shabkar's account of his progress...is so straightforward, heartfelt, and unaffected that one is encouraged to believe that similar deep faith and diligence would allow anyone else to achieve the same result."

This narration of the life and liberation of the great vajra-holder, rich with his enlightening and enchanting spiritual songs, is translated into often poetic English by Ricard and collaborators, and is at once annotated and indexed for scholars, yet clear and readable. The reader who opens his mind to this text and its author may well experience the uprush, the wind, the beating wings, of what Shabkar called "the flight of the Garuda."

Barrie Simmons ■



# Introduction to Tibetan Astrology

Second part of a weekend seminar at  
Merigar, 21-22 February, 1998

given by Prof. Thubten Phuntsog

## The Usage of the Parka or Trigrams in Tibetan Astrology

### 1. DETERMINATION THE INDIVIDUAL PARKA OF THE CURRENT YEAR

In Tibetan astrology the Parka are examined to foretell favorable or unfavorable events that may effect the life of an individual and the period of the year in which they will occur. As to the etymology of the word Parka, 'par' means 'change' and 'ka' means sign, i.e. the signs that indicate the nature of such a change.

In each year the individual is characterized by the association with a particular Parka. To determine which Parka is associated to an individual in a particular year is simple. First one should know that the year of birth of a male is always associated with the Parka Li. The following year the Parka will be Khon, the next Da and so on, following the disposition of the Parka in the clockwise order. The year of birth of the female is always associated with the Parka Kham. For a female the Parka of the following year will be Khen, the next Da and so on, following the disposition of the Parka in a anti clockwise order.

Thus, for a male, one starts from Li and counts clockwise for how many Parka correspond to the years of the person's age. Starting from Li, the tenth Parka will be Khon. Knowing this, we can do a quick counting in tens skipping the single years. The 10th year of life for a male will be associated with the Parka Khon, the 20th with Khen, the 30th with Ghin, the 40th with Zon, the 50th with Khon, the 60th with Khen, the 70th with Ghin, the 80th with Zon and so on.

For a female, one starts from Kham and counts counter clockwise for how many Parka correspond to the years of the person's age. The 10th year of life for a female is associated with the Parka Khen, the 20th with Khon, the 30th with Zon, the 40th with Ghin and so on.

Once determined, the Parka of an individual in a particular year is interpreted in a number of different ways. The Parka are also evaluated in relation to the sign of birth of the person and in their relation to the Parka of other members of the person's family. Another way in which the Parka can be used is within a family. On the basis of these combinations the astrologer interprets on the favorable or unfavorable situations a person may meet.

### 2. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE DIRECTIONS OF THE PARKA

To determine the Parka, Tibetan astrologers use the first, middle and ring fingers of their hand. (SEE DIAGRAM). The directions of the Parka are also shown on these fingers - East is the middle phalanx of the first finger, south the tip of the middle finger, West the middle phalanx of the ring finger and North is the root of the middle finger.

Each Parka stands in the center of eight four cardinal and four intermediate directions. Four of these are positive and four are negative.

### 2.1 THE FOUR POSITIVE DIRECTIONS

Taking, for instance, Parka Li, the first positive direction is called 'spontaneous help' in the Northern direction facing Kham. 'Spontaneous help' is symbolized by a mirror, is favorable because it stands in the North, a direction is associated with increased wealth, food, and health.

For Li the second positive direction is called 'preservation of life' in the Eastern direction facing Zin. 'Preservation of life' is symbolized by a scepter (vajra), is favorable because it stands in the East, a direction associated to the accomplishment of one's aim, work, and good relations with family and friends.

For Li the third positive direction is called 'increasing power' in the South-east direction facing Zon. 'Increasing power', symbolized by the infinite knot, is favorable because it stands in at Southeast, a direction associated to all activities of increase, like business.

For Li the fourth positive direction is called 'propitiation of wealth' in the Southern direction

facing itself. 'Propitiation of wealth', symbolized by the swastika of the Bon, is favorable because it stands in the Southern direction associated to the propitiation of deities and wealth.

### 2.2 THE FOUR NEGATIVE DIRECTIONS

Taking always Li as our example, the first negative direction is called 'harm' in the Northeast facing Ghin. 'Harm', symbolized by a triangle, is negative because it stands in the Northeastern direction to which the rituals of *mdos* and *Zor* done to curse others, are directed.

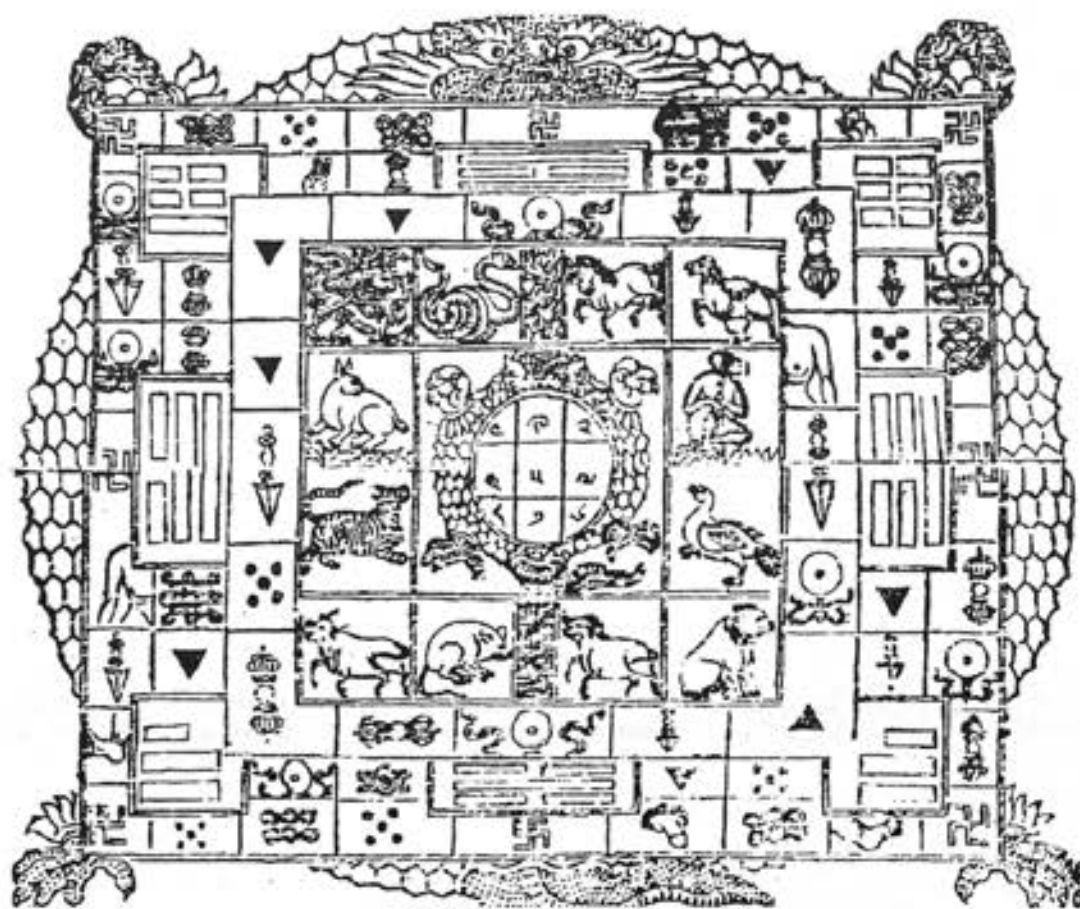
For Li, the second negative direction is called 'five demons' in the West facing Da. 'Five demons', symbolized by five black pebbles, is negative because it stands in the Western direction to which the ritual of *yas* and *glud* to pacify other, are directed.

For Li, the third negative direction is called 'cutting the demon' in the Northwest facing Khen. 'Cutting the demon', symbolized by a Phurba or three bladed dagger, is negative because it stands in the Northwestern direction to which the rites of protection from harm, by means of placing votive images and statues of deities, is directed.

For Li, the fourth negative direction is called 'section of the body' in the Southwest facing Khon. 'Section of the body', symbolized by a head. (This direction for each Parka is indicated by different symbols; Kon by the left

hand, Da by the left ribs, Khen by the left leg, Kham by the penis, Ghin by the right leg, Zin by the right ribs and Zon by the right arm.) This direction is negative because it is the one toward which the rites of increasing one's fortunes, like issuing prayer flags, are directed.

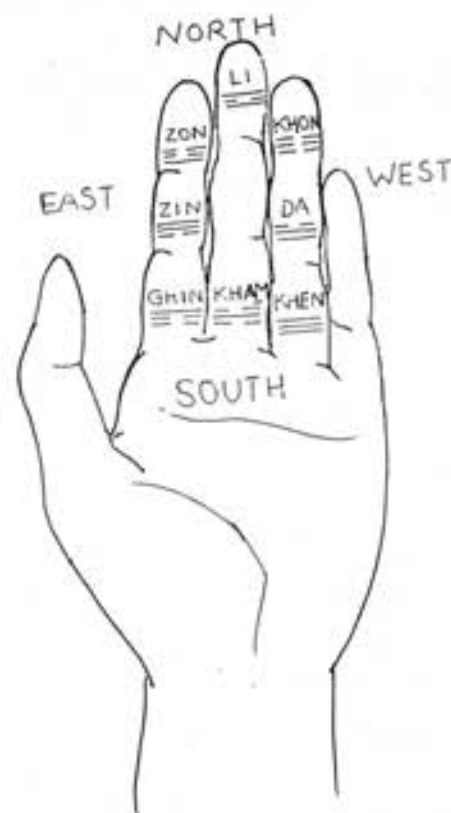
Similarly the other Parka are characterized by these four positive and four negative relations, whose direction will change according to the diagram. ■



THIS TURTLE  
represents the trigrams, their eight directions,  
the twelve animals and in the center the nine numbers.

POSITIVE DIRECTIONS	LI	KHON	DA	KHEN	KHAM	GHIN	ZIN	ZON
SPONTANEOUS HELP	NORTH	NORTH WEST	NORTH EAST	SOUTH WEST	SOUTH	WEST	SOUTH EAST	EAST
PRESERVING LIFE	EAST	NORTH EAST	NORTH WEST	WEST	SOUTH EAST	SOUTH WEST	SOUTH	NORTH
INCREASING POWER	SOUTH EAST	WEST	SOUTH WEST	NORTH EAST	EAST	NORTH WEST	NORTH	SOUTH
PROFITATION OF WEALTH	SOUTH	SOUTH WEST	WEST	NORTH WEST	NORTH	NORTH EAST	EAST	SOUTH EAST

NEGATIVE DIRECTIONS	LI	KHON	DA	KHEN	KHAM	GHIN	ZIN	ZON
HARM	NORTH EAST	EAST	NORTH	SOUTH EAST	WEST	SOUTH	SOUTH WEST	NORTH
FIVE DEMONS	WEST	SOUTH EAST	SOUTH	EAST	NORTH EAST	NORTH	NORTH WEST	SOUTH WEST
CUTTING THE DEMON	NORTH WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH WEST	SOUTH EAST	WEST	NORTH EAST
SECTION OF THE BODY	SOUTH WEST	SOUTH	SOUTH EAST	NORTH	NORTH WEST	EAST	NORTH EAST	WEST



How to calculate on the hand

"me", they're "mine". They say, "when I think, in my opinion, my body does such and such, my name was given to me. ..." What people then settle on is that the body, the name and the mind are not "me", they are not "me" but they belong to "me". "I" am something separate from them. But honestly, it is very hard to find the "me" that is not the body, the name or the mind. Isn't that true?

