

In the Dzogchen teachings a mirror can be used in many ways as a metaphor to clarify various aspects of the teachings and as a symbol to explain the functioning of the mind.

THE MIRROR

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
INSPIRED BY THE TEACHINGS OF AND UNDER THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF
NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

One of the ways in which a mirror is used as a symbol is to remind one to observe oneself at all times and to check whether one is distracted or truly present in the moment.

MAINTAINING THE PURITY OF TRANSMISSION AS THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY GROWS.

REFLECTIONS FROM MERIGAR. John Shane.

Since the end of the Christmas retreat Merigar has been a hive of activity. All the Dzogchen Community members who live nearby and all those who have come to Merigar to stay for even a few days have been continually busy with all the work necessary to put into action the various important activities planned for this year: the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to take part in the inauguration of the Shang-Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies; the Institute's inaugural Exhibition of all aspects of Tibetan culture which will first be on show in Arcidosso during the inauguration; the building of the Gumpa at Merigar; and the launching of this newspaper. All these projects are in addition to the usual work necessary to keep Merigar going, which includes holding Gakyil meetings, replying to correspondence, publishing the Italian newsletter 'Merigar Letter' and the magazine 'Merigar', and preparing Shang-Shung Editions books for publication.

At the centre of all these activities, as usual, has been our Master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who, when every thing had settled down after the Christmas retreat, immediately began work with a small dedicated group of the Community's Tibetologists on the translation into Italian of one of his books, entitled 'A Journey into the Culture of Tibetan Nomads' which has previously only been available in the original Tibetan edition.

The book was divided into sections, and each translator was given one part of the book to work on. The veranda upstairs at the main house at Merigar, whose large windows overlook the wide panorama of the hilly landscape of Merigar's fields and the distant view of Monte Labro, was filled with the concentrated energy of brains being wracked to find the right Italian words to correspond to the Tibetan terms for all the fascinating customs and artefacts of the nomad peoples of the high Tibetan plateaus.

Rinpoche himself sat working at the end of a long, sturdy table made by Merigar's carpenters of local chestnut-wood from the slopes of Monte Amiata. Along each side of the same table sat the translators, with their Tibetan-English dictionaries at the ready. Whenever a translator had a problem he or she approached the Master for clarification. The work continued like this all day for about ten rather tense days, during which woe-betide anyone not translating who ventured upstairs at Merigar without good reason. The work was urgent: the aim is to publish the book to coincide with the Shang-Shung Institute Inaugural Exhibition, which, it is planned, will contain many exhibits relating to the life of Tibetan nomads, about whom little has so far been published elsewhere.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE pages 2 and 3



The Stupa at Merigar with the site of the new Gumpa in the distance.

His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, the XIVth Dalai Lama in Merigar



His Holiness the Dalai Lama will visit Merigar for the inauguration of the Shang-Shung Institute. This visit is particularly significant as it demonstrates His Holiness' wish to draw attention to an initiative whose aim is to safeguard the historic and cultural heritage of his people, dispersed as they are in the world today with more than one hundred thousand Tibetans living in exile in conditions of

bare survival and in danger of losing their ethnic and religious identity. The Shang-Shung Institute's name is derived from the name of a vast ancient pre-Buddhist kingdom known as Shang-Shung that once existed in the region of present day Tibet. The Institute is gathering research material relating to all aspects of Tibetan culture, but one particularly interesting feature of the collection already in existence is that it includes the largest number of Tibetan texts to be found anywhere in the world on the subject of the ancient and profound Tibetan spiritual tradition known as "Dzogchen". Dzogchen, meaning "The Great Perfection", is regarded as the essence of all the spiritual teachings of Tibet, and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is internationally considered to be one of the most authoritative and learned exponents of this tradition. His Holiness will stay in Arcidosso, as a guest of the Institute from the 28th to the 31st of May. During his visit he will give public teachings at Merigar. While in Italy he will be received by His Holiness John Paul II at the Vatican.

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INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING COMMITTEE OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche appointed representatives for the five major languages in which Dzogchen texts have so far been published by the Community. They are as follows:

Italian: Giorgio Amtrano	English: John Shane	French: Anne Marie Clos
Cesare Spada	John Koumantarakis	Alix de Fermor
German: Christiana Totino	Lauri Marder	
Anna Eid	Spanish: Anamaria Humeres	
Karin Koppensteiner		
Matthias Winter		

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FACES IN THE MIRROR

"The History of a Change"

12 Years in the Dzogchen Community
by Cristiana De Falco

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Why this newspaper is called The Mirror.

The mind's essential nature is said in the Dzogchen teachings to be like the nature of a mirror. A mirror's essential nature is clear, pure, and limpid; if this was not the case no reflections could arise in it. In the same way the mind's natural condition is one of clarity, purity and limpidity. A mirror will reflect whatever is placed in front of it, but the nature of the mirror is not stained by any reflection, no matter how ugly or terrible. In the same way, if an individual remains continually present in the contemplative state that is the inherent nature of the mind, no thought however beautiful or ugly, attractive or repulsive, can stain the mind's fundamental purity, or distract or disturb the practitioner, who remains integrated in a state beyond the limits of the ego and the judging mind, experiencing the world as the play of his or her own energies. This is the effortless state of 'Dzogchen', the 'Great Perfection', complete in itself, and lacking nothing. But when an individual is distracted, they are no longer in the state of the nature of the mind; they enter into the dualistic confusion of separating their experience into that of an observing subject who perceives a seemingly external world as an object. This is said to be like mistaking the unreal reflections arising in a mirror for reality itself.

The Dzogchen teachings exist to enable those who have entered into this dualistic condition, with all its inherent suffering, to return to the 'primordial state' which is the mind's natural condition, the state of Dzogchen. This state is self-perfected and exists in every individual from the very beginning. It is only lost through the dualistic clinging of the ego-fixed mind. It does not have to be created, or constructed. The practitioner of Dzogchen, having received transmission of the primordial state from a qualified master, experiences it for him or herself and no longer remains in any doubt as to what this state really is. He or she then tries to remain present, continuing in non-dual contemplation in each moment, without becoming distracted or allowing the mind to become caught



"Since the beginning of the 1980s, the Town of Arcidosso has helped the Dzogchen Community to put down its roots in this area, because of the important cultural, social and economic advantages."

Pier Luigi Marini
Mayor of Arcidosso



"It has been an extremely interesting and positive experience for us, the way the two Communities (the Dzogchen Community and the local Community of Amiata) have been integrating."

Marcello Ramacciotti
Chairman of the
"Comunità Montana"
of Monte Amiata

MAINTAINING THE PURITY OF TRANSMISSION AS THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY GROWS AN INTERVIEW WITH NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

RECORDED BY THE EDITORS OF
THE MIRROR AT MERIGAR ON THE
THIRD DAY OF THE METAL HORSE YEAR,
THE NEW YEAR OF THE TIBETAN
CALENDAR, 28th FEBRUARY 1990

THE MIRROR: On behalf of the Members of the Dzogchen Community everywhere in the World, Rinpoche, we would like to wish you a Happy, Healthy, and Successful New Year. And on behalf of the readers of the first edition of our new newspaper, which is being published to coincide with the Tibetan New Year, we would like to ask you to explain the meaning of the name of this particular year. Does it have a special significance?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: First of all I would like to say hello to all the members of the Dzogchen Community! This year is the year of the Metal Horse in the Tibetan calendar. Generally speaking, in any year of the Horse, whatever you set out to do will be more effective than in other years. Since this is the Metal Horse year, and metal is considered to be a stable material, it is even more auspicious for carrying actions to conclusion.

THE MIRROR: Please could you then tell us something about your plans, and what you want the Dzogchen Community to be able to achieve in the New Year?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: I think this is a very important moment for us, because we are preparing to do many things connected with preserving Tibetan culture, and safeguarding the teachings in general and the Dzogchen teachings in particular. There are many people in the Dzogchen Community who already have a great deal of knowledge of the Dzogchen teachings, as well as knowledge of the state of Dzogchen itself. These people are aware of the delicate situation in the world today, and that awareness prompts them to try to make a contribution that will be of benefit to all sentient beings. But what is fundamentally necessary is to be able to bring about such benefit is that we develop collaboration between practitioners, between those people who have a sound understanding of the teachings. It is not so difficult to all collaborate together, and in that way we can achieve many things.

I am personally very committed to a number of major projects. We are inaugurating the Shang-Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies this year, and we will soon begin building the new Gumpa to give us more space during retreats at Merigar. We also now have the plans ready for the model village for Tibetan refugees in India.

But beyond those things, I have many plans for things I want to achieve in Tibet itself. In East Tibet, for example, at Khamdo Gar, the village where my own master Chanchub Dorje lived, we are rebuilding the temple and its various retreat places. We are doing this not only for the local Tibetan people but also for the practitioners of our Community so that they will be able to go there. I hope that people will be able to visit Khamdo Gar for one or two months at a time to practise. We are also starting to build a small hospital and a primary school in this village because there isn't any medical care available in that place at present, or anywhere for the children to receive any sort of education. We are building a small guest house in which people of the Community will be able to stay. If no such facility exists, the Chinese authorities will not allow them to go there.

In addition to these initiatives, we are building a hospital and primary school at Galentin, where we are also repairing the temple and two or three of the monastery buildings that were damaged in the Cultural Revolution. There is a lot to do, but the projects are already under way.

In general, as far as the Community in the whole world is concerned, I think it is very, very important that we prepare many retreat places in the different countries where we have Dzogchen Communities.