Another example is this flower, this is what we have given the name flower. It has many of these small petals, is there a flower without those petals? Is this the flower? (CNR pulls apart the flower) That one petal wasn't the flower. That was one petal. And the rest of it was made out of petals. There is something in the center also called the anthers. That is not the flower. Where is the flower? Not the front, not the back. Where is the flower? What happens if you cut each of these petals into pieces.

As long as we don't examine in this way we have the impression there is a flower, but the moment we look closely at that to which we attach the name flower, it cannot be found. In exactly the same way, all other things have no real existence, and yet as long as we are not aware of this fact and do not look closely at what things really are, we cling to things as being permanent and concrete, something formed, and cling to that solidly. But if we look closely, the very nature of any thing is that it is devoid of true existence, all by itself. To be unaware of the fact that things have no true existence, that is called ignorance, that is delusion.

How can we know that this is delusion? If we would just learn and reflect a tiny bit we could find out right away. We can find out that we are usually mistaken. And to find out we are mistaken is a great plus. Because otherwise there are so many people in this world, intelligent, well educated people, but there are not so many who understand they are mistaken. Most people think "I am not mistaken".

How do we find out "I was mistaken"? It is by using our intelligence a little bit. When you learn something, question and examine a little bit, you will also know this. Therefore the root cause of mistakenness and delusion is the attitude that clings to itself. And both temporarily and ultimately this attitude always brings suffering and pain. Based on this clinging to a self we hold on to a duality and get involved in a variety of pleasure and pain, hope and fear, and anxiety.

Delusion, karma and suffering is made by nothing other than this ignorant attitude that clings to a self. It's not made some god or devil, not by anybody else. It is made by oneself. And what is self-inflicted needs to be cleared away by some method applied by oneself, not by somebody else. Only oneself can do that.

Firstly we must identify the attachment, the aversion, the dullness, secondly we need to find out what these three emotions do, wrong, and thirdly, is it possible to be free of these three emotions? If yes, how?

On a more blatant level these three emotions are called craving, anger closed-mindedness. Everyone knows them. Where do they

come from? Most people, when they see a flower, they like it, it's pretty, some flowers even smell good. And because they look pretty and they smell good they are lined up like here in front of my seat. When people see them they are happy. There are also things that make people unhappy and displeased, like withered flowers. Withered flowers don't look pretty and may not even smell good. If someone arranged stinky old flowers most of you wouldn't appreciate that.

But there are also plastic flowers. You are not especially exhilarated by them, but they don't depress you either. But fresh new flowers; when we see them we feel pleased. It's called liking. But really it's attachment - the liking can turn into attachment. We don't like the old, stinky flowers. When dislike is intensified it is anger. Plastic flowers that are not especially beautiful disinterest us; we simply don't care about them. We don't feel the urge to grab hold of them. We just shut off and don't investigate further. That is closed-mindedness.

From the moment we wake up in the morning until we fall asleep there is a busyness of thought in our minds, incessantly. What if we questioned what the quality of those thoughts are; the thoughts of liking, disliking and not caring to investigate?

When we deeply dislike something, we may get furious. Even if it's cold we feel hot, our face changes it's expression, and the otherwise peaceful face turns wrathful. A man starts to look like a demon and a woman a demoness. What makes that happen? Anger. The tone of voice becomes harsh and unpleasant and the meaning uttered is deeply unpleasant. The state of mind is very uneasy, restless and disturbed. It is disturbing to both oneself and others.

So, attachment, anger and dullness have their root in liking, disliking and indifference. We need to check out and know whether or not we have those thought states. We can spy on ourselves a little bit. What actually happens in our mind from we wake up until we go to sleep? Are there any thoughts of liking or disliking or being indifferent? Do they sometimes turn into anger, attachment and closed-mindedness or not? Because these feelings of attachment, aversion and dullness do not come out of nowhere.

Emotions are like somebody throwing the last piece of a cigarette and the whole forest burns down. A small ember can create disaster. People usually think, "If I don't have any attachment, anger and I'm not dull, what's wrong with simply liking, disliking and being indifferent? What can they do wrong?" The Buddha taught us to get to the very root and totally eliminate that from which negative emotions spring. He taught us about the very source or root of delusion, in a very detailed subtle way.

Most religions and spiritual paths, as well as most normal people, agree that selfish emotions like being aggressive, conceited, jealous, etc., are unpleasant, nasty and create disharmony. In Buddhism we are taught to totally eliminate attachment, aversion and dullness, and especially to totally eliminate the delusion, and

## His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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Volunteers for the event are needed please call Matthew at 202 828-6288.

ignorance. Therefore, to totally eliminate emotions, we have to find their root and identify the true view. To make this matter very direct and simple, Nagarjuna said, "Samsara is merely thought. When free of thought, that is liberation."

When developing renunciation and the will to be free, what we need to be free of is conceptual thinking. There are many people who don't want to give up their thinking and yet want to be free. That does happen. What many people want is the "flame" of wisdom and at the same time to keep the "hair" of ignorance inside the flame. That's impossible. They can't co-exist.

On a coarse level, the root of delusion is the attitude of clinging to a self. On a more subtle level it is any thought state, any thought. And

what is a thought? It's a conceptual attitude, a thought that fixates on something.

In Buddhist Philosophy, the Tibetan word for thought is *namtog*, which means to "conceptualize the perceived". A thought happens when the mind, which is the primary cognizant act, conceptualizes the objects that are perceived through the five senses.

More simply put, to conceptualize is a fixating attitude and a fixating attitude cannot eliminate a fixating attitude. This is a key point. Thinking cannot eliminate thinking. The opposite attitude of holding something in the mind is to hold nothing in the mind. Usually, the opposite of thinking is to be thoughtfree. Thoughtfree in a way could be not knowing, could be ignorance. It's not enough just to be

thoughtfree. Something more is necessary. We need thoughtfree wakefulness.

Every thought is by definition ignorant. And every thought is contaminated by subtle attachment and aversion. The opposite of thinking is thoughtfree wakefulness. Thoughtfree wakefulness can also be called innate suchness. In the special terminology of Vajrayana it is also called Mahamudra or Dzogchen. That is what we need to know.

Unless we gain this knowledge, we have to be weary of ourselves. We need to try our best to come to know. And whatever can help us to discover is something we must use.

Translated by  
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# An Eventful Day - August 22nd 1998

by Elisa Copello



Rinpoche and Dignitaries

L. GRANGER

Yesterday it was full but today it is manifesting emptiness", joked the Master a little before eight in the morning on August 22nd as he entered the Gonpa at Merigar, all but deserted after the crowds of the preceding days. Only three or four people were there to welcome Rinpoche who arrived early for the meeting to renew the Gakyil, the first event of a day extremely full of different engagements. The representatives of the old gakyil and the candidates for the new arrived one at a time while the Master waited patiently observing those present with a kindly gaze.

The meeting began with the official announcement of the resignation of the old gakyil with the exception of Josef Heim who intended to continue his role in the blue section. With his distinctive humor and commonsense the outgoing director, Giovanni Boni, proposed the names for the 'yellow' and 'red' from those who had presented themselves as candidates. For the 'blue' the two vacant posts were filled by Mario Maglietti whose participation in the gakyil was particularly welcomed by Rinpoche and by Marina Micelli who received the largest number of votes among the other candidates.

The new gakyil is made up of the following people:

Yellow: Maria Grazia Florido, Fabiana Mela and Franco Marinelli (director)

Red: Spartaco Vitiello, Paolo Bonacina and Andreas Hannig  
Blue: Mario Maglietti, Marina Micelli and Josef Heim (vice-director).

Rinpoche asked Pia Bramezza, ex-yellow gakyil, to continue with her job as accountant for the Associazione, a commitment she has undertaken with dedication and sacrifice for many years and a position for which it is difficult to find such a competent and ready substitute.

When giving his best wishes to the newly elected gakyil, Rinpoche asked the outgoing members to cooperate with the new gakyil in their work for at least a year, putting at their disposition the experience they had acquired. The Master also emphasized the importance of being kind in human relationships and said that during his travels abroad he had met practitioners who had been satisfied by the welcome they had received at Merigar from those in charge but he had also heard complaints from others who had found themselves ill at ease for a kind of hardness and rudeness that had made their stay at our center less pleasant. Rinpoche's words should make us reflect on the need to be more open and to have a real

spirit of collaboration which should inspire all practitioners, in particular those in charge who have more direct contact with guests and visitors at Merigar.

The meeting was followed by the presentation of the 1997 budget which was approved by the Assembly after Giovanni Boni and Pia Bramezza had clarified several points. The meeting swiftly concluded so that the program for the day could be followed.

At eleven o'clock there was a reception on the veranda of the Yellow House for the local authorities who had been invited to the official inauguration of the Merigar Stupa and local business people who had generously collected funds in the past to contribute to its construction.

Those invited included the President of Grosseto Province, the Councilor of Culture of the Province, a representative sent by the Prefect, the Mayor and the Councilor of Culture of Arcidosso and other local authorities. Several shopkeepers timidly appeared at the door of the verandah - Rinpoche had a word with all of them while he spoke with the guests about the projects of ASIA in Tibet and about his recent visit to China. In the meantime the square below had filled up with practitioners, tourists and people from Arcidosso who were curious about the event and wanted to take part in the ceremony.

After the reception Rinpoche and all those present left on foot towards the Great Stupa, followed by a long, colorful and merry procession. The day was clear and there was a slight breeze and a festive air and even the authorities seemed to enjoy the joyful atmosphere.

Once they got to the Stupa, they did the customary ritual circumambulations and, at a sign from Rinpoche, the authorities were given some 'kata', the local population multicolored carnations from a large basket at the foot of the monument and the practitioners handfuls of rice. Then all were invited to throw or lay their offering at the feet of the Stupa, while Rinpoche recited mantra and invocations of favorable auspices in an undertone.

The ceremony was brief and essential but very moving especially for all of those, and there were many, who had seen the Stupa gradually growing and who had actively collaborated in the creation of this work, certainly unique in Italy and perhaps in Europe for its grandeur, accuracy of workmanship and artistic value.

Then before lunch which had been organized at a local restaurant for the authorities, Rinpoche and some of those in charge at the Associazione, there was another collective moment on the lawn behind the Yellow House where refreshments were improvised for everyone; an opportunity to consolidate our links with the local community and let them know a little more about us.