In America, at Tseggyalgar, in Massachusetts, we have a place where people can undertake a Yantig retreat of practice in the dark. We are now building another dark retreat house in southern France, near Perpignan. This doesn't mean that we only need dark retreat houses. We also need places for study, such as the Shang-Shung Institute, good libraries and so on.

The Dzogchen Community of Argentina has now bought some land with two houses, to which I have given the name 'Tashigar'. It is my intention that there should be a library of Dzogchen texts and other related books there, like the library here at Merigar. Then there will be the possibility to follow and study the Dzogchen teachings in that area.

I would like to see collaboration between Dzogchen practitioners all over the world. But I don't want to limit the idea of collaboration to just that between members of the Dzogchen Community. We can collaborate with all practitioners of all spiritual traditions, not even limiting ourselves to just collaborating with other Buddhists. That is how I would like to see people working together.

THE MIRROR: So we could say that this is a year of building?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: Yes; this is a year in which we are constructing many things.

THE MIRROR: All this activity reflects the tremendous



growth of the Dzogchen Community in recent years, and this growth is obviously not without its difficulties and its risks. You have commented several times recently about people misusing the teaching, which you said was very dangerous. At a retreat at Loches, in the Loire Valley in France I remember that you said: "There is a kind of modern vice in which people come to a Master to receive teachings, but instead of working to realise them themselves, their real intention is to acquire something in order to set themselves up as teachers." We have now formed an International Publishing Committee to regulate the publication of all material relating to the teachings that is in your copyright or in the copyright of the Dzogchen Community to try to stop unauthorised or inaccurate publications of that material appearing. Could you please now give us some clear indication of how to work with the situation in which people abuse the teachings in other ways, such as in the way you spoke of in France?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: When we follow a teaching such as the Dzogchen teachings, we are learning how an individual can be really free, and can live in a state of perfect freedom. But when we speak of being free, that doesn't simply mean being free to mix everything up in any way we feel. This is particularly true of the teachings.

The teachings are communicated through transmission. They enable us in this way to discover many things that we can't discover with our intellectual judging minds, with all their limitations. The value of the teaching is that it enables us to get beyond all these limitations. The transmission is really very, very important for the teachings, and if we really understand what we mean by a teaching, we must understand that it is based on transmission.

We must respect and preserve the authenticity of the transmission. This doesn't mean that if we follow a teaching we can't do other things. We can integrate everything. But by 'integrating everything' we don't just mean mixing everything up with the teaching. We have many problems with this kind of thing. Many people don't understand this fundamental point, and they learn a little about the Dzogchen teaching and its methods and mix it up with psychotherapy. I am not against psychotherapy. It can be very useful. But if we become involved with psychotherapy we should do so in the right way, not mixing it up with the teachings. Otherwise the Dzogchen teachings will be lost for future generations, for our children and grandchildren. All the teachers of Dzogchen from Garab Dorje to the present day have preserved the traditions of the transmission in a very pure way, and I feel that it is very, very important that we continue in the same way.

THE MIRROR: Some people have started to teach, giving transmission and declaring that you have authorised them to do this. One person in America has, as you know, published their own newsletter that states that they have been authorised by you to give transmission. Many practitioners have expressed their doubts about this whole situation, but some people are convinced by the fact that the person in question claims to have been authorised by you. Could you please tell us what you think about this?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: I have written a book for the Community entitled 'Santi Maha Sangha', which, when it is translated into English from Italian will give a precise definition of the way in which one will become qualified to teach. Unfortunately, the translation is not yet ready for publication. When it is, people will know more clearly how to teach and in what ways they can give transmission. It is not simply a matter of someone having received transmission from me and then being able to transmit themselves. The issue of maintaining the transmission in a pure way is more important than the question of permission being granted by someone to someone else; but nevertheless we need a system that will make it clear how and when someone can teach, and that is why I have written my book 'Santi Maha

Sangha'.

THE MIRROR: Since that book has yet to be translated and published, could you clarify for us now whether you are satisfied with the way such people are announcing publicly that they are 'authorised by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche' to give transmissions?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: No; I am not satisfied!

THE MIRROR: You are not satisfied that they are declaring that you have authorised them?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: I am not satisfied that they make such declarations themselves, independently. But it is not always easy for me to deal with this kind of problem because of the way people sometimes put their questions to me. If they ask me something, and I reply in a certain way, they interpret my answer to suit their own purpose. If they ask me, for example, "Did I receive transmission from you of a certain practice, or not?", I must of course reply: "Yes, you did receive it", because I myself gave the transmission. But just receiving the transmission does not mean that afterwards you are free to do everything you like with it, or are ready to transmit it.

THE MIRROR: Most people in the Community have tried to show real respect for the transmission and to understand the commitment involved in receiving it. But once one person begins to say: "I have received transmission, therefore I can teach and transmit", it is clear that others begin to feel: "Well, if that person is doing it, I can do it too because I am just as qualified as they are." And unless there is a clarification of this point from you, Rinpoche, the standards of the whole Community are endangered by this sort of activity. If I have understood you correctly, you are saying that you do not want people to declare independently that they have been authorised by you to teach and give transmission?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: Yes, that is correct. It is better that they do not do that.

THE MIRROR: Those who know a little about your life and the history of your teaching know that you yourself refused to teach for many years when you were first requested to do so in the West. Then you later did begin to teach. Can you please explain to us the reasons behind your initial reluctance and your later change of attitude?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: I have always been very concerned with ensuring that the transmission of the Dzogchen teachings is maintained correctly. To teach the Dzogchen teachings means to give transmission of Dzogchen. If I teach to people who do not keep the transmission in a pure way, but who instead create problems with the transmission, that is very negative for me personally as well as for the person who distorts the transmission, because I am the one who taught them and I have thus entered into a relationship with them based on transmission. If I am not sure of the situation in relation to how people will be respond to my trust in teaching them, it is much better that I keep quiet. That was the idea that was behind my not teaching. But then, at the same time, I know that some people are capable of keeping the transmission in a pure way. If I were to keep quiet I would hinder those people who are really ready to work in a genuine manner with the teachings. That is why I now teach.

THE MIRROR: So we can say that the responsibility for the transmission is mutual between the one who transmits and the one who receives it, between the teacher and the practitioners; both must have the right attitude to maintain it purely?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: Yes; that is true. If the practitioner wants to arrive at realisation through the transmission, then he or she must know how to maintain the transmission and how to work with it, understanding that it is linked to the teacher and the teaching. Otherwise the transmission becomes lost, and has no value any more.

THE MIRROR: You sometimes have to speak out strongly, even severely, on certain issues in relation to the conduct or the understanding of certain individuals in the Dzogchen Community, or of one or other of the various Communities in the world. Some people feel that you are disappointed in the Dzogchen Community in general. Could you please comment on this?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: I am not disappointed with the Dzogchen Community in general; most of the practitioners have followed my teachings in a sincere manner. Sometimes, however, we do have problems that arise through the actions of a few people. These problems are not the fault of the whole Community, but nevertheless I must speak strongly on these issues to make people understand that what they are doing is wrong.

THE MIRROR: The Dzogchen Community has always had an international character, with its practitioners living in every part of the world, but Merigar has come to be seen by many people all over the world as the central point of the Community because you live in Italy and are thus here more often than elsewhere. Could you please share with us your view of the Dzogchen Community as a whole?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: I have always explained to the people of the Community that we have no intention that Merigar should be or become the number one place of the Dzogchen Community in a bureaucratic, hierarchical way. Since I do at present live in Italy, however, I have more contact with Merigar, and thus it has become a kind of example, a resource of acquired experience that can be shared by the whole Dzogchen Community all over the world. Many aspects of the Community's activity at Merigar are at the moment more developed than they are in other places, but I hope in the future that we will develop five principal places of the Dzogchen Community, that will be like Merigar, on five continents. In North America, for example we have already bought a fine piece of land at Tsegylgar, at Buckland in Massachusetts, close to where the Community used to have a house at Conway. Then, in South America, as I have already said, the Dzogchen Community of Argentina has just bought some land and two houses that I have named 'Tashigar'. In Australia, the Community is now looking for land, and in Asia we are already building at the places in East Tibet that I have already mentioned. I hope that in the future, in those places in East Tibet, there will be the possibility for us to develop a strong base for the Dzogchen Community. The five places on five continents that I have mentioned are like a mandala. A mandala always has five families, so everything can develop from the mandala of those five principal places in an integrated way, with the various places of the Community becoming like chakras in the various channels of the Community's energy. This is the way I want the Community to develop for the future, with this kind of international outlook.

THE MIRROR: To conclude this interview, could we please ask you a personal question? How is your health?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: My health is very good now, very much improved.

THE MIRROR: We were all very worried about you last year.

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: Last year my health was not good at all. Now my blood pressure is very, very normal, and I am continuing with my special diet, so there is no

problem with my health. I can go ahead with all my various activities as usual.

THE MIRROR: Could you please tell us something about the personal retreat you intend to make later this year? How long will it last?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: My personal retreat will be for about one year. I will begin it after the teachings that I plan to give in Massachusetts at Tsegylgar at the end of July. I will remain there for about one month in retreat by myself. Then I will leave Tsegylgar and continue my retreat for the rest of the year somewhere else.

THE MIRROR: While you are in that personal retreat do you have any particular request to make of the Community and its members?

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE: I would like people to apply what I have taught them. I have already given you all many transmissions, so everyone has plenty to work with putting into practice what they have already received.