However the day still held some surprises in store - at 6 pm there was a rich Ganapuja with Rinpoche and then some chatting together like in the 'old days'. Then while the instruments were being prepared for the 9 pm concert, Mara Sangiorgio and Nelida Saporiti accompanied by Mark Eagleton on guitar entertained listeners, entralling them with their expertise. As announced the concert started at 9 with the 'Ave Maria' by Gounod performed on the cello by Mara, a professional musician from Cremona at Merigar for the first time at the August retreat. Her performance was really perfect and everyone listened enchanted and moved. The

magic continued with the next pieces played by the 'Vajra Trio' on ancient Indian instruments and a mega-harp. This was the musical improvisation that Adriano Clemente, Costantino Albini and Bernhard Siegel performed with mastery and creativity. The concert ended with a piece that Costantino composed for the show organized by the Rome community for A.S.I.A., a melody inspired by the Heart Sutra. The applause went on and on as did Rinpoche's approving smile.

The evening wasn't over yet! After two years of selling tickets for the international lottery organized by the Merigar gakyil to collect funds for the Stupa, the extraction of the winning ticket took place. The first prize, a retreat with Rinpoche in any part of the world including travel and stay went to lucky Sonia Grosso from Naples. The second prize, a sold silver vajra was won by one of the Argentina gakyil members, the thangka of Chenrezig painted by Augustinas went to Brazil, the gold and turquoise earrings from Puntso Wangmo's family went to a German practitioner and the last prize, a rose-quartz pendant in gold with the figure of Tara was won by Alessandra Sorbelli of Castel del Piano.

At the end of a really long day Rinpoche finally went to rest and the last merrymakers went to the Yellow House where Josef had invited a rock group from Grosseto who played into the night for the unrestrained dancers.

A truly unrepeatable day, sacred and profane, formal and informal, wild rock and solemn music, improvisation and organization, integrating everything in the experience of this life illuminated and lightened by the presence of the Master! ■

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# Meeting Buddhism

## Conference in Arcidosso

by Iacobella Gaetani



Rinpoche and other presenters at Conference

F. ANDRICO

At the end of August the municipality of Arcidosso, Italy, hosted a refresher course for teachers entitled "Meeting Buddhism, from Tibet to Amiatina - A Study Conference". The Conference, which was made up of a series of talks, was organized by the Associazione Culturale OSA in collaboration with the Dzogchen Community. Giacomella Orofino carefully selected the subjects to be covered in the thirty hours of practice and theory and the respective speakers.

On August 23rd the course opened with a conference held by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The council chamber was packed. With great clarity and simplicity Rinpoche introduced the principles of the Buddhist message, primarily focusing on the Four Noble Truths. Afterwards the public asked him many questions showing how much interest and good feeling he aroused. Prof. Grazia Marchiano followed with a talk entitled "The nature of Buddhism in India and the Far East".

In the next days the following talks were given:

Giacomella Orofino - "The origins of Buddhism and successive phases of development in India."

Raimondo Bultrini - "Ethics and information on a religion without God."

Andrea Di Castro - "The first Buddhist monuments according to history and tradition."

Enzo Terzano - "Symbolism in Buddhist art."

Giacomella Orofino - "The meeting of Buddhism and European culture."

Iacobella Gaetani - "Death and liberation in Tibetan Buddhism."

Gino Vitiello - "Introduction to the philosophy of Tibetan medicine."

Fabio Andrico - "Yoga in the tantric Buddhist tradition."

On the third and fourth days of the conference the films "The Little Buddha" and "Seven Years in Tibet" were shown, both of which evoked lively reactions.

The course generated great interest and participation for the participants. They expressed their regret for the brief amount of time allotted to the course which they felt was not enough to fully investigate the topics that had been covered. They also hoped that this type of meeting could be repeated. Besides some local people enrolled in the course, people from Sicily, Umbria and Lombardia also participated.

In the closing of the conference, Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti gave an "A practical introduction to the first principles of Yantra Yoga" at the Gonpa at Merigar.

For the Dzogchen Community this event was an opportunity to meet and to show their openness towards the local community. ■



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is on the  
<http://scil.npi.msu.ru/pub/religion/dzogchen> <Moscow Dharma  
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We would like to keep the  
International Community Contacts as





## Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance Teachers and Courses

### Some Clarification

On September 4, 1998, at Merigar, Italy, after the Ganapuja at the end of the SMS training, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave a short speech about (among other things) Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance. To summarize this speech, Rinpoche explained that the principal aim of the four teachers of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance should now be to prepare new local instructors in different countries. Those people who wish to become instructors should organize a course and invite one of the teachers. The teacher will then examine not only this person's ability to perform the movements precisely, but also his or her capacity of communication and attitude. After this examination, Rinpoche will decide whether this person will be confirmed as an instructor of the first level.

The same procedure can be followed later on for the second level and the third level and one day there will also be a diploma.

Of course the four teachers can continue to give normal courses if they wish to and are invited to do so, yet their main focus should be the training of local instructors.

Furthermore, Rinpoche explained that these courses should be advertised in the sense of informing people, without conditioning them, but letting them know. "For example, by advertising in newspapers, etc., even for a long period of time if necessary, even if there is something to be paid, but people should be informed, this is important", according to Rinpoche. This is especially true for the Yantra Yoga courses, since in this case it is may be easier to contact people from outside the Community as well. Rinpoche commented that sometimes these courses are organized too much in a kind of "amateurish" or "in-crowd" way. If only a few people come to the course, it means that a better effort in informing and organizing should be made.

For advertising Vajra Dance courses, please use a pre-prepared text for this purpose, which you can receive by asking your local Gakyil or Gar. ■

## SMS UPDATE

Information Update on  
Santi Maha Sangha

According to the Master's last directions, all Base Level practices must be completed before the First Level examination, except for the Base Level mantra recitation of the Three Roots which must be completed before the Third Level exam.

By the middle of the month of October, Shang Shung Edizioni will publish a booklet on the 18 Semdzin of the Second Level containing further explanations on breathings and on the way of doing the practice. This booklet, which is an excerpt translated by Adriano Clemente of the new version of Ati Changsem Gongdzod text, can be bought from the SMS coordinators of different Gars by those who have already taken the First Level exam.

The updated list of SMS coordinators is the following:

**Merigar:** Igor Legati ssed@ats.it

**Tsegvalgar:** Jim Valby  
73711.257@compuserve.com

**Tashigar:** Nelida Saporiti nsaporiti@interlink.com.ar

**Namgyalgar:** Elisabeth Stutchbury  
elise.stutchbury@anu.edu.au

**Russia:** Grisha Mokhin mokhin@rain.bog.msu.ru

## DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY OF ITALY

### MERIGAR 1998

#### Autumn

#### OCTOBER 23-25

COURSE OF VAJRA DANCE FOR ADVANCED STUDENTS with Prima Mai. The course starts on Friday, October 23rd, at 4 pm. Cost: Lit. 120.000 with 30% discount for members. Registration at least one week before the course.

#### OCTOBER 30-NOVEMBER 1

PRACTICE RETREAT ON THE 3RD AND 4TH LOJONG.

The retreat starts on Friday, October 30th, at 5 pm, Saturday sessions at 9 am, 11 am, 4 pm and Sunday 9 am and 11 am.

#### NOVEMBER 13-15

PRACTICE RETREAT OF THE COMPLETE VAJRA DANCE.

The retreat starts on Friday, November 13th, at 5 pm. Sunday will be dedicated to the Dance of the Three Vajras. Please register soon since there are only place for 12 participants.

#### NOVEMBER 21-22

YANTRA YOGA COURSE FOR BEGINNERS with Laura Evangelisti.

Two daily sessions at 10 am and 4 pm. Cost: Lit. 80.000 with 30% discount for members. Registration is at least one week before the course.

#### DECEMBER 4-6

PRACTICE RETREAT ON THE 5TH AND 6TH LOJONG.

The retreat starts on Friday, December 4th, at 5 pm, Saturday sessions at 9 am, 11 am, 4 pm and Sunday 9 am and 11 am.

#### DECEMBER 6-8

SANTI MAHA SANGHA with Adriano Clemente

Explanation on the theoretical views of the various vehicles according to the Santi Maha Sangha Base text.

#### DECEMBER 11-13

PRACTICE RETREAT ON THE PURIFICATION OF THE SIX LOKAS AND DANCE OF THE SIX LOKAS. The retreat starts on Friday, December 11th, at 5 pm. Sunday will be reserved for the Dance of the Three Vajras. Only 12 people may participate and they should already know the Dances.

ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE COMUNITA DZOGCHEN MERIGAR I-58031  
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## New Organizational Structure for Istituto Shang Shung

by C. Chuden & L. Granger

On Thursday, October 1st, everybody currently working for the Istituto Shang Shung and all those interested in the work of the Istituto met with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at the Yellow House at Merigar.

Recently there had been some uncertainty about the aims and projects of the Istituto and the efficacy of some activities had not always met with expectations, so it was decided to take advantage of the presence of Rinpoche as President of the Istituto and Enrico dell'Angelo, who had been abroad for so long, as the official general secretary to clarify in which way the Istituto should proceed in the future.

In Rinpoche's introductory talk he said, "... Until today I still feel a little disordered about the Institute. As I already said there is no coordination and sometimes also very little communication between the people working on the projects of the Institute. ... I feel it is very, very important to form a kind of direction first of all and then to decide who is taking the responsibility. If too many people who are involved in the Institute are given a kind of rank or title they actually might not be able to do very much, like me, then the Institute becomes only a name. So

I think it's very important that we need few people, but few really taking care and many people collaborating. There should be a kind of management to which we can communicate and which is taking responsibility. It should not only be one person but a group of people who are being consulted and taking care. ... Between them there should be no conflicts, no personal interests, they should be only thinking of the activities of the Institute."

After both Rinpoche and Enrico had given some clarification and advice to those present, first of all Rinpoche spoke about the need for a secretary as the central point of the Institute who would be in touch with all the different sections and know about their activities and projects and thus be able to provide information about what is going on in the Institute. Caroline Chuden was elected as the new secretary.

Then the "steering committee" of three people was elected: Enrico dell'Angelo, Francoise Van Den Berg and Gino Vitiello. On a sheet of paper Rinpoche drew nine

stars around this central triangle, a little like the symbol of the European Community, representing the different sections of the Institute's activities:

1) the Archives which is subdivided into the library, video, photo and audio archives. Mauro Nascari remains in charge while Nida Chenagstang, currently the resident Tibetan doctor at Merigar, will be in charge of Tibetan books and manuscripts and Maria Simmons for the Western texts. Paolo Brunatto is in charge of the video section, Liz Granger the audio section and Alex Siedlecki the photo section.

2) the Art section with Bernhard Siegel in charge.

3) Tibetan medicine - Paolo Pappone is in charge.

4) Archeology - Mauro Nascari.

5) Translation - Adriano Clemente for translations from Tibetan into Western languages and Nida for translations into Tibetan.

6) Computerization - Yeshe Silvano Namkhai

7) Exhibitions - Paolo Brunatto

8) Scholarships for Tibetans - Enrico dell'Angelo

9) Tibetan culture in general - Giacomella Orofino.

All these functions concern the internal structure and organization. The official board of directors and all the official titles laid down in the Institute's statute remain as they are.

Istituto Shang Shung, Merigar, I-58031 Arcidosso (GR), Italy.