THE MIRROR: Thank you very much, Rinpoche. We hope that all the plans that you have described will go well, and that we will all be worthy of the trust you have placed in us.



HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE MIRROR

Although we are joined spiritually through the power of the transmission, we are nevertheless separated in time and space by oceans and mountains living as we do in different lands and on different continents. The function of 'THE MIRROR' will be to bring us closer together, to help us to know each other better, to enable us to understand what projects and initiatives are being put into action by the various local Communities, to help resolve the difficulties encountered by those Communities, and to share resources. If we really receive the active support of the Dzogchen Community world-wide we can make our new newspaper a wonderful success; if the Community in all countries does not collaborate, there is no way that a small group of people can make such an ambitious undertaking succeed. The Editors and Staff at Merigar will continue to do their very best in every way, but they cannot succeed without YOUR help. PLEASE COLLABORATE and send news and other articles from YOUR area as

soon as possible, as this is a major project which cannot truly succeed in reflecting our Community's presence and activity in the world if we do not receive material from everywhere! We don't want 'THE MIRROR' to reflect only one group of persons' views; we want it to truly mirror the Community as a whole. We want YOU to feel it is YOUR Newspaper, and to make it truly reflect all the colours of the Community's rainbow-like spectrum. We want 'The MIRROR' to contain news of coming retreats, reports and photos from retreats that have just finished, and excerpts from teachings given at retreats. It will include on-going updates on projects the Community undertakes anywhere in the world, such as, for example, on the progress made with purchasing land, building retreat houses and cabins, and on publication and translation projects. It will detail the latest news on activities such as the forthcoming visit of H.H. The Dalai Lama to inaugurate the Shanshung Institute for Tibetan Culture (in Arcidos-

so), the New Tibetan Village Project to help Tibetans in exile in India, and Rinpoche's various projects to build schools and hospitals in East Tibet, and will contain contributions from the many qualified Tibetologists in the Community. We will interview Rinpoche as often as we can on specific topics relating to the Community and the teachings. But we also want personal articles from individual practitioners on such subjects as: 'How I first met Rinpoche'; 'How the teachings have helped me in my life'; or simply little potted biographies with a photo to introduce ourselves to each other. Please think first: 'Is this really just something that's only my own private little trip, or is it of genuine interest and value to others?' As Rinpoche himself has requested, we should all avoid provocative material either at a spiritual, personal, or political level. The Editors will obviously reserve the right to exercise their judgement in deciding what is acceptable. If in doubt, get in touch with the Editors before writing.

If you have some burning question that you have always been dying to ask Rinpoche but have never managed to put your query to him, write it down and send it to the newspaper. We will try to get you an answer from Rinpoche. Please be sincere in this kind of approach. These are just a few preliminary suggestions, and we hope to develop a dialogue with our readers in these pages that will encourage communication between us. When writing we should try to show the kind of respect between persons that Rinpoche has always emphasised is the true basis of a valid spiritual community. We do not want articles that are critical at a personal level of other Community members, or of other spiritual communities, spiritual traditions, or religions. This does not mean that there is no place for discussing problems in the newspaper; quite clearly the reverse is true. But we want constructive material that will encourage and inspire others on the path. We are all in the same boat, as Rinpo-

che often reminds us. I am sure all of us are already aware that an article for a newspaper such as this should not just be an excuse for someone to get all their grievances off their chest. We would welcome humorous contributions, cartoons, etc. Now's your chance to bring a smile to the face of all your fellow members of the Dzogchen Community all over the world!

All articles should ideally be written in English, but we will also accept material that needs translation if there is absolutely no way it can be written in English. The articles will be edited into a good level of English language where necessary.

Please TYPE your articles DOUBLE SPACED ON ONE SIDE OF THE PAPER ONLY. This will be a great help to those who edit and typeset.

If you can prepare your article on an Apple Macintosh computer, which is the machine that we are using to typeset, and send the article to us on a disk, that is an even better way for us to work together efficiently. We hope soon to have a modem up and running so that we can receive data from you down the phone lines at the cheapest phone rates for you in your country.

You can give your article to the local correspondent of 'THE MIRROR' for him or her to forward on to us. The newspaper will be mailed by us here in Italy in bulk to the correspondents in the various countries who will send them out to the individual subscribers. This will reduce postage costs.

If you want to send articles by mail, send them by AIR MAIL direct to 'THE MIRROR', c/o Comunità Dzogchen, Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

We now have our FAX machine up and running, in Arcidosso: the number is (0564) 966039 and 966846, so if you can send your article by FAX that is better than the post.

Any photographs you send should come by mail. They should preferably be in BLACK AND WHITE. We also need line drawings and other illustrative material. There must be lots of talented artists out there who can enliven our pages! Please don't hide your work away in dusty folders on your bookshelves! Mail your work to us! Subscriptions to 'THE MIRROR'

There is another way in which everyone can contribute to 'The Mirror' even if they can't write articles or make illustrations. Everyone can take out a subscription as soon as possible. The basic subscription is 50 (fifty) US Dollars a year, or its equivalent in your local currency. If you live reasonably near one of the Correspondents, please pay the subscription to them. Make sure you give your Correspondent your full postal address and, if possible, phone number. If you are far from a local correspondent, please send an International Money Order in US dollars

directly to the address above. The basic subscription is only the minimum contribution! But don't let us be limited! If you really feel, as we do, that this newspaper is a good idea, you can offer any amount you like above 50 dollars. But we are hoping that generous community members will make a FOUN- DING SUBSCRIBER'S DONATION offering 250 US Dollars. For this you will receive the newspaper for five years, as well as the merit of such a good action! If the Founding Subscriber so wish will be listed in the newspaper.

Everyone in the Community already knows that each Gakyil which represents a local Dzogchen Community has a yellow group that is responsible for the finances of that local Community. Each yellow group will already have many commitments to meet, and not enough funds with which to meet them. The Merigar Gakyil and Shang-Shung Editions are giving their full support in every sense to this newspaper. But 'THE MIRROR' is not just the newspaper of the Italian Community, or of Merigar alone. 'THE MIRROR' is the newspaper of the entire Dzogchen Community world-wide; we are using the English language because that is the language that will enable the largest number of Community members to understand what is written in it. We now need a response from the whole Community to enable us to know if our fellow Community members value the efforts that are being made to communicate with them enough to help to finance those efforts.

We would like the yellow group of each local Gakyil to consider making a contribution to the running costs of the newspaper. It obviously will not become self-supporting at once, though we intend in due course to sell advertising space.

Since Rinpoche is going to make a personal retreat for a year, here at Merigar we feel that increased communication between us all is essential for the future of the Community. We want very much to hear from Community members and the various local Gakyils what they feel in their hearts about our efforts. Please write to us!!

The Editors.

NEWS FROM THE BRITISH COMMUNITY

GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL will be giving teachings at YARNER HOUSE near BOVEY TRACEY in South Devon, England from 12th to 19th April. The cost of the retreat is £105, which includes accommodation and all expenses. Accommodation in the house is on a first-come-first-served basis. Those who arrive later will have to book their own accommodation elsewhere. It is essential to book in advance for the retreat so that the organisers can calculate how much food to buy. For bookings and for further information you can contact TIM & LORENA WALKER TELEPHONE: 0364 42987

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING COMMITTEE OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY FORMED AT MERIGAR CHRISTMAS RETREAT.



About 600 people came to the Christmas retreat. During the first few days Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave a general introduction to the Londe series of the Dzogchen teachings to the whole group of participants in the big barn that has usually been used as a wood workshop. Then the retreat continued with Rinpoche giving the initiation of Ngonzong Gyalpo, an empowerment to practice the Longde Series, in the main house at Merigar to five groups of 108 people, and one group of 37. While this was going on the rest of the participants followed teachings in the barn from Geshe Tenzin Wangyal, who explained the all-important basics of how one enters contemplation and integrates it with one's daily life. Fabio Andrico also shared his experience as a practitioner of Yantra Yoga.

We had many meetings during the retreat at which we discussed various aspects of the development of the Dzogchen Community world-wide. Rinpoche likened the Community to an eight year old child that is growing fast and is developing good and bad habits. It is not too late at this stage to shape it by encouraging the good and discouraging the bad, but unless this is done now it will become set in a pattern that is perhaps the wrong one. The fact is that, with Rinpoche's guidance, we are evolving the structures of the Community as we go along. What began as an informal group of students around Rinpoche has become over the years a more formalised, though still informal, association with all the responsibilities that come with the ownership of land and buildings. Rinpoche has continually attempted to guide us in how we can accomplish this without losing sight of the very principles of the teaching that have inspired us to form a Community in the first place.

It has not been easy, and in the various parts of the Community around the world, mistakes have been made and corrected. Thus the procedural and organisational modes of the Community have developed, many of them based on ways of working that Rinpoche devised and first applied at Merigar. Gakyil - groups of nine persons chosen to serve for one year coordinating the Community's activities - have now been formed in many cities and countries all over the world on the model of the first Gakyil at Merigar. The Gakyil - named after a Tibetan symbol whose name means 'Wheel of Bliss' and which is similar in form to the famous

Taoist Yin Yang symbol, but having three interdependent parts making up its whole instead of two - consists of three groups of three persons, responsible for cultural affairs (blue), economic matters (yellow), and work activities (red), corresponding respectively to mind, energy and body at the level of the individual.