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## Santi Maha Sangha Level 4

August 1998

There were thirteen participants in the Santi Maha Sangha Level 4 training in Merigar this past August. The participants came from Italy, Germany, USA, Poland, Austria, Serbia, and Holland.

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# The Fifth Gar

by Gregory Mokhin

Another dream of the International Dzogchen Community is becoming real. It will become the owner of the fifth Gar - it has no name yet, but it has existed for a long time already in the vision of our precious Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Rinpoche committed himself to found five Gars on the Earth. He started talking about the foundation of the Gar in Russia in 1994, during his second visit. It became evident that with the number of Dzogchen practitioners growing rapidly every two years in Russia, and with one third of all Santi Maha Sangha students living in Russia, the Gar for Russia and neighboring countries was becoming more and more necessary.

After much searching, the Moscow Community found a place that appeared very suitable for the Gar. It is a piece of land in a pine-tree forest, occupying the area of 13.7 ha. It was a Russian Young Pioneer (boy scout) Camp. There are many buildings already on the land: houses that can accommodate 150 people, a large canteen, a hospital, boiler house, dancing hall for two mandalas, etc., and everything in good condition! The camp is located 75 km East of Moscow on the bank of Kliazma river, in an ecologically clean region, and its climate is dry and very healthy.

On July 25th, 1998 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu met with the representatives of the Moscow Gakyil at his house in Merigar. Rinpoche gave his approval to purchase this land, and many people responded very actively in fundraising.

Most of the money was generously contributed by Rinpoche himself and some of his closest disciples: Adriana dal Borgo, Fabio Andrico, Adriano Clemente, and Jim Valby. Our special heartfelt thanks to Laura Cavicchi and Dick Drury for their great contributions!\*\*\* Donations came also from the US West Coast Community, British, German, Australian, French, Latvian Communities, and it is impossible to name here everyone who offered their help. Donations came also from the US

West Coast Community, British, German, Australian, French, Latvian Communities, and it is impossible to name here everyone who offered their help.

The site was to be sold at an auction with the starting price of \$90,000. The price was fixed in Russian rubles, and by the time the auction was to be held, unexpected circumstances changed completely all the course of events. With the economic tornado and political crisis in Russia, the ruble fell down and the dollar price of the land decreased considerably. So, even with the absolute impossibility of borrowing money from the collapsed banks and getting the wires offered by various communities, the money arrived here just in time and in amount sufficient to cover immediate expenses.

The auction was preceded by intensive Dorje Legpa practice done in various communities in Russia and worldwide. Luckily, Fabio Andrico with his fountain of energy and inspiration, lead the practice in Moscow. The day before the auction the practice went on overnight. Dorje Legpa is hard to compete with and the Moscow Community won the auction!

It is quite clear that many people from the world Community can benefit from the Russian Gar. During Rinpoche's next visit to Russia there will be three levels of Santi Maha Sangha training and a general retreat. In 1998, 160 people received the 1st level SMS training, 80 the 2nd level training, and more than 1400 people attended the general retreat. It is expected that next time more people will come to receive the precious teachings. It is absolutely necessary to provide excellent conditions for Rinpoche's stay and his teachings. This camp offers the unique possibility that provides the necessary atmosphere for the teachings and the possibility for Rinpoche and those traveling with him to rest.

The Russian Community is really happy to offer this new Gar to our precious Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and to the international Sangha. ■

## CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU TEACHINGS IN FRANCE

### MARSEILLE

Saturday, November 7th, 10am, till Sunday November 8th, afternoon, RETREAT  
All teachings are in the center of town and accommodation possible in hotels nearby. Local Contact: Claude Casabianca, 137 avenue de la Panouse, 13009 Marseille, tel.0481821603, e-mail: Claude.Casabianca@bol.fr  
Friday, November 6th, 8pm, LECTURE Address: Alhambra, 340 Bd Chave, 13004 Marseille Fee: 65FF  
Address: Saturday: Alhambra Sunday: Theatre Mazenod, 86 rue d'Aubagne, 13006 Marseille. Fee: 300FF

### MONTPELLIER

Wednesday November 11th, 10am PUBLIC CONSECRATION OF THE LAND This wild and beautiful place of 9 ha in the southern Cevennes was bought by the French Community at the end of June.  
Local Contact: Le Deves 30570 St Andre de Majencoules (33) 467824490 DzogchenFr@compuserve.com  
Due to limited covered space and uncertain weather, registration is necessary. Accommodation: nearby houses in a half abandoned village are already rented by the Community. Around 80 FF per night. Meals: buffet for lunch Fee: no fee, donations are accepted

### PARIS & CERGY

Tuesday November 17th, 8pm, LECTURE Address: Salle Adyar, 4 square Rapp, 75007 Paris. Fee: 80 FF Friday  
November 20th, 4pm, RETREAT (Zergna) till Sunday 22nd, 2pm Address: Centre d'Accueil des Etangs de Cergy-Neuville, Rue des Etangs, 95001 Cergy-Pontoise Fee: 450FF  
Local Contacts: Cathy Braud, 8 rue de la Jussienne, 75002 Paris, tel. 0140399213, Laurent Poureau, tel. 0147490716.  
Accommodation: the retreat place is in Cergy-Pontoise, 30 km north of Paris in natural surroundings. The place can be reached by a quick train (RER) then a bus. During the retreat, there are possibilities of full board (rooms shared by 2 or 3 people) on the spot for around 400 FF, including 2 nights, two breakfasts, two dinners and one lunch. It is necessary to book in advance. For practitioners staying outside the center, snacks will be available at lunch time.

### KARMA LING

(1h from Grenoble) This monastery was founded by Kalu Rinpoche. Due to collaboration with the Dzogchen Community, a mandala room for Dance was established one year ago.

#### RETREAT

(Semzin) from Friday 27th, 8pm till Sunday 29th, 4pm Address and booking: Karma Ling, Chartreuse St Hugon, Arvillard, 73110 La Rochette, tel. 0479257800. Indicate your category of membership. Fee: 4500FF with usual discounts. However it will be necessary to pay an additional 15 FF a day for temporary membership at Karma Ling. Accommodation: Note that the place is rather isolated. Contact Karma Ling.

#### GENERALITIES:

Fees: although the French Community has to cover the expenses of its new land, we have kept the fees at the same level as at Merigar. The usual discounts for members (i.e. 30% for ordinary and free for sustaining) are valid. Language: Rinpoche will speak in English and there will be a translation in French. Please indicate if you need translation in another language. Travel: for those wishing to attend different teachings in different places, very high speed (TGV) trains run between Marseille, Montpellier, Paris and Grenoble (or Geneva in Switzerland). Booking: it will be helpful for us if you confirming advance the dates of your coming, even when booking is not explicitly required. Except for the Karma Ling retreat, this can be done at:

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30570 ST ANDRE DE MAJENCULES  
(33) 467824490  
DZOGCHENFR@COMPUSERVE.COM

## DZOGCHEN RETREAT WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU IN BRAZIL

### Schedule

#### "INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ANCIENT TIBETAN"

Public Lecture  
December 12th 1998 at 4:30pm  
The lecture will be in Italian with Portuguese translation  
at the Italian Institute of Culture, Rua Frei Caneca, 1071 Cerqueira Cesar - Sao Paulo, free admission

#### WEEK-END RETREAT

December 18th-20th, 1998  
location: Sitio "JARDIM do DHARMA", Cotia - Sao Paulo  
In the course of the retreat, Fabio Andrico will be giving teachings on the basic principles of Yantra Yoga.  
All teachings will be in English with Portuguese translation.  
Admission of US\$100 will cover three days of retreat.  
Payment will be required at arrival.

#### INFORMATION ON THE "SITIO" LOCATION

Jardim do Dharma is situated in Cotia, a small town in the Great Sao Paulo county, in an environmentally protected park and is a recognized center of Buddhist studies. From the town of Cotia to the Sitio, there are 12 kilometers of unpaved road. Possibly a mini van will be available for traveling to the Sitio.

#### LODGING ACCOMMODATIONS:

In the Sitio there are 8 large rooms which can accommodate up to 40 people, a dormitory for 15 people and a campground with a capacity of 20 tent sites. Keep in mind that December is rainy season. If needed the Gonpa can be used as a dormitory.

#### COSTS:

Rooms, dormitory and Gonpa: US\$ 10.00 per night per person.  
Campground:  
US\$ 4.00 per person.  
Priority in the assignment of rooms will be given to elders and to people with special needs. Breakfast is included with the above prices.

#### Hotel accommodations:

In Embu' das Artes, a little town at 16 kilometers away: Hotel Rancho Silvestre tel: (011)79611911, fax 79611500. Embu' Park tel: (011) 4945123, fax/4943586  
In Cotia: Pousada Chale' da Montanha tel/fax: (011) 79210070 Eduardo's Park tel: (011) 79603577, fax: 79603777

#### FOOD ACCOMMODATION:

Food is not included in the cost of the retreat. A kitchen will be available from December 11th through the 21st. Meals will be provided if reserved few hours in advance. Cost is US\$6.00 per meal. It will not be possible to cook personal meals in the campground for safety reasons.

#### CHILDREN:

Childcare service will be provided during teaching hours.

#### TRAVELING TO JARDIM DO DHARMA

If you arrive at the International Airport of Guarulhos, San Paulo, you can reach Cotia by taxi, using the COOP CAB service, which has a booth at the airport. For approximately R\$100.00 (reais), or by giving the time of arrival of the flight in advance, it's possible to reserve a taxi which will take you directly to the Sitio for about the same price. It is possible, but fairly complicated for the lack of a direct line, to arrive at the Sitio by bus: Airport to AV. Paulista from 7:30am to 11:40pm (R\$ 12.00) AV. Paulista to Largo de Pinheiros bus 715F which carries the sign "SHOPPING CONTINENTAL" Largo de Pinheiros to Cotia (km 21) R\$3.00 At the bus terminal in Cotia look for the mini van with the sign: JARDIM DU DHARMA (R\$5.00) If you arrive by car: You can rent a car at the International Airport of Guarulhos. In order to rent a car you must have your passport, your driver license from your country and a major credit card. From Marginal Pinheiros follow the Rodovia RAPOSO TAVARES toward Cotia. At the 21st Kilometer arriving in Cotia, take the third street to the left, and continuing toward the center ask for directions to the street of the Represinha. From the entrance of the condominium "Chacara Represinha" you will find signs with further indications.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION:

The season during which the retreat takes place is characterized by hot weather with intense, fast and sparse rains. At 2 Km from Jardim do Dharma there are waterfalls and natural pools surrounded by tropical vegetation. Bring comfortable gear for walking. In the Sitio Jardim do Dharma there also is a pool.

#### INFORMATION AND RESERVATION

In San Paolo: Muriella and Washington Malaga tel. 0055-11-69536072  
E-mail: wmalaga@uol.com.br It's important to make reservation giving name, address and desired accommodation as soon as possible. R\$ 1.00 = \$89US

#### SCENIC BUS TRIP FROM BRAZIL TO TASHIGAR, ARGENTINA

A bus trip from the Brazilian retreat (December 22nd, 1998) from So Paulo, Brazil to the Tashigar retreat in Cordoba, Argentina is being organized for people to travel together on a 44 hour trip in an executive bus with air conditioning, passing near IguaAu's falls and through some very nice places. The cost will be \$100US each, and the necessary minimum is 27 persons. If we will be more than that, the cost will be cheaper (around \$80US). We need your confirmation as soon as possible, with your name, surname and passport number.