Associated with the primary organisational bodies of the Gakyil, which have a Director and Assistant Director as and when legally required, there have developed various Sub-committees to administer various activities. Similarly, at Merigar the publishing activities of the Community have been focussed in Shang Shung Editions, a not-for-profit Cooperative whose aim is to provide practitioners with the materials that they need and to further the publication of Tibetan texts in their original language and in translation.

Since the community has been growing rapidly and it is not possible that every initiative in every part of the world is able to benefit from the direct guidance of Rinpoche, it has now become necessary to bring a more formal approach to the Community's publication situation in general. This is to avoid leaving material relating to the Teachings open to abuse or misinterpretation as regards who may publish what and in what form.

At the retreat an **International Publishing Committee of the Dzogchen Community** was therefore formed that will regulate all publications relating to teachings given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. This Committee will exist to authorise or otherwise refuse permission for any proposed publication in any language of material considered to be in the copyright of Namkhai Norbu and/or the Dzogchen Community. Anyone wishing to publish such material must approach the Committee, through its address at Merigar, explaining the nature of the project they are proposing to undertake, and asking for permission to go ahead. At a later stage, proofs of the material to be published must be submitted to the Committee for correction of both meaning and language errors. This applies to all material, including transcriptions, and translations. Those intending to publish Magazines and Newsletters using the Dzogchen Community's name, logo, or material, must seek approval

before publishing the first edition, explaining in detail how they intend to proceed. Any persons intending to start a publishing house connected to the Community, using the Community's name, logo, or material, must get in touch with Shang Shung Editions at its address at Merigar to discuss how to proceed, and must be prepared to explain in detail the financial structure and legal status of the publishing house they wish to found.

Anyone who wishes to work on publications may approach the Gakyil of the Dzogchen Community of their country or city for information as to how they should go about contacting either the International Publishing Committee or Shang Shung Editions. Another Committee will be formed to similarly regulate all Video and Film material relating to the teachings.

Clearly, the aim of forming these Committees will not be to impede the work of the very many sincere and dedicated people who have so generously and selflessly given so much of their time, energy and financial resources to further the preservation of the precious teachings which it has been our privilege to receive. All who wish to participate in the process of transcription, translation and publication are more than welcome: their help is urgently needed. The Committees will offer active encouragement and support to all initiatives that are undertaken in the right way, and will offer constructive criticism and advice wherever possible. But certain circumstances that have recently occurred have brought home the fact that the previous situation was too open to individual interpretation and possible abuse. Where necessary, therefore, the Committees will also be responsible for ensuring that the principles of copyright are respected, using all the available means to do so, including taking legal action.

The International Publishing Committee will have two members for each language, with the exception of English, which will have three members to deal with the larger number of publications that are to be expected in that language.

Rinpoche has often pointed out that he himself has never made money from the teachings for his own or his family's use. The fact that he has a job working as a University Professor and yet still manages to practise as he

does has always been an example and an inspiration to us. In being self-supporting he has also avoided the complications that can arise when a teacher is dependent on sponsors who attempt to exact political influence in return for their financial support. Similarly, money made from publishing the teachings or from practice books should be used for the preservation of the teachings and not for the private gain of individuals. This does not mean that in certain cases the Community will not decide that a person who has no other financial means who is committing themselves to a full time job for the Community will not be paid a suitable salary by the Community. Some translators have already been supported in this way, as are the Secretary and Gekos (Caretaker) of Merigar. But these people are simply being enabled to live while they work for the Community. They are not accumulating personal capital from Community business. The principal publishing houses linked to the Dzogchen Community are all not-for-profit organisations linked to the Gakyil of their respective country. They may in due course, when they are able to do so financially, pay salaries to those who work for them. But their capital is entirely linked to the Community, even if it was donated by a private individual. Private businesses are a valid way in which individuals can make a living, and the Community can gain benefit from collaborating with businesses belonging to its members. But the relevant Gakyil must be in control of the way these transactions are undertaken, and approve the terms and conditions on which work is done for the Community or using the Community's funds. This is just as true whether it is a matter of employing people to do building work or to produce books. The Community may decide to ask a private publisher belonging to Community members to produce books for it. But even if the publishing house belongs to Community members it must work with the Gakyil and abide by its decisions. It must not behave as if it is in a position to dictate to the Community.

The publishing meeting held during the retreat with Rinpoche present, at which these matters were discussed, was recorded on audio and video, and these materials are available to be consulted at Merigar.



SHANG - SHUNG INSTITUTE PROGRAMME

LIBRARY. We plan to put together the constituent elements of a specialist library: a thesaurus; a collection of manuscripts and books on Tibetan culture, with its transfer to microfiche; and the acquisition of the Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen library.

MUSEUM. We plan to establish a museum on the ethnography, history and art of the Tibetan civilization.

MEDIA ARCHIVE. This media archive will mainly hold slides, photographs and films on Tibet and its culture.

CENTRE OF TIBETAN MEDICINE. In the spirit of a deeper exchange between different traditions, the Centre of Tibetan Medicine will be involved in studies and research in the medical sciences, with the co-operation of both Tibetan and Western doctors. We also plan to organize the II International Convention on Tibetan Medicine.

ENTERTAINMENT. We propose to put on performances of Tibetan music, dance and folklore, as well as documentary films on Tibet.

EXHIBITIONS. We plan to hold a number of public exhibitions: on the ethnography of Tibetan nomads; on art and the history of science as represented by medical thangkas; of Tibetan arts and crafts; and a photographic exhibition on Tibetan culture.

COURSES, SEMINARS AND

CONFERENCES. We plan to hold international seminars and conferences on Tibetan studies, as well as intensive courses on the Tibetan language and literature.

In addition to the above studies the Institute proposes to organize some regular annual and biannual events.

These are:

PHOTOGRAPHY - exhibitions of photographs illustrating 150 years of photographic documentation of the East;

CINEMA - an international festival of Oriental films and the creation of an Oriental film archive;

ANTIQUES - we intend to offer our scientific expertise in the interest of the public as the Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen will promote a trade fair of fine Oriental antiques;

TIBETAN MEDICINE - summer courses on Tibetan medicine reserved for Western doctors.

We foresee, in the initial stages, the following activities taking place in the Italian cities of Milan, Venice, Rome and Naples:

- a photographic exhibition and some conferences in Rome and Milan;
- conferences and seminars in Naples;
- meetings on international co-operation for Tibet;
- meetings and conferences on cultures in danger of extinction.

A PRACTICE RETREAT IN MERIGAR FROM 12th TO 19th APRIL 1990

A practice retreat based on a specific programme written by the Master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The more experienced practitioners will be available for the beginners and those who require further clarification and explanation.

For those that are already enrolled in the Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen from December 1989, the participation fee will be:

Lit. 70.000 for the entire duration of the retreat or
Lit. 9.000 for each single day.

For the new members the fee will be:

Lit. 90.000 for the entire duration of the retreat or
Lit. 11.000 for each single day.

FOR ACCOMMODATION

Since a limited number of people can be accommodated at Merigar, we suggest that you contact the hotels in the area, some of which are listed below.

Aiuole: Tel. 0564/967300 **Capenti:** Tel. 0564/967355.
Impero: Tel. 0564/955337 **Lorena:** Tel. 0564/967162
Giardino: Tel. 0564/966406 **Gala:** Tel. 0564/977058
Stella: Tel. 0564/955391 **Venerio:** Tel. 0564/955244

MERIGAR - 58031 ARCIDOSSO (GROSSETO) - ITALY



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's schedule for 1990.



Rinpoche will be travelling a lot less in the foreseeable future. At Easter this year he will make a visit to Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan, where he was intending to go last year.

He will be at Merigar in Arcidosso, Italy, from the 28th May until the 3rd June, during which time His Holiness the Dalai Lama has kindly accepted an invitation to inaugurate the Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Culture and the new Gumpa (or meditation hall) that is to be built on the hill facing the main house at Merigar. Later in July, Rinpoche will travel to the United States to teach at the Tsegylgar Dzogchen Community, Buckland, Massachusetts, on the new land not far from the old house at Conway, which has now been sold. This will be his only retreat in the USA.

Following that Rinpoche has indicated that he intends to make a long personal retreat of many months, perhaps even a year, and that he will not thus be available to give teachings for a long period of time.

As most members of the Community probably know, the continual travelling involved in Rinpoche's teaching schedule has had an adverse effect on his

health. To remedy this he has recently been following a very strict diet and taking more exercise, which has led to a marked improvement. But it is clear that in future, when he travels, we must take much greater care of his food, itinerary and schedule, as well as the accommodation provided for him, to tire him as little as possible. And we must be prepared to make a greater effort to get to where Rinpoche is teaching rather than expecting him to come to us.

Rinpoche has said; "It's not teachings all the people in the Community lack, but practice." We can keep the transmission alive in us in a more real way by actually putting into practice what he has taught. Finding the presence of the master in the primordial state within each of us, as well as in the actual living presence of the master will mature each of us and bring a new and much needed maturity to our Community as a whole. If we really make the right effort to develop in this way we won't lack things to do while he is in retreat.

Rinpoche also said during this last Christmas retreat at Merigar: "You may abandon your samaya commitment to me, but I will never abandon mine to you", so

it's not a question of him cutting off from us, more a question of him conserving his energy, and only making himself physically available when and where he is really needed or really appreciated. In a spiritual sense, he is always available to us, if we open ourselves to our own wisdom. After leaving Tibet, Rinpoche had no physical contact with his own master, but visited him whenever he wished in his dreams. While we may not have developed such clarity ourselves, we should not have too low an opinion of what is possible for us when practice really begins to function.

The Community everywhere is growing up, and is thus inevitably going through growing pains. We may make mistakes, and have lapses of commitment, both as a Community and as individuals, but we should not become discouraged. While we live we can always try again. And, we can be grateful that, even when it hurts us from an ego point of view, Rinpoche nevertheless continues to wield the Vajra of his wisdom to magnetize, subdue, pacify and empower as and where appropriate. Long may he continue to do so for the benefit of all beings!

Everyone calls me Cicci.



Hello! My name is Sicilia D'Arista; Sicilia as in the name of the island of Sicily, but everyone always calls me Cicci. I was born in New York, but I've spent all my life in Naples. I'm the secretary of Merigar at present, but it's not the first time I have had this job. I was also the secretary two years ago when Michel was Gekos and we were living in Merigar with our little daughter, Mandarava.

When did I meet Rinpoche? It was in Naples, at the place known as the "gymnasium", where some of Rinpoche's students taught Yantra Yoga. I regi-

stered at the yoga class because I had a backache. At that time I wasn't interested in the "philosophy". I told them that from the first day. My biggest worry was that I would have to sit crosslegged. I was sure that it would be very uncomfortable. During the years when most people study I too, studied, finally undertaking a degree course in psychology, without being really convinced of its value. I was really interested in doing something that would bring me close to children.

After I graduated I came to live in the area around Merigar. Since then

I've been working, teaching English to groups of small children. Since moving to this area I have pursued an old dream of mine, which is to try to open a little country school, creating a relaxed and joyful place. Maybe after this year at Merigar, the secondary causes for this to happen will arise. The Editor has asked me to make a wish for the Tibetan New Year. My wish is to achieve the combination of a good year of productive work together with a good year with a relaxed mind! Both for my own benefit and for the benefit of those who work with me, of course.

Meet the Gekos



My name is Karin Koppensteiner. I am the Gekos of Merigar for this year.

I was born at the time of the new moon on the twenty-third of February 1955, in Vienna, Austria. A snowstorm interrupted the electricity supply and the heating shut down in the hospital where I was born. So I remember feeling cold as soon as I was born.

Later I went to school in Austria for thirteen years and afterwards studied in Berlin to become a film director.

Now I am thirty five years old and it seems to me that the older I get the shorter my autobiography becomes! I am sure that in a few years time I will find nothing at all to say any more about the earlier years of my life. Already now, looking back, the woman I was at different stages of my life seems like a dream to me.

When I was asked to prepare a little autobiography for 'The Mirror', I asked myself what is most interesting about a person. I decided that perhaps the most interesting things about one's life are the things one keeps secret. Sometimes it can be valuable to share some of these secrets with others, even though they are very per-

sonal, because they concern things that have touched us very deeply in our lives. I, for example, lost a baby son when I was twenty-one years old, and that completely changed my life.

If there is one thing I really regret in my life, it is that for the last fifteen years I have tried to be an artist without really succeeding in producing a real work of art. And if there is one thing that I have really enjoyed, it has been living with my daughter Elisha, and watching her grow in a way that no work of art ever could.

As the Gekos of Merigar one of my principal responsibilities is to ensure that we all respect the teachings, and to remind people if they should forget to do so.

Since I have always been anti-authoritarian by nature, and have usually reacted against hierarchical situations in the past, it represents quite a challenge for me to have to take a responsibility of this kind. Fortunately, the task is made easier for me by the fact that in general I am surrounded by practitioners here at Merigar who know how to respect the Master and the Dzogchen teachings, and who are de-

veloping the practice within themselves. They are all dedicated as I am to the preservation of the precious teachings it has been our good fortune to receive.

Sometimes, however, people do come to Merigar without a real interest in the teachings, and when it becomes apparent that this is the case, it is my responsibility to ask them to leave. Similarly, I have to remind people of the standards of conduct we must all observe in relation to the teachings, should they forget them.

This year, with so many important projects being undertaken by the Community, it is particularly important that we all collaborate as much as we can, and for my part, I will do my best as Gekos to ensure the smooth running of Merigar and of all the various activities that take place here. This year should be one that will see particular growth and prosperity, and I hope that I will be able to learn to relax with the responsibilities of my role so that I can play my part in making the year a successful one for the whole Community. Wish me luck!

I hope to welcome you to Merigar soon.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's retreat schedule for 1990

SINGAPORE RETREAT: 7th April to 11th April 1990
FOR INFORMATION
contact: M.me TAN YI HUI
BLOCK 232, TAMPINES ST., 21, #05-647 - SINGAPORE 1852.
TELEPHONE: Home: 7823205 Office: 2914600
MALAYSIAN RETREAT: 14th April to 18th April 1990
FOR INFORMATION
contact: Mr CHANG

KWOK KEE
11A, JALANJUJUR,
1/5 TAMAN BAKTI AMPANG, SELANGOR
WEST MALAYASIA
Telephone: 03/984/7167
03/774/4081
03/774/3309
Telex: MA 37955
CARAIAN
TAIWAN RETREAT:
21 April to 25th April 1990
FOR INFORMATION
contact: DANIEL CLOUTRE, Co CHANG & ASSOCIATES

8TH FLOOR, SUITE A,
WORLD BUILDING,
N.126, NANKING EAST ROAD, SECTION Y,
TAIPEI, TAIWAN.
CONWAY RETREAT:
After the 20th July 1990, there will be a ten day retreat at CONWAY, USA.
FOR INFORMATION
contact: VERENA SMITH
19 COSBY AVENUE,
AMHERST, MA 01002
TELEPHONE: 413/5492830

Practices for Special Days

Dear Dzogchen Practitioners,

This is the calendar of practices given to us by our Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for this year, Metal Horse.

TIBETAN DATE

1st Month, 10th day, 2117

WESTERN DATE

Tuesday 6/3/1990

As this is the day of Padmasambhava, you can try to do a Ganapuja with an intensive practice of the Long-life mantra connected with the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava. Usually it is best to try to do this together with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If this is not possible you can try to do a medium or short Tun alone, reciting the Long-life mantra as much as possible. The important thing is to try to communicate with all practitioners, linked to the same transmission, through entering into the same state of contemplation. In this way you develop the potentiality of the transmission you have received, and through that you also develop your understanding and ability to integrate practice into daily life.

1st Month, 15th day

Sunday 11/3/1990

FULL MOON

The first full moon of the Tibetan year is the very important anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje. It is also a special day of Buddha Shakyamuni; the day he performed many miracles, and it is the anniversary of the Master Marpa as well as that of Shenrab Miwoche, the founder of Bon. So it is a special and important day for all Buddhists and Bonpos, but above all for Dzogchen practitioners. Therefore on this day, when it is 8 o'clock in Oddiyana, our Dzogchen practitioners

all over the world celebrate at the same time, practicing the "A Kar Lamai Nalijor", Guruyoga with white A, communicating and integrating all transmissions in the same moment in the state of contemplation. You can celebrate and perform this practice collectively or if there are no other practitioners nearby you can do it alone.

1st Month, 25th day

Wednesday 21/3/1990

In general this is a Dakini day, and in particular it is the anniversary of the Dzogchen lady Master Ayu Khadro (a famous yogini who in 1952, when she was about 113 years old, transmitted many teachings to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, including the complete practice of Yantig). So on this day it is good to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lamai Nalijor", adding a Ganapuja with the transformation into the Dakini Simhamukha.

1st Month, 30th day

Monday 26/3/1990

NEW MOON

This is a god day to do purification practices. Therefore try to do "Namchos Shitroi Nalijor", the practice of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or personally.

2nd Month, 6th day

Sunday 1/4/1990

This is a particular day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a practice of the longer Tun with your Vajra sisters and brothers, otherwise you can do a medium Tun personally. In either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

2nd Month, 10th day

Wednesday 4/4/1990

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, the anniversary of the day when King Sahora tried to burn him ali-



ve, and he transformed the fire into a lake. So try to perform a Ganapuja collectively, but if that is not possible do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

2nd Month, 12th day

Friday 6/4/1990

This is the anniversary of Dragpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216), one of the first great Masters of the Sakyapa tradition, so try to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lamai Nalijor", the Guruyoga with white A.

2nd Month, 15th day

Monday 9/4/1990

FULL MOON

This is one of the best days for Long-life practices and in particular the practice of "Union of Primordial Essences". The best time for this practice is from 7 to 8 o'clock in the morning. This is also the anniversary of the day when Buddha first gave the teaching of Kalachakra. So it is good to do a long Tun in the evening.

2nd Month, 20th day

Sunday 15/4/1990

This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), disciple of the first Do Drub Chen Rinpoche, who was a master of Nyagla Padma Duddul. It is therefore a good day to do the "A

Kar Lamai Nalijor", the Guruyoga with white A.

2nd Month, 25th day

Friday 20/4/1990

This is a Dakini day as well as the anniversary of the fifth Dalai Lama, a great Terton and practitioner of Dzogchen. So it is a very good day to practise the "A Kar Lamai Nalijor", Guruyoga with white A.

2nd Month, 30th day

Wednesday 25/4/1990

NEW MOON

On this day, which is the birthday of the great Terton Loter Wangpo, try to do the "A Kar Lamai Nalijor", Guruyoga with white A.

3rd Month, 10th day

Friday 4/5/1990

The day of Guru Padmasambhava is an excellent day to practise Ganapuja, with an intensive recitation of the Long-life mantra. Otherwise you can do the Universal Wisdom Union practice of Long-life. The best time for this is between 7 and 8 o'clock in the morning.