FOR CONFIRMATION AND MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:  
INTERNET:WMALAGA@UOL.COM.BR





## Shang Shung Video

### VIDEO TAPES AVAILABLE

The Shang Shung Video department is a branch of the Shang Shung Institute at Merigar, Italy. Currently the Shang Shung Video department has approximately 1200 video tapes with teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche as well as 200 documentaries and films about Tibet.

At the moment Shang Shung Video is preparing a catalogue of the video and film archive and a database for consultation.

#### ONGOING PROJECTS

The following projects are planned for the near future:

**Video and film archive:** preservation of the old tapes containing teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

**Yantra Yoga video tape:** the 8 Movements explained and performed by Fabio Andrico - By Angelo Fontana in the Kathmandu Valley, November 1998. (Ready in January 1999.)

**Kumar Kumari (Yantra Yoga for children)** video tape; same as above.

**Interview-portraits with important Lamas:** a.o. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu R., Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Chatral R., Sogyal R., Dzognyi R., Dzongsar Khyentse R. ectetera, (containing some unique material).

**"Why Hollywood"?** Interviews with protagonists of the show-business (actors, movie directors, pop singers, etc.), who have been involved directly or indirectly with Buddhism, like: Richard Gere, Steven Segal, Harrison Ford & wife, Bernardo Bertolucci, Keanu Reeves, Martin Scorsese, Philip Glass, Rudy Wulitzer, Roberto Baggio, etc.

We have to provide a Digital Handycam to Fabio Andrico (plus a satellite mobile phone) for him to be able to continue his work of video taping Rinpoche's teaching and communicating with us.

A Shang Shung Video web homepage has to be prepared with trailers of the material that is for sale on the Internet.

We are working on the idea of live on-line broadcasting the teachings of Rinpoche during retreats and seminars on the Internet.

Video tape on Mandarava (made in Singapore); this has to be checked with Rinpoche and others in order to make it available.

Further details about these projects will be sent to you in the future.

The following video tapes, produced by Shang Shung Video, are now being distributed:

**TUNDRIN** practiced by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu - 30 min. / 25.000 Italian lit. Only for people who have received the transmission.

**CHOD** practiced by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu - 19 min. / 20.000 Italian lit. Only for people who have received the transmission.

**GANAPUJA** explanation and practice by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu - with some advice from Adriano Clemente on how to sing it - 175 min. / 30.000 Italian lit. / English version. Only for people who have received the transmission.

**RETREAT** at Merigar of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu - July 24-28/1998 - 10 hours / 150.000 Italian lit. Only for members of the Dzogchen Community / English & Italian version.

**WITH A LAMA AROUND THE WORLD** by Fabio Andrico & Paolo Brunatto - 1988/1990 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rin-



poche visits the various Gars of the Dzogchen Community around the world during a long trip to Tibet, Nepal, India, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Argentina, the United States, Great Britain and Italy tirelessly transmitting the Dzogchen Teachings. The footage was shot between 1988 and 1990 and is a rare document that underlines the commitment and the dedication of the Master. Particularly moving is the scene in which after having

spent many years in the West, Lama Namkhai Norbu returns to Khamdogar, the village of his Master, Chanchub Dorje, in Tibet. 70 min. / 25.000 Italian lit. / English & Italian version.

**KAILASH - The Sacred Mountain** - by Paolo Brunatto - 1988 The diary of the adventurous journey of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a group of Westerners to the unexplored areas of North-occidental Tibet and to Kailash, the sacred mountain for Tibetans. 45 min. / 25.000 Italian lit. / Italian version (We are preparing the English version).

#### HOW TO ORDER

You can order the video tapes by sending an International Money Order, EuroCheque, cross-drafted bank check or cash (by registered mail) to:

Istituto Shang Shung Video Department  
Merigar 58031 Arcidosso (GR), Italy.  
Tel. 0564-966940 Fax 0564-966846  
Email 100043.1433@compuserve.com

Please mention which video tapes you wish to receive (and the quantity) giving your full name, address, zip code, country, telephone/fax number and/or Email address.

The total amount of your check should cover the ordered video tapes, as well as the mailing expenses.

#### IMPORTANT COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Please be advised that all teaching and practice material which has been taped during retreats and seminars etc. are the (spiritual and intellectual) property of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Since in the past we noticed

that people distributed their own produced video material, we now want to make it very clear that such copying and using of this material is **EXPLICITLY FORBIDDEN**.

The reason for this is that the process of producing a video tape is a very deli-

cate one. All material should be checked and double checked again and again with Rinpoche and his translators, in order to produce video material that in a consistent and correct way transmits the teachings. In order to ensure such a process, from now on in each Gar or Gakyil there should be appointed **ONLY ONE PERSON** that is allowed to shoot the video material during the teachings. The Gars & the Gakyils then should send a (video) copy of each Retreat to the Central Video Archive of the Shang Shung Institute at Merigar. No further distribution or copying of this material is allowed without the explicit permission of the Shang Shung Institute.

#### REQUEST FOR COLLABORATION

The Video Department of the Shang Shung Institute wishes to warmly request those people who made their own video tapes about Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, not only teachings but also in everyday life, to send a VHS copy of this material to the Video Department of Shang Shung Institute at Merigar. The Institute of course will refund the expenses of copying and mailing.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

You can contact us at:

Istituto Shang Shung  
Video Department  
Merigar  
58031 Arcidosso (GR), Italy.  
Tel. 0564-966940  
Fax 0564-966846  
Email 100043.1433@compuserve.com

#### VIDEO FESTIVAL ON TIBET

The Video Department is ready to organize a Video Festival on Tibet. The Department has already organized many festivals in Italy and in other countries to collect money for ASIA.

If you want to organize a Video Festival about Tibet in your country, please contact the curator of the Shang Shung Video Department:

Paolo Brunatto,  
Email: 100043.1433@compuserve.com or p.brunatto@iol.it.

## Merigar Audio Archive

by Josef Heim

In the Merigar tape archive there are many non-indexed retreat recordings, especially the first fifteen years of Rinpoche's teachings. To date, we do not have an accurate record of what has been taught and where. We have tried to remedy that by listening to the tapes, but we haven't had success yet in finding enough people with enough time and/or diligence to participate.

During the translation and publishing committee meeting, Rinpoche remarked that it would be very helpful for him in writing his autobiography to have this information, hence this new proposal:

If all or some of the earlier students could look through their notes and send us an index of what was taught when and where, we could then compare it with the records of retreats we have already compiled. All we need is a very simple index, i.e.: what Rinpoche taught, (for example Semde or Longde), where and the date of the teaching. This would greatly assist us in creating a list of all the teachings that Rinpoche gave, since here in Merigar we do not have a record of all the places he has taught in the world.

All cooperation and collaboration would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you!

Please contact: Josef Heim (Blue Gakyil, Vice Director)  
c/o Merigar Arcidosso 58031 GR Italy  
Fax: 39 564 966 110 email: merigar@duelfe.it

## Spanish Gakyil

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28028 Madrid

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## RETREAT WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU IN PORTUGAL

DECEMBER 4TH - 6TH, 1998

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MONCHIQUE TEL: 351-81-323780 OR VITOR POMAR, TEL:  
351-89-804018

The retreat will be held in a mountain center with limited accommodation and a hall for up to 120 people. This time of year can be a rainy season.

#### DIRECTIONS:

First you come to Faro, either by air or land. From there you go to Portimao (bus or train) and then to Monchique (bus). From Monchique to the center there may be some special arrangements for transportation.

For general information see also the Webpage:  
[http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/david\\_lynch/h\\_direct.htm](http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/david_lynch/h_direct.htm).

Please note: In case participation is much larger than the accommodations offered by Karuna, and if Rinpoche agrees, there remains a possibility of using the facilities offered by a Cultural Center in Vila Real de Santo Antonio, near the sea and the Spanish border, easily reachable and with plenty of accommodation facilities at that time of the year.

For any further communication you can email (even during retreat):  
INTERNET: nop36506@mail.telepac.pt

FOR ACCOMMODATIONS, REGISTRATIONS, ETC.,  
SEND EMAIL TO THE ABOVE NUMBER  
IT WILL BE FORWARDED IT BY SNAIL MAIL TO THE CENTER









## Course on Kum Nye

(Tibetan Massage)

by Giovanna Conti

During the last days of August, while Rinpoche was examining the students of the Santi Maha Sangha level three, around thirty participants followed a course of Kum Nye, or Tibetan massage, in the Gonpa at Merigar. The long awaited course was given by Dr. Nyida, a young smiling doctor recently arrived from Lhasa at the invitation of the Istituto Shang Shung.

The doctor clearly and precisely explained the profound concepts from the chapter on massage from the first chapter of the Conclusive or Fourth Tantra of Tibetan Medicine. The topics related to this chapter are: disturbances to be treated by massage, the way of applying it and the benefits derived. Passing on to more detailed explanations, the doctor dwelt on six specific points which were explained during the three day course:

- the origin of massage
- the cases in which massage is advisable and inadvisable



Doctor Nyida marking points

F. ANDRICO

- the use of various oils and other medicinal substances
- specific points to be massaged
- the way of doing massage
- other therapeutic methods to use together with massage (moxa, infusions).

All the doctor's explanations, both historical and scientific, were valuable and of great interest, in particular the information on the function of the main and secondary winds, the characteristics of the three humors (wind, bile, phlegm), on the lha connected to the movement of the moon during the month, as well as the properties and application of oils.

While the doctor confirmed that Tibetan massage can be learned by anybody because it is a simple method, easy to understand and not risky in its application, he emphasized that there are two indispensable aspects that cannot be ignored: knowledge of the flow of energies in the body and their functions as well as another highly important element, the entire map of the movement of the lha.

The course concluded with a pleasant practical experience of the three phases of massage: the application of the oil, the actual massage over all the body and drying it with chickpea flour. All the students look forward to being able to repeat this experience in order to deepen their knowledge of Kum Nye and thank the doctor for his kindness as well as all those who collaborated in the organization. ■

## Passages



Ursula Hirschi

### BIRTHS:

Ursula Mary Hirschi was born July 15th to Tom Hirschi and Jane Smillie in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA.

### WELCOME TO

Gabriele Palden Palladino son of Antonella Vitali and Gennaro Palladino who arrived on the 7th September at 6.30 pm in Poggibonsi, Siena, Italy

Laura Clara was born to Anya Wisniewska of Warsaw, Poland on September 9th, 1998 at 1:47pm.

Marsha, Jack and Jay Ellison are proud to announce the birth of Jenna Mandarava on August 29th, 1998, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. She weighed 7 lbs. 10 ozs. She is named in honor of her great aunt and great grandmother.

## YANTRA YOGA TEACHER TRAINING COURSE

Namgyalgar, 8 - 18 April, 2000

This course will be taught by Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti.