3rd Month, 15th day

Wednesday 9/5/1990

FULL MOON

This is one of the best days for Long-life practices, and in particular for the practice of the "Union of Primordial Essences". It is best to do it early in the morning if you

can.

3rd Month, 25th day

Saturday 19/5/1990

This is a Dakini day as well as the anniversary of the fifth Dalai Lama, a great Terton and practitioner of Dzogchen. So it is a very good idea to practise "A Kar Lamai Nalijor", Guruyoga with white A.

3rd Month, 30th day

Thursday 24/5/1990

NEW MOON

This is a particularly good day for practising the Purification of the Six Lokas. As it is also the anniversary of the great Terton and Dzogchen Master Sangyas Lingpa, try to do the "A Kar Lamai Nalijor".

4th Month, 6th day

Wednesday 30/5/1990

This is the anniversary of Buddha's birth, so it is good to do a Ganapuja, if you have the possibility, otherwise you can do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

4th Month, 10th day

Sunday 3/6/1990

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

4th Month, 15th day

Friday 8/6/1990

FULL MOON

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

4th Month, 25th day

Monday, 18/6/1990

This is the anniversary of

Ngor Chen (a great Master of the Sakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lamai Nalijor", either collectively or alone.

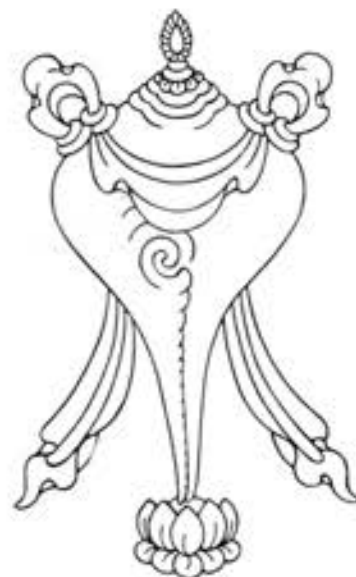
4th Month, 30th day

Friday 22/6/1990

NEW MOON

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

(To be continued in the next issue)



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58031 ARCIDOSO - P.zza Indipendenza, 6
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58033 CASTEL DEL PIANO - C.so Nasini, 14/C
Tel. 564/956325

AGENCY n° 2

58037 - SANTA FIORA - P.zza Garibaldi, 7
Tel. 564/977091

DARK RETREAT HOUSE PLOURAY FRANCE

Rinpoche has offered this photograph of himself and his family taken in Tibet, in order to raise money for the building of the Dark Retreat House in France. The French Community have bought land at Plouray in Brittany, close to the place where the retreat was held with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in 1986. Building has begun and the plan is to finish this year. Money is urgently needed for this project. Please send 50 U.S. dollars for your copy of the photograph. The money will go to the Building Programme. If you would like to offer a donation, for 100 U.S. dollars you can receive a priority reservation for your dark retreat. This 100 U.S. dollars will cover the cost of the first day of your retreat. Subsequent days will cost around 20 U.S. dollars. Please send any money and orders for the photograph to:



MARTINE GUILLOUCHE - TELEPHONE: 97348113
LA FONTAINE NEUVE 56770 - PLOURAY FRANCE
MONEY CAN BE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE BANK
ACCOUNT: CREDIT MUTEL DE BRETAGNE:
DZOGCHEN 0 121 4435640

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal

by Tuula Saarikoski

"I am not a Tulku and I am not a Rinpoche, just call me Tenzin Wangyal." This is how he introduced himself.

I had heard of this young Bonpo Lama, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal, in the spring 1988. He was doing his Western Ph.D. at Oslo University. He had been at the Dzogchen Community's base in Italy, Merigar. He had given Bon teachings on retreats at Merigar, and in Oslo and Copenhagen.

He arrived at the Arlanda Airport, coming to Stockholm, Sweden. He looked very young, smiling, vigorous, and he carried a suitcase heavy with books. Having never met a Bonpo before I was very curious. I was interested in Bon; otherwise I did not expect much.

The retreat was a surprise. The young Geshe was a real Master, I felt, a true Dzogchenpa. His teaching was of the Shang-Shung Nyan Gyud (*Zhang zhung snyan brgyud*), his way of transmitting clear, direct and strong. He had a pleasant sense of humour. The fact that he was a monk added an aspect of power and an almost innocent purity to his youthful energy and his scholarly sophistication. When later, in the December of that year, I finally made a longtime dream come true, and went to live near Merigar, in Tuscany, Tenzin Wangyal was there back from India. He seemed to be on the road all the time, travelling from Merigar to Rome, from Rome to Naples, to Milan, to Venice or Bologna to give teachings of Dzogchen.

I wondered what his life had been like so far. "Who are you, Tenzin Wangyal?" I asked.

"I shall tell you" Tenzin Wangyal replied.

"I was born in India, at Amritsar, in 1961. My father was Buddhist, and my mother was Bon by religion. They were Tibetan refugees, and at that time they lived in Madiya Pradesh, in a Tibetan settlement, where they had a house. A house, and very big problems."

Because of his parents' difficult situation, Tenzin, their only child, was sent to a children's home at Simla. When he was seven, the home was closed, and the Tibetan children were transferred to a Christian school at Rurki, near Delhi. Four years of misery followed. Buddhist or Bonpo, the Tibetan children were taught the Christian moral codes, they learned to read and write Hindi and English, and their lives were hard.

"My father had died in 1970, and my mother had found a new Tibetan husband. My step-father was a Bonpo, he had been a monk in the Menri monastery in Tibet, and he wanted me to study in Dolanji, in the Bon monastery that the former monks of Menri had established some years before. I was eleven when I went to Dolanji, and I had to start from the beginning, learning how to read and write in Tibetan. The preliminary studies took almost three years."

Nevertheless Tenzin Wangyal, at 14, was the youngest in the group of fifteen monks

who studied under the guidance of Menri Lopon Sangye Tenzin, who was also the principal Master of Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

"With Sangye Tenzin we went through the whole of the Shang-Shung Nyan Gyud. It took three years with no holidays. During that time I also did many retreats with Sangye Tenzin, doing Ngondro and Phowa practices. When we had come to the end of the Shang-Shung Nyan Gyud, in 1977, we all wanted to start again from the beginning. So we did. Soon after Sangye Tenzin died, and before dying he said: 'It was a good sign to start again.' The same year Norbu Rinpoche came to Dolanji."

Lopon Tenzin Namdak started a Dialectic School in Dolanji. Grammar, poetry, astronomy, Sanskrit and all the various rituals were learned first, and after that, primary logic, vinaya, cosmology, prajnaparamita and tantra. The last year of eight years' studies in the Dialectic School was dedicated to Dzogchen again.

"Before we started to study Dzogchen, we were told to find a sign in a dream", explains Tenzin Wangyal. I had a dream in which I was in a tram. A friend of mine, another student of Sangye Tenzin's, was driving the tram and I was handing people the tickets. The tickets were square pieces of paper in all basic colours, and in the center of each ticket there was a Tibetan letter A. That was my sign."

"When I started to teach in the West, and we were doing the fixation on an A, I remembered this dream as I handed each person a square piece of cardboard with the Tibetan letter A in its centre." There had been other signs, too.

"When I first came to Dolanji, Lopon Tenzin Namdak had a dream in which his personal divinity told him to take care of the new boy and to educate him. While I was studying in the Dialectic School, I did many retreats with him, and we did a Dzogchen practice every evening with Sangye Tenzin."

"My most important experience was the dark retreat. I spent 50 days and nights in the dark, when I was seventeen. Sangye Tenzin had told me to do it while I was still young, and Lopon Namdak helped me. I did the retreat in Lopon Namdak's house. For the first two weeks of the retreat nothing happened, but then the visions came and my practice developed."

In 1986 Tenzin Wangyal finished his studies as a Geshe, which is the equivalent of a Ph.D. in Western universities. His other important Masters were Geshe Yungdrung Namgyal, who was a Bonpo Geshe, but also Lharampa Geshe. This Master received the Lharampa degree, which is the highest of the several Geshe degrees of the Gelugpas, from the monastic university of Drepung.

"With Yungdrung Namgyal I studied the Gelug philosophy, and I studied the Nyingmapa tradition with Ketsun Zangpo, who is the most important contemporary

Nyingma scholar."

Lopon Tenzin Namdak and the first four Geshe to graduate from his school travelled in Tibet for eight months in 1986, visiting many Bonpo monasteries, such as Nag Chu, Chabdo, Tsang, Dege and Nyangsong. After returning to Dolanji, Tenzin Wangyal was invited to Dharamsala, to work in the Library of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, preparing a catalogue of all the Bon texts of the Library.

"During the time that I spent in Dharamsala, I also published a book about my journey in Tibet, whose title in English is 'The Helpful Jewel of the New Speech'. I also wrote a summary of Shenrab Miwo's biography and published several articles."

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal's scholarly career was well established. Professor Per Kvaerne, an outstanding authority in Tibetology, of the University of Oslo, Norway, invited Geshe Tenzin to collaborate, and offered him the possibility of doing his Ph.D. according to the Western academic tradition. The university of Lund, in Sweden, gave him a research scholarship, and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche invited him to Merigar to work with him.

Thus in addition to an academic career, there emerged the possibility of giving the spiritual teaching of Dzogchen. Tenzin Wangyal gave teachings at two retreats in Norway, one in Denmark, one in Sweden, and before going back to India he gave a retreat in London, as well as a long retreat of transmission and practice in Devon, England.