It is suitable for people wishing to become teachers of Yantra Yoga or those who would like to deepen their knowledge of Yantra Yoga.

Applicants must be registered members of the Community and should have undertaken a course previously with Fabio or Laura.

The course will be held in between the SMS Program and Rinpoche's Easter Retreat in 2000.

The Cost is \$500. (Aust. \$) (does not include meals, etc).

Expressions of interest in the training would be appreciated by the end of January 1999.

Please indicate your interest or send full application to :-

The Secretary, Namgyalgar

PO Box 14, Central Tilba NSW 2546, Australia

phone / fax: (02) 4476 3446, email: namgyalg@acr.net.au



## THE MIRROR

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COMMUNITY

founded by  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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### European Office:

The Mirror Merigar, 58031  
Arcidosso GR Italy  
Tel and Fax 0564-966608  
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### DESIGN AND PRODUCTION

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### ILLUSTRATION

Glen Eddy  
P. Koernig  
Gene Balicek

### PRINTERS

Turley Publishers  
Palmer, MA

### DISTRIBUTION

Tsegialgar at  
Conway, Massachusetts

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

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Dancers from Vajra Dance Course in Merigar, August, 1998

N. ZETZ

## Vajra Dance In Merigar

Enzo N. Terzano

From July 15th to the 21st, the second training course for Teachers of the First level of the Vajra Dance was held on the Mandala of the "capannone" at Merigar. The course was led by Prima Mai and Adriano Dal Borgo.

The course followed the guidance for training Vajra Dance Teachers given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his communication entitled "Qualifications of the Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance Instructors" published in The Mirror, issue 37, September/October 1996. The course was organized in order to prepare local instructors to back-up the work of Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo and become stable points of reference.

The first level training course aimed at thoroughly examining the 'Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas' and the 'Dance of the Three Vajras'. As a prerequisite, the participants were asked to register for the course only if they knew both the male and female parts of these two dances. Actually it was useful to know both the male and the female parts of the 'Dance of the Song of the Vajra' too in order to pick up the subtle indications that the teachers gave when they did the Dance with us.

Many of those who had followed the first course in September 1997 took this new opportunity to perfect the Dance. Our movements were looser and lighter thanks to a greater awareness acquired through daily Dance practice which makes any pretense or hasty knowledge immediately visible. I had the impression that through the Dance the practice manifests all the condition "that is" and in this way even those who watch us dancing can easily see many aspects of our practice.

The object of the Dance is to enter the state of contemplation and integrate it in the Dance movements taught by our Master. The Mandala is the beginning of this experience, a refuge in which to practice remaining in the state of contemplation, a state which then accompanies you outside into the Mandala of existence. Wherever we go, the Sacred Dance that we follow instills in us a gentle and joyful lightness

revealed in each movement of the hands, the feet and the body.

The retreat was not lacking in moments of strong emotions that I had matured through this experience and some personal problem arose which the practice allows to emerge because, obviously, the moment of clearly observing it had arrived.

All of us had come to the course in order to deepen our experience of the practice and to improve our movements and our inner way of being on the Mandala and doing the Dance. Becoming a Dance teacher is definitely a great responsibility and the Master will give to those of us who will be teachers the strength and the courage to take on this commitment and carry it out with gentleness and respect for tradition.

Participating in the First level training does not mean receiving the authorization to teach because the Master will decide who is more adapted to collaborate in this sense.

The fifteen participants who came from various parts of the world studied and practiced the Dance in two sessions in the morning and in the afternoon. Prima Mai filmed our Dance so that each one of us could observe him/herself on the video and understand his or her way of moving, his or her experience. Thanks to the help of the teachers we were able to improve many individual aspects of the Dance.

Harmony was not lacking and even today, even though the retreat finished some time ago, when we meet we share a special sweet glance. We have had an intense experience together and I am very happy for this. I have had similar types of experience at the end of retreats with the Master. On the way home if by chance I met someone who was there at the retreat with me, it was like refreshing myself all over again.

The Master has transmitted this wonderful practice to us with great generosity and I hope that other practitioners will come on the Mandala to dance with us and to have an experience that no words can properly describe.

Translated by Liz Granger  
from "Merigar Letter" no 7,  
August 1998.

## Seminar for Yantra Yoga Teachers

First level

by Giovanna Conti

An in-depth seminar of Yantra Yoga for the first level was recently held at Merigar in the Temple of Great Liberation with the aim of training qualified teachers. The first level was established by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche several years ago and includes the nine purification breathings, the five *tsigjong* which loosen the joints, the eight *lungsang* or movements for purifying the *prana*, the five *tzadul* and their relative *pranayama* to reactivate the *prana* channels, the first two groups of Yantra connected to the *pranayama* of the four retentions and the rhythmic breathing; as well as the profound method of the Vajra Wave for eliminating all impediments to the *prana* channels.

This was the program covered by the seven day seminar held by Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti from July 31 to August 6 which was aimed at deepening, unifying and defining in a correct way the teaching methods of Yantra Yoga.

The group of about 30 people participating in the seminar was made up of those interested in enriching their personal practice, "old" practitioners who were already partially expert at Yantra and others who were interested in teaching Yantra in the future.

Taking into consideration the enormous amount of material being dealt with, it was a week of extremely intense work which severely put to the test both the students and teachers.

All the sequences of the first level were checked in detail including the *pranayama*. This required a constant diligence and particular attention of body, voice and mind, most of all for the teachers who tirelessly explained and repeated with



Yantra Yoga Advanced Class in Merigar, August, 1998

N. ZETZ

patience and devotion more than once the deep meaning of Yantra. Again and again they corrected the errors in posture of each student in order to give the right quality to each detail of the movement.

The commitment of everyone and the pleasant spirit of collaboration seemed to produce its fruit: at the end of the week Fabio and Laura confirmed that the whole class had improved! Of course the incentive that inspired all the students to give their best was the shooting of the video, intended on one hand for correcting the errors of the students themselves but also so that Rinpoche could see the level of the aspiring teachers. We hope that this work was of good quality, in spite of our limits!

One of the interesting episodes that enriched the seminar was the talk given by Dr. Gino Vitiello (student of Yantra Yoga as well as Tibetan medicine) who explained the complex theoretical principles which underlay the theory of the three humors, wind, bile and phlegm, which are the foundation of the Tibetan medical system. In particular Gino spoke at length of the

wind humor which is more linked to respiration and therefore to the mind and the movement of the physical body. He also explained the five principle winds connecting their functions directly to the benefits of practicing Yantra Yoga. He underlined that even if Yantra Yoga is a secondary practice in Dzogchen, it is a path for discovering the real condition of the nature of the mind. During the discussion the teachers also stressed the importance of practical knowledge of Yantra Yoga for studying the Santi Maha Sangha.

The seminar concluded with a collective dinner at Merigar where all the participants took part in songs, dances and music of all traditions in a joyful atmosphere.

At the end of the last lesson, after the dedication of merit, the students offered a fantastic fruit cake with an A in the middle which had been prepared by Silvia (the Gekos) and a toast with Brunello as a tangible sign of thanks for the teaching, to our precious Master and to Fabio and Laura who invited all of us to the next seminar for teachers in Namgyalgar, Australia, in the year 2000! ■



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wheels their blessings sur-  
round all sentient beings,  
and turn their minds and  
hearts toward the Dharma,  
and speed them towards  
liberation."





## Santi Maha SanghaKumar Kumari

by Gino Vitiello

During the August retreat at Merigar the exam for the second level of Santi Maha Sangha Kumar Kumari was held. In quick succession, a dozen teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 appeared before the Master. I was able to observe everyone from a privileged position at the side of the examining table where I was taking photos.

During the year I had guided a good number of them in explaining the text and had had the possibility to know about their characters and their problems a little more in-depth. We all know that this age of change is considered to be difficult. Here are children who are turning into adults with all the difficulties, the enthusiasm and the confusion that this change brings about. Each one of them sat in front of the Master with his or her excitement hidden or shown according to their characters, with their preparation which

had been done throughout the year or at the last moment, but in any way good and true. I was able to follow their efforts to understand the meaning of what they were doing, not only to learn the text by heart in order to pass the three exam questions.

Rinpoche dwelt upon those points of the questions which were more important for each person showing how well he knew the nature of our, and his, children.

Between the coming and going of the candidates, Adriano commented to the Master on adolescence while I silently meditated



Merigar children participating in 1st level SMS

L. GRANGER

on how many words I had used to explain less than what Rinpoche transmitted to them with a single look. At the end there was a brief meeting with the whole group. Unfortunately everything happened so quickly that it wasn't possible to record the intense words of Rinpoche, however I

will try to refer to the sense of what he said, hoping that I can remember well.

The Master told the young people that he cannot always be here and that when he returns the next time he will find them grown up even more because at their age that is what happens. It is necessary that they themselves become aware of the importance of this moment of their lives because it is just at this moment of development that they are more sensitive to external influences. They know very well that this modern world is

fascinating but it is also full of danger, such as drugs which destroy the body, voice and mind of those who use them. So the choice of people with whom they spend their time and experiences during growth is essential. Often those people who seem to be more interesting are those who do the worst things, but bad company is a real danger because a wrong behavior can damage the path of life that they as students of the Santi Maha Sangha have understood to be so important. For this reason it is important that all of them develop the maximum responsibility towards themselves, awareness of their actions and value for life, helping each other without being egoistic.

Finally Rinpoche communicated that he was preparing the text for the third level, so in autumn we will take up our studies once again. ■

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Wangyal will give the last of a three  
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in Tibetan Shamanism,  
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The cost for the two day teaching  
is \$125.00.

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## BEYOND FEMINISM

by Birgit Gewehr

Before the retreat in Germany this summer we had the chance, in a small group, to speak with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu about feminism and Dzogchen. The talk was not taped, but I will try to repeat here some of what Rinpoche told us and my thoughts about that.

I told Rinpoche that his statements about feminism in an "open letter" to the Sangha (see *Mirror* issue #43, January/February 1998) had caused some reflections and discussions within the German community.

Rinpoche stressed in his "open letter" that he considers feminism in the Dzogchen community as a heavy dualistic concept and that mixing the teachings with feminist ideology is a danger for the pure transmission.

I told Rinpoche that my first reaction to his statement was surprise, and also a bit of opposition, in that I had felt connected with the feminist movement for several years and had found it quite necessary and justified. I can say that personally I needed this engagement and support to develop more trust in myself, as well as the courage and strong will necessary to enter and follow a spiritual path.

I consider Rinpoche my teacher, and when he says something I try to go deeper and observe myself and try not to remain in the first emotional reaction. I know that as a result of that fight for self respect and respect from others as a woman I still feel some wounds, anger and mistrust. I was identified with feminism as a concept. I had created images, ideas, prejudices, and ideologies which still have some power; habits which still function and pride which can be an obstacle. Actually what I want is to

be open to see men and women without any concepts and conditions of the past; new in every moment; "as it is". Every concept is a limitation. Actually I wanted to leave such supposed refuges - but it seems I was not really ready yet to get out of it. At least sometimes now I manage not to take it too seriously. When I insisted to be called directress instead of director of the German Dzogchen Community, I had to laugh when somebody put "Mrs. Director" on my nameplate that was worn as identification during a retreat.

When I feel discriminated as a woman I want to resist. There exists exclusion and violence against women as well as anti women feeling worldwide. There are still countries where women are not allowed to appear in public. Concerning this Rinpoche said: "This has to do with secondary cause on the relative level" and further, "If there is something to struggle with, then we struggle!" - a statement which encourages me and, of course, as a German saying goes: put all the wind out of my sails.

"Furthermore", he said, "the concept of feminism deals with all concepts concerning male and female, like for example the concept of democracy deals with all concepts concerning different classes, poor and rich and so on. All these concepts are relative".

"All this", Rinpoche explained, "takes place on the relative level of

dualism and we practitioners should never be conditioned by concepts and we are no longer on the level where one accepts one thing and refuses the other". Rinpoche then told us that several women had come to him and asked him whether they could do Guruyoga with a female figure instead of with Padmasambhava or Garab Dorje. He had answered, "Yes, of course, that is possible, for example with Yeshe Tsogyal, Mandarava or Tara". But, he said he felt sad and also sometimes discouraged because they missed the main point that he had done his best to transmit to them. For three days he had spoken about the Nature of Mind - beyond dualism - and immediately after the teachings the listeners had come to him with still such a strong attachment to a dualistic concept.

Rinpoche said, "The principle of Guruyoga is to go beyond dualism, not to practice feminism. And the nature of mind is neither female nor male. Or did you ever hear of male Dzogchen and female Dzogchen?" Of course it is also not the main point whether the person who introduces one to the nature of mind is male or female.

I understood that this has nothing to do with politics. Our Master did not want to make a political statement in his "open letter" in the sense that, for instance, the discrimination of women does not exist or that he supports the movement for equal rights for men and women

and rejects radical feminism or something like that. As a Dzogchen Master he never judges developments on a relative level. It is a misunderstanding, when some people of the community, after reading Rinpoche's statement in the "open letter" came to the conclusion, "Ah, finally he gave it to these feminists!" Also my first reaction was a misunderstanding. "Why does he fight feminism now instead of sexism, isn't the last one the more heavy concept?" All this is political dualism. As Rinpoche expressed it, "We don't do politics. We practice Dzogchen."

I know that we cannot liberate on the level where we are constantly involved in conflicts, emotions and where we are identified with positions and new positions again. Only in a state of mind "beyond hope and fear", in this wide and open space which we all know deeply but constantly forget, everything is possible - also the healing of all conflicts on the relative level, including the one between men and women. The Master embodies that State of Mind and he transmits it to us. Trust in the master is a main key to enter the state. Rinpoche told us of his experience, that some women keep a distance from him, avoid speaking with him, and form separate groups and so on. He said this makes him really sad.

I think if women want to realize mainly as women and create a female spiritual path, let's say espe-

cially encouraging women and doing special practices for women in opposition or distance to men, then they are mingling the teachings with feminist ideas and therefore with political and psychological "inflammable matter" (as one says in German), and with their own subjective and mutable feelings. As a main point, this would overshadow the essence of the teachings. Rinpoche transmits the teachings to us in a very pure way and it is our responsibility not to mix the teachings with our limitations.

Everybody who comes into contact with the Dzogchen teachings sooner or later is confronted with the challenge to overcome concepts. When I was in Merigar for the first or second time the rumor came to me that a military person, one of the responsables of planning the stationing of American nuclear weapons in Europe, was listening to the teachings. During this time I was a part of the anti - militarist women's movement and my opinion was he should completely change his political view and job or he should be kicked out. Maybe he was only a dreamlike appearance especially for me. In the end I understood that the teachings are transmitted to everybody who is interested, beyond those limited judgments, beyond my judgments. My view was not pure enough to see that everybody has a very deep understanding and that everybody's nature of mind is pure. May we meet each other in the pure Nature of our Mind. There is this deep connection and unity beyond all different manifestations. When we experience this, we are really Sangha and in the Mandala with the Master. ■

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we must do now for future countless others.

I speak of bringing all efforts and intentions  
the very essence of our lives  
as cover for the roots of this sacred tree.

I speak of being ever vigilante  
to the weeds of the dharmas of form  
encroaching on its trunk.

I speak of knowing or condition  
and giving the world only its minimum due.

I speak of knowing that time is passing  
that our father must be getting weary  
and needs to be free.

I speak with eyes full of tears a heart full of love  
a compassion self-arisen  
from empty space and with no cause.

From the space by the pond  
on the land called sacred

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## "YOU BUYS YOUR TICKET AND YOU TAKES YOUR CHANCES" (A Trip to Merigar)

by Diane Campbell

For those of you who are not familiar with this old American saying, I think it comes from a carnival barker selling admission to a roller-coaster ride. If you have no problems planning trips to retreats, you need not read this story. If, however, you need a little push, read on.

"I hate traveling alone and I don't speak Italian." Those were my reasons for dreading traveling to Italy for the August retreat in Merigar. I longed for contact with the Master and clearly needed instruction in practice. I wanted to "be there" but I didn't want to make the journey itself. Earlier in life I loved to travel, but the urge to be on the move has quieted inside me. I should also mention a deathly fear of airplane travel .....this is a newly acquired fear, borne of a couple of particularly scary flights and of knowing a few too many pilots. As I contemplated the four airplanes that would take me from Central America to Rome, I could imagine every one of them heading straight into a hurricane or an air pocket. (My copy of the Mirror with John Shane's wonderful story about flying hadn't arrived while all this was going on - I read it with great delight at the retreat!)

I made the trip. It is analogous to the Path itself. We want freedom as revealed in the teachings, but are we willing to do the work? Perhaps we are resistant because our imagination tells us the journey is hard and lonely ..... is it really? I found the answer to be a resounding "NO."

When I decided to go to Merigar I sent out blind emails to different Dzogchen communities along my travel route looking for somebody who might want to

travel together with me. No luck, but one fellow practitioner offered advice, information and encouragement. All of which I needed, because planning this trip became indeed a roller-coaster ride.

I made airplane reservations. Somehow by the time I went to pay for the ticket, the price had more than tripled..... eventually the travel agent found me a more direct flight for a bit less money. I bought the ticket. Lidian had given me names of hotels in the Arcidosso area - and Italian neighbor made phone calls for me ..... one day there were rooms available, the next day they were fully booked. One hotel said they had a room but would not book it for me because they had never heard of the country where I live (my Italian friend went slightly ballistic and I think told the proprietor to go buy an atlas, but suffice it to say I did not get a room at that hotel.....) Frustrated, we placed a call to Merigar and were assured by Rita that she would find me lodgings in the home of a local practitioner - "Just come to Merigar, please," was her message. I felt a bit better. OK, I would trust Rita to get me a bed. Two friends who had promised to bring me an Italian phrase book (they are not for sale here) forgot to do so. I began to practice my truly atrocious Spanish in hopes it would help in a pinch.

I left for Italy on the little twin engine plane that takes me from my island home to the international airport in Belize. When I checked in for the flight to Houston I was told they had no seat for me ..... a couple of minutes later

the agent said he had found something. What he had found was a lovely seat in first class ..... not a bad way to start a trip after all. Eventually I arrived in Rome, sleepy but having had nothing but smooth air and good company on the flights in between. A couple of days in a nice hotel recovering from jet lag passed and it was time to head out to Arcidosso. Off to the train station - I found the right platform, the right car, the right seat ..... with a minimum of trauma..... and eventually managed to get off at the correct stop in Grosseto.

At the train station in Grosseto I looked around forlornly for the bus ticket seller - and I watched lots of busses come and go ..... I decided to approach the problem of the bus with a full stomach and thusly went into a sandwich shop and pointed at some food. A beautiful dark-haired woman behind the counter served me and then said "Merigar?" She spoke no English, and I wasn't wearing a banner saying "retreat" but there she was - she sold me my ticket, indicated that she too was a practitioner, and about five minutes later she left work for the day. Things were getting very interesting! I ate my sandwich and watched bus after bus depart - none of them with a sign indicating they were heading to Arcidosso. I tried to use a pay phone in the plaza and got my phone card hopelessly stuck in it. After ruining that phone I tried two or three others, failing each time to figure out how to use an Italian public phone. I sat down to contemplate my situation and while doing so, a

woman approached me "Merigar?" she said. She was from Spain, spoke good English, and had a decent grasp of local communications (including pay phones). She successfully phoned Rita at Merigar to let her know we were coming. She located the right bus while I sat bemused across from about ten heavily tattooed youth all dressed in rags and each carrying a cellular phone. We boarded the bus and were off.

We were met in the town by Rita and my local host ..... whisked away to excellent lodgings and on to Merigar. My host was warm and direct - I was to make myself totally at home but I needed to be very independent while I was there, as his schedule was quite demanding. Mostly this meant that I would need to work out my own transportation to and from the retreat (although he did watch out for me more than he was willing to admit). "Just ask anyone for a ride," he said. (I took a deep breath and didn't tell him that I had been kidnapped while hitchhiking many years ago .....) After registering at the retreat I asked for a ride, and got one. I was dropped off in the center of Arcidosso and realized that I had no idea how to get "home." I was totally lost, I didn't know where to look for street signs and it was getting dark. I managed to make the pay phone work this time and once again my angel of mercy Rita answered the phone at Merigar - she was just about to leave, but she gave me directions that got me where I was going and settled in before I faced a night

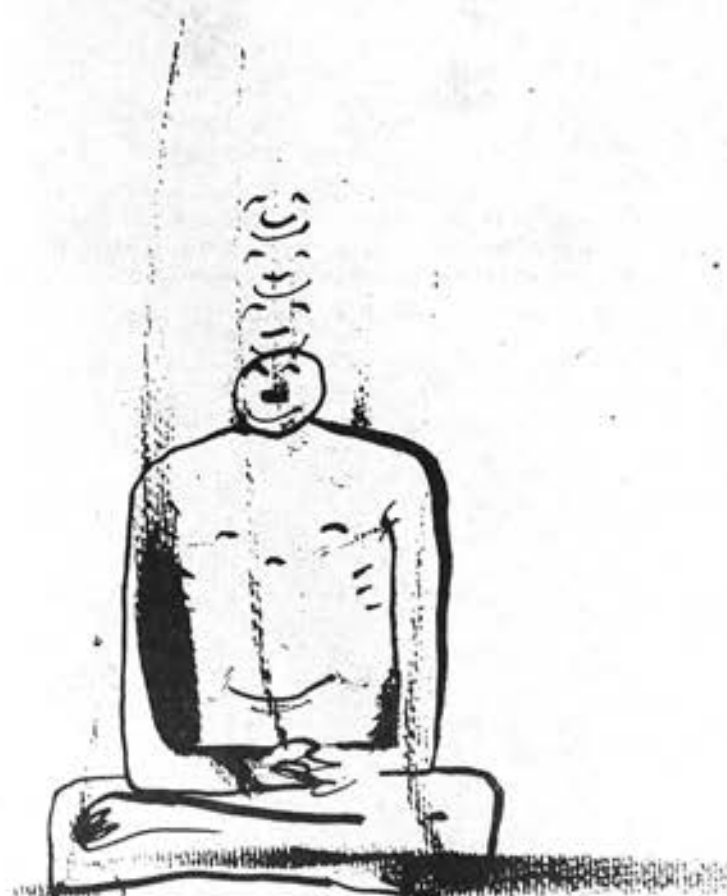
sleeping on a bench in the park!