"After some time in India, I decided to come to live in Italy. Here I started to work at ISMEO, the Institute of Middle and Far Eastern Studies in Rome, making a catalogue of all the Tibetan texts in Professor Giuseppe Tucci's library. When I came to Italy for the first time, a year ago, I had planned to rest and take it easy, but I was drawn in all directions. Now I begin to understand the ways of the West a little better," he laughs.

He has temporarily settled down in Italy, and found a car to his taste. Sometimes one can feel in him a nostalgia for the regular pattern of life in a monastery, for his "family", Lopon Tenzin Namdak and fellow monks, for the school where he had already started instructing the younger monks before finishing his own studies, and where he was the chairman of the students of Dolanji for three years. Most of the time, though, he is happily driving fast on the highways of Italy from one city to another, where groups of the members of the Dzogchen Community wait for him to share with them his profound knowledge and his transmission. But for how long will he remain in Italy?

"I think I shall like the Americans and their way of thinking," he used to say, as if he was ready to move on.

Then, a couple of days before Tenzin Wangyal was to leave for America, a telegram arrived from India with sad news. His mother had died after eleven days in hospital



at the age of 48. Everything that had to be done for her had already been done. At the monastery in Dolanji the traditional rites to help the deceased had been performed, and the funeral, which according to the Bonpo way was to be held in three days' time, had already happened. Everything had been taken care of, and for Tenzin Wangyal there was nothing to do there.

Under this shadow of the loss of his mother, Tenzin Wangyal started his journey to the USA, where he planned to stay a few weeks on the East Coast, mainly at Tsegayalgar, in Massachusetts. He will fly from there to the West Coast, visit Los Angeles, San Francisco and also Oregon, where land has been offered for a possible future Bon Foundation.

A group of devoted friends from Italy followed the young Dzogchen Master on his first trip to the new continent, where just six months before him his own master Lopon Tenzin Namdak had made a similar tour.

Tuula Saarikoski



Reflections from Merigar

continued from page 1

Those who know Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will not be surprised to hear of such intense and concentrated work sessions; but they will also know of the playful and light-hearted side of his nature. To balance the intensity of the day's work, and to maintain his contact with those of us not involved in the translation project who were equally busy with other projects, he delighted many of us by teaching us Tibetan dances each evening downstairs in the wooden-floored meeting space of the main house.

These were happy occasions of simple human warmth and friendliness. Rinpoche, his trousers tucked into furry sheepskin boots, with a small angora blanket wrapped around his middle, would sit and play haunting Tibetan tunes on a bamboo flute until all the would-be dancers had gathered. Then we would play a game called 'Samsara and Nirvana' until we were warmed up. This involves everyone holding hands and, facing outwards, revolving in a simple circle: Nirvana. But soon someone, still holding the hands of the players to their left and right would dash forward, under the arms of the players at the opposite side of the circle.

In this game, unless everyone in the circle remains really present and moves in a coordinated way, as all the players follow those who have gone under the arch of raised arms, the whole free moving circle becomes an entangled mass of knotted arms and legs: Samsara. No one must then let go of their neighbours' hands, but the knots must all be undone and Samsara once more revealed as being in its essence Nirvana, in a freely moving linked circle of players.

The Tibetan dances saw us forming another circle, this time of couples of men and women, and learning complex moves involving us stamping our feet and moving our arms above our heads to wave imaginary silk scarfs. These dances had a slow, stately rhythm, but nevertheless taxed our powers of concentration and presence to remember all their steps.

We also played a game known as 'the blind man and the lame man' which involves two people moving around in a space limited by a circle of onlookers. One person's eyes are blindfolded and one of the other person's legs is tied in a bent-up position with a scarf, so that he or she has to hop around to get away from the groping hands of the blind-folded person. Since the latter only has the sense of hearing to enable him or her to find the 'lame' person, the onlookers' cooperation in not making confusing noises can be crucial to the 'blind man's' success in ending the game by grabbing the other player. The onlookers' advice to the blind-folded player is, naturally enough, not always intended to be helpful.

When the Master was to be the lame man no one wanted to be the blind man, so the Editor of this newspaper volunteered. The thick woollen scarf was tied over his eyes, and he set about trying to orientate himself in his newly darkened world. No sound of the Master's soft sheepskin boots could be heard, and none of the usual helpful banter offered to guide other 'blind men' seeking other 'lame men' reached his ears: there was a strangely intense silence, and the 'blind man' began to sweat as he pursued a now invisible Tibetan Lama. No one, of course, wanted to betray the whereabouts of the Master.

There seemed in this situation something of a metaphor for so much of our neurotic seeking for something external to ourselves in our efforts to follow the teachings of our wonderful 'spiritual friend', teachings that guide and inspire us through the transmission to find within ourselves that contemplative state whose continual uninterrupted presence in our teacher makes him a Master.

After a long search Rinpoche kindly allowed himself to be cornered and caught, much to the Editor's relief.

Some weeks of further intense work later, on the 26th of February many Community members arrived at Merigar from all over Italy, and we participated in the usual practices for the Tibetan New Year. At dawn, everyone washed their hands, feet, and face in water that had been left out overnight under the light of the stars and moon. We then did the Long Life Practice of Mandarava, and at two o'clock the same afternoon, assembled for a Ganapuja.

On the third day of the New Year, we had finished preparing the new Lungta, or 'prayer flags' which were to be hung that day on a long stout rope running from the side of the main house to a pole on the hill above the stupa.

While fires were lit outside for the burning of 'sang' - incense of dried cypress needles - for purification and offering, we gathered with Rinpoche in the main meeting room downstairs at Merigar to practise the 'Riwo Sangchod', a sang rite based on the visionary teaching of the great tertön Lhasun Namkha Jigmed, who was born in Tibet in the year 1597.

Rinpoche beat time on the drum and we chanted with him the powerful Tibetan phrases of this practice, the profound words of some parts of which we include here in the pages of the first edition of our newspaper in the hope that it will prove worthy of them:

"...we pay homage
to the natural, un-corrected state,
and offer the clear light which is beyond all limits!
In that space in which Samsara and Nirvana
have not separated into duality
we confess (our errors)
and, rejoicing in the complete ending of all (dualistic) existence,
beyond (the limits of) the mind,
we beg you to turn the wheel of self-perfected Dzogchen
to release us from the prison of Samsara!
Beyond the limits of the three (selfish) considerations
we dedicate (to others) the merits (of our practice)!
May all our negative actions and obstacles
accumulated in the three times,
and all our mistaken behaviour
in our offerings to the three Jewels and to the dead,
be purified through the offering of this fire!
May its flames and sparks fill the entire universe
as an inexhaustible accumulation of offerings of all that is all good
pervading all the pure dimensions of illuminated beings!
May these flames reach throughout all the realms of the six lokas
as rays of offerings of the five wisdom lights!
May all the beings of the three worlds
attain illumination in the essence of the primordial state
and obtain liberation in the rainbow body..."

When we had finished the practice we all went out into the bright sunshine to watch the new prayer flags being hung up. Then we walked around the stupa, going faster and faster until we were all running and laughing in a circle with Rinpoche overtaking and bumping into us as we went. As the prayer flags snapped and fluttered in the strong wind, tugging at the rope that held them and making a bright row of colours against the clear blue of the sky, the Editors of 'THE MIRROR' went inside to record the interview with Rinpoche entitled: 'Maintaining the Purity of the Transmission as the Dzogchen Community grows' which is included here in these pages.



The Stupa at Merigar.



Rosa Namkhai, Rinpoche's wife, with Rinpoche in the woods at Merigar.



The south side of the main house at Merigar.



The main house at Merigar, seen from the direction of the stupa.

These photographs are all the work of Yeshe Namkhai, with the exception of the
The thanka painting of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's principal master Chanchub Dorje sh
show the principal master of the Dzogchen Community surrounded by his family, and a
the Dzogchen teachings. The lineage of masters of the teachings exists to maintain the
ty. The inclusion of photographs of the master in this newspaper thus do not in any sens



one of Rinpoche and his daughter which was taken by the late George Holmes.

ows the latter surrounded by his family and disciples. The photographs on these pages
re included here as a mark of respect and devotion to the Community's teacher, and to
ransmission of a contemplative state that is beyond the limits of the ego and personali-
e involve an intention to construct a 'cult of personality' around the person of the master.



Tibetan thangka painting showing Rinpoche's Master, Rigzin Changchub Dorje, surrounded by some of his principal disciples.



Yeshe Namkhai, Rinpoche's son.



Part of the collection of Tibetan texts upstairs at Merigar.



Rinpoche, with his daughter Yuchen.

The customary Christmas retreat was held at Merigar between 27 December 1989 and 6th January of this year. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave teachings of Dzogchen Longde. More than six hundred people came to Merigar for the occasion.

Once again it was the Christmas retreat that drew the largest number of people to Merigar this year. The fact that the Christmas and new year holiday period exists just about everywhere in the world gives many people the chance to put their work to one side and come to Merigar. Thus it was that visitors came pouring in not only from all over Italy and Europe in general, but also from around Asia, Australia and America. Mid-way through the retreat, it was estimated that as many as seven hundred people were huddled together in the room where the teachings were being held. Even though the building has only recently been completed, it is already proving insufficiently large to hold everyone. At some points it was like going back in time to the Christmas retreats of four or five years ago when there would be over two hundred persons squashed up against each other in the little Gumpa up in the main house at Merigar, which is now only used for collective practice when there are not too many of us.