Most mornings I walked to the round-about where the road leads out of Arcidosso and looked for a ride - one day I put on my retreat badge and stuck out my thumb, another day I recognized some practitioners in a bar and asked them for a ride. One evening Piero picked me up on the road leaving Merigar and the very next morning he and I arrived at the round about simultaneously ..... I was whisked away in good company once again. Yet another morning Janke began thinking of me as she drove to Merigar and we arrived at a particular corner together. She picked me up and again I had a delightful ride up the mountain. These stories are just the tip of the iceberg - every time I was in need of something, it was there. I was fine. I always got where I was going safely and on time. (And on the way back to Belize I discovered that I was no longer afraid to fly ..... ) The journey was an integration of the teachings (Rinpoche said "Relax"..... I relaxed) and an analogy of the practice.

There is no doubt in my mind that from the time I made a commitment to the practice and to the teachings, Rinpoche's protection went to work.

The teachings were profound. The retreat was beautiful. And for me traveling there "alone" was an experience I would not trade for the world. Because you know - we're not alone ..... as Rinpoche says "We're all in the same boat." It's a GREAT boat! Advice to those who are considering traveling to a retreat ..... "Buy your ticket and take your chances."

Homage to the Master - and Thank You. ■



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# COUNTING TO A MILLION

(BEGINNING WITH ONE).

by John Shane

They say that if you can remember the Sixties, you weren't really there.

But I was there, and I remember everything - the good and the bad.

I was there, full of teenage lust and loneliness, finishing school in London when the Beatles rattled down from Liverpool in one dirty little van to put on their very first shows in the big city - where nobody screamed.

I was there, with blonde-haired and mini-skirted Julia - my first real girlfriend - when a local band, The Rolling Stones, acned and unkempt, prowled the tiny stage of the Richmond Railway Hotel - before their wild guitars and raw harmonicas shook off the manicured music that still ruled the charts and led them out to conquer the waiting world.

I was there - I was there - scribbling in my journals, writing and reading my poems, singing my songs and strumming my guitar along with a million other guitar strummers, as a generation found its voice in protest at the madness of the cold war with all its stupid posturing and its gridlock rigid thinking.

I was there, in 'swinging' London, as the mode of the music changed, and the walls of the city trembled and shook.

Artists, photographers, poets, musicians, without fully knowing what they were doing or why they were doing it, driven - yes - by the lust for fame, riches, admiration, and - yes - motivated by longings for love and sex, but also urged on by something larger than themselves - a sense of exploration, of discovery, of new possibilities - pushed the parameters of the known, the boundaries of the accepted, searching for something, seeking to express a great yearning, a hope, a glimmer, a growing consciousness that for the planet to survive, things were going to have to change and to change pretty damn fast, too.

I was the son of a distinguished and influential family, and as I prepared to enter the august halls of Cambridge University - then, even more than it is now, one of the traditional avenues for entering and becoming a member of the Establishment - all around me the grand monolith of the staid culture of post war austerity in Great Britain was finally cracking as prosperity returned after so much post-war hardship.

The class system that so dominated English society began to buckle under the seismic force of pressure from below as the baby boom generation came of age, discovering itself as a force in the world. The sons and daughters of the great and the good courted the new 'aristocracy' of working class pop stars and fashion photographers, and the sons of garbage collectors became DJ's - disc jockeys! - the much sought after and celebrated arbiters of taste and social mores.

Social mobility increased and new opportunities opened up. But uncertainty replaced certainty in every aspect of life, as values were turned on their heads. Underneath it all, bubbling away like the molten core of a volcano ready to erupt, lay our collective awareness of The Bomb.

I know: Yes, it was me. I was there.

By the time I was ready for col-

lege it was already some years since I had first squeezed myself into the Levi jeans that I shrank to a skin-tight fit by sitting with them on in a bath full of cold water; it was already some years since I had first pulled on my tall black suede boots and had first picked up my guitar to join the annual march from London's Trafalgar Square to the nuclear base at Aldermaston, where I added my presence to the protests of thousands of other young people like me - who knew all the words to the songs on Bob Dylan's just released first album.

I didn't want to sing Bob Dylan songs, or protest songs like 'We Shall Overcome' - which seemed too one-dimensional to me, so I made up my own songs to the sequences of basic chords I copied from songbooks and from watching the fingers of other guitar players.

Although we were mostly white - and many of us were from comfortable homes - we felt we had good reason to sing the blues.

We were the first generation to have to try to grow up with the threat of nuclear holocaust hanging over us, and that ominous threat colored all our thoughts, undermining all our plans for the future. How could we even consider a long-term career or commit to a life-time mortgage, when the world might be blown up tomorrow?

And from questioning the values that could produce something so evil in its perfect logic as the nuclear bomb and the concept of deterrence, we progressed to questioning all the governing values of the society we found ourselves in.

When we asked ourselves the inevitable and crucial question: how can we respect and obey our elders and the structures of society and tradition when they have produced and are committed to actively maintaining a system of weapons that can destroy the planet and everything on it, it didn't take long for us to come to the conclusion that we could no longer live by the sense of social duty that motivated our parents.

My father, blessed with the gift of life-saving irony, remarked as I set out to march against the bomb one fine Saturday morning that he was sure the whole nuclear problem was really all his fault for working and paying his taxes as he did.

But with the self-righteousness of youth, the younger generation blamed the older for a mess that they had partly inherited from the generation before them. The buck had to stop somewhere, we felt, and so it might as well stop with us. It was more of an intuition than something we could consciously state at first, but we gradually came to define a philosophy of sorts. WE wouldn't play the game any more. WE wouldn't compromise.

It was almost as if, in our time - in the late Sixties - it was our duty to protest and rebel, just as in the time of the second world war it had seemed to our parents that their duty was to conform in order to win the war and to rebuild the country after it.

It would not be unfair to suggest that it was on the basis of the pros-

perity our parents had created that we found the liberty to rebel, but we didn't think about that. Our rebellion produced a determination to pursue freedom in every way. And of course, at the time we didn't see that there was as much conformity inherent in this rebellion as there had been in the slavish devotion to duty of previous generations.

In the cultural vacuum created by the fall from favor of traditional values every kind of philosophy, secular and religious, found itself up for discovery. The collective confusion of the time is amply reflected in the Beatles songs as they veered from the cheery optimism of 'All You Need is Love' to John Lennon's howl of rage and despair on 'Cold Turkey'. The step from LSD to heroin had been a short one, and, as Lennon reminded us in his song, addiction is no joke.

The psychedelic component of the developing counter-culture revealed a gaping hole in the soul of western civilization, but the opening of minds that took place as a result of the psychedelic experience left many as bewildered and bemused as they had been before it. What, finally, was the use of a brief drug-induced glimpse of awakening when there was no way to sustain it, no spiritual framework within which to understand it?

Finally, it was not easy to escape feeling that the media's discovery of the 'youth market' had led to a brutal and cynical exploitation for profit of young people's legitimate causes and concerns: the status quo triumphed and held its ground by the familiar process of containment and corruption, preventing any real change. Despair and apathy made people withdraw into themselves. 'Dig in', became the order of the day, and people left the cities in droves to get back to the earth.

It was in the midst this cultural and spiritual chaos that the first Tibetan lamas began arriving in the West, where they found a host of disaffected young people searching for answers and ready to listen to the teachings of the Buddha that had been preserved for centuries in the mysterious land of the snows. The image of Tibet had long had a particular life of its own in the popular western imagination as a kind of mystical Shangri-La inhabited by spiritual supermen possessed of every imaginable kind of psychic power.

I know. I was there. It was the end of the Sixties, but I remember it well.

I was among those who went - with all manner of absurd expectations and assumptions - to Samye Ling, the first Tibetan Buddhist monastery to be founded in the West, where I met Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who did me the great favor of destroying a few of my illusions and of giving me essential meditation instructions that were to enable me to work at destroying a good many other illusions on my own over the following years.

There is a traditional saying in the East: 'When the student is ready, the master appears', and over the years I have had the good for-

tune to meet and learn from many spiritual teachers, each of whom has arrived in my life at the time I was ready to open to them. Teachers all have their own flavor, style and approach, which will be more suited to some potential students than to others, and obviously different teachers will attract different individuals at various stages of their lives and their development.

I don't want to lie to you, or to present myself as something other than I really am. I want to confess right away that I met my first Tibetan teacher, Trungpa Rinpoche in classic Sixties fashion: our meeting came about because I went to a party. If that doesn't sound much like 'right motivation', I have to say in my own defense (though, of course, no defense is really needed) that what I lacked in the initial motivation department was more than made up for by a certain freshness and candor. In my young and I'm sure, naive way, I had a relaxed freedom from preconceived ideas about the Dharma and about Dharma teachers that Trungpa Rinpoche clearly found refreshing, considering some of the heavy projections he had to endure. I didn't put him on a pedestal but related to him very directly, and he appreciated that.

It happened like this: I went up to Scotland for a society wedding, and the marriage ceremony was performed by Trungpa Rinpoche, who was the couple's teacher. I stayed on at the monastery after the marriage festivities, and greatly benefited from both his conversation and his Dharma talks. It was a blessed relief after so much Sixties polemic to hear someone explain simply how to sit, how to walk, how to meditate. What I learned in those weeks has remained with me as a positive force throughout the ensu-

ing thirty years of my life.

And while it is certainly true that my story is not so very remarkable and is perhaps only of interest to others in that it is so typical of the experiences so many of us went through, what happened in my life was nevertheless, for me, absolutely extraordinary and unique - just as is the experience of each individual who encounters a spiritual master and is enabled by them to approach and enter into the real meaning of the teachings.

The recent nuclear tests in India and Pakistan have reminded us all that the nuclear threat has not gone away - indeed the proliferation of nuclear weapons has continued over the years in an insidious and alarming way. Several big Hollywood movies have now reflected the growing fear in the collective psyche that terrorists will somehow get hold of a nuclear bomb.

In order not to give in to despair about this state of affairs my personal meditation on this theme has been to reflect on my own life history, and to note that the nuclear threat that so preoccupied us in the Sixties was at least in some part a cause of my becoming open to the teachings: the unsatisfactoriness of Samsara was brought home to me and many others in a big way by the fact of the nuclear bomb.

But it is also clear to me from this meditation that, in more ways than one, technology is forcing the pace of human evolution: either we evolve out of our competitive and aggressive modes of behavior, or the planet, and humanity with it, will die. Technology has now provided us with so many ways to project out into the world all the unresolved desire, anger and selfishness that we hide within us that every individual is now presented with a deep challenge.

As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has often remarked in relation to peoples' attempts to change society without first confronting themselves, to count to a million, we have to begin with one, and the one we have to begin with is ourselves. ●

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