Rinpoche gave teachings of the Dzogchen Longde, and conferred an initiation for the empowerment of the practice, dividing those who wished to attend into small groups for the purpose. The Dzogchen Longde series (the Series of Space) corresponds to the second principle in the testament of Garab Dorje: which involves "not remaining in doubt" concerning the state of contemplation. Aided by a meditation belt and a stick, one employs positions of the body and particular techniques to control the flow of subtle energy; one gains inner confidence through the meditative experience and by stabilizing the state of contemplation.

As is his custom, Rinpoche devoted several teaching sessions to explaining the fundamental principles of Dzogchen and the Community. He also spoke about the activities of the Community in general of which he has always been the prime mover and inspiration. On the morning of the 28th of December, he spoke at length on the importance of keeping the transmission pure. For the benefit of anyone who did not already know, he recounted how and why he began teaching Dzogchen in the West to a small group of persons who requested him to do so, and how, considering Dzogchen to be the most important teaching known to him, he had at once communicated it, endeavouring to make it understood. In so doing, he had followed Buddha Shakyamuni's advice to use one's own individual experience as an example to help others, with the awareness of the benefit this could have for them. At first, only a few people were interested. Obviously, no attempt has been made since then to publicize the teachings, but despite this fact, general interest in Dzogchen has expanded. Many people have now become interested in the teachings and this interest has grown from the first small group of students to the present situation of larger numbers through personal communication between individuals, exchanges of information, and the publication of books. At a time when interest in Dzogchen has become so widespread as to seem almost a fashion, Rinpoche reminded us that our Community is a spiritual Community made up of individuals linked by the fact that they share the same guiding principle and the same transmission. "The Dzogchen Community", he said, is a Community of practitioners; it is made up of those people who have knowledge of the teaching, and who use this principle to collaborate with one another." Rinpoche then stressed how, with the Community developing day by day, each and everyone must be responsible for the protection of the teaching they have received. "The Dzogchen teaching is of great value not just to one single individual but to all beings," he said. "It is because of this value that the teaching must be protected so it can continue through time... The teaching retains its value not only until the death of the individual, but right up to the moment of total realization, and is linked to the transmission and to the practitioner. It is therefore something of very great importance. Everyone is responsible for it and must collaborate in keeping the real meaning of this responsibility alive and present." Rinpoche went on to explain the importance of protecting the teaching by keeping it pure and intact: first of all by applying it in the right way, and secondly applying it correctly, making sure it develops as it should. In particular, one must not make a "pot-pourri", throwing in a bit of everything, mixing up, for instance, psychological or psychotherapeutic techniques with the practices related to the transmission. "If you want to deepen your understanding of subjects like psychology by way of the teaching, then there is nothing wrong with that in itself. But the teaching must not be edited together with psychological techniques: one must respect it and keep the transmission pure." Furthermore, one must beware of using these mish-mashes as a business to make a living. Living off the proceeds of the teaching is in fact always very damaging, but it is especially so in cases such as this. It is actually the worst way possible to get something to eat. In the teaching there is an expression used to describe this sort of attitude, which can be rendered in English as "sucking the blood of the faithful." Within the Community, there are many publishing initiatives and publications ongoing in many countries around the world. Norbu Rinpoche underlined that particular attention and respect must be given to this fundamental principle by those involved in these projects. He stressed the importance in cases of doubt of getting in contact with him, or should his engagements preclude this, of contacting the Shang-Shung publishing house. He said it was also important that those collaborating on or co-

Cesare Spada is 45 years old. He first met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Rome, in 1978. After he took his degree in Law he worked for two years for a cultural magazine. He attended a course, organized by the CNR (National Council of Research) and worked for the RAI (the national Italian Radio-Television network) for more than fifteen years.

He worked for two years with a group of psychologists specializing in family therapy. Three years ago he left Rome and moved to Santa Fiora, near Merigar, becoming the co-ordinator of the Italian "Merigar Letter" and the "Merigar" magazine.

SEEING ONE'S OWN EYEBROWS

Christmas Retreat at Merigar

by Cesare Spada



ordinating the various publications, newsletters and magazines should be guided by their awareness: for example, by writing things that can be of benefit, rather than things that can cause harm or provoke dissension. The publishing work, like all the other activities of the community should, as Rinpoche never tires of emphasising, be done in a spirit of collaboration, always keeping the goal of the work in mind so as to avoid narrow mindedness and limitations brought about by one's own ego. During a meeting of all those involved in publishing projects around the world, Rinpoche formed an international consultation committee to collaborate in verifying texts proposed for publication.

As well as this meeting and the usual other meetings to renew the Gakyil and plan Shang-Shung Editions publishing work, those collaborating on transcribing Norbu Rinpoche's teachings also met to co-ordinate their efforts.

As usual, Rinpoche brought us up to date on the activities of A.S.I.A., the Association for International Solidarity with Asia, one of the main aims of which is to found a "New Tibetan Village" in India. He told us how the initiatives in Tibet were going, and that construction work on the new school in Galen is well under way. The first lessons have already been held nearby. At Nyagla Gar, or Khamdo, the wood that was bought is being used to build a similar school. Close by, a small nunnery that had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution is being rebuilt with the money collected by Yuchen Namkhai, Rinpoche's daughter, at Merigar. Rinpoche is also helping the monastery of Ralung, with which he has a specific connection.

At present it is desperately short of funds. The Ralung



Cesare Spada

monastery was in fact built as the residence of Tsangpa Gyas, the founder of the Drugpa Kagyu tradition. It remained the seat of his descendants and successors in the lineage down to the emanation of Tsangpa Gyas who was later to become the first Dharmaraja of Bhutan. The monastery was then abandoned following a power struggle with a "rival" reincarnation of Tsangpa Gyas, born of Central Tibetan nobility. This tulku transferred his residence south from Central Tibet, and brought about the abandonment of Ralung on the part of the future Dharmaraja of Bhutan. As we know, Namkhai Norbu has been recognised as the reincarnation of the first Dharmaraja, so his connection with the Ralung monastery should be clear. As an offering for the monastery, Rinpoche has ordered the one hundred and eight volumes of the Kangyur.

Rinpoche mentioned that he would be returning to Tibet to complete his archeological research around Kailash and elsewhere in Western Tibet. He will probably also visit Lhasa to hold seminars and conferences aimed at broadening Tibetans' knowledge of their own culture and encouraging people to deepen their studies of it. The Institute will also provide the opportunity of remunerative work



for many Tibetologists and translators who cannot easily make money in the normal job market because of the limited demand for specialists in the field of study they have chosen.

During the retreat, Rinpoche presided over a ceremony for the laying of the first stone of the new Gumpa at Merigar. A vase containing relics, precious stones and other propitious offerings was interred on the site. An Italian television film crew recorded the ceremony, which was later shown on a regional news programme.

This, broadly speaking, is the news that came out of the retreat. As so often happens, the retreat itself gave many of us the chance to reflect on our own personal attitude, behaviour, and our integration of the teaching into daily life. Rinpoche's parting remarks on "The Song of the Bee", the poem he wrote on his return from Kailash, particularly encouraged this sort of reflection. It was

written, he explained, not in order to judge or condemn the behaviour of a few practitioners, but to explain the value of the teaching and to remind everyone of it. Through distraction, habit often robs us even of those things we regard as being most important: "The eyes do not see the eyebrows, simply because they are so very close."

Translated by Robin Cooke



We were very happy to receive this message via Fax

NEWS FROM ARGENTINA

We pay homage to our Precious teacher! Homage to the Buddha Dharma and Sangha!

Sending greetings to our Vajra Brothers and sisters of the ten directions, We are delighted to inform you that during the year of 1989 a new Dzogchen Community has been born in Cordoba, Argentina!

When Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche announced in Venezuela last June that he would come to Argentina in November 1989, the first question that those who had invited him had to resolve was how to make such a visit a reality. The economic situation at present prevailing in Argentina makes just surviving difficult enough, but makes any project beyond mere survival twice as difficult. The fact is that Argentina today is the victim of 'hyperinflation' and all its ensuing consequences, which creates serious hindrances for any group such as ours with limited economic resources.

For those of you who have the good luck or positive karma not to know what is meant by 'hyperinflation', an explanation is necessary at this point: what it amounts to in practical terms is that you

live in a situation not unlike an economic war, in which you must battle every day to deal with the fact that your income is decreasing daily in real value as the country's currency loses its real purchasing power. Your hopes just seem to go up in smoke, and plans for any creative or productive progress have to be delayed until the ferocious wave of hyperinflation slows down a bit.

As practitioners, we decided to regard this circumstance as just a passing circumstance, and to face the situation with confidence. With this attitude, firmly founded on our practice, we kept on working to organise the retreat. Curiously, everything went well right from the beginning, just as if some rare power was dancing above us holding a sharp 'drigu' to cut through all obstacles.

When the retreat began at Alta Gracia on the 12th. of November and the one hundred and fifty people present (including children) sang the Song of the Vajra, we knew that all our efforts had not been in vain: our country had opened itself to the Path of Self-Liberation.

From this experience many of us had the insight that many of the most serious obstacles are those that are within ourselves, in the limitations



Fabio Andrico
Who has been teaching Yantra Yoga in Argentina

of our minds. Since the retreat we have continued with our plans, working with the circumstances that we have to face along the way, looking forward to having a 'Gar' so that all the practitioners of this country (and of the world) may find here a place to receive Teachings and to practise.

We hope to enter into and maintain good communications with all the Dzogchen Communities all over the world, so that we can grow together, being enriched by the sharing of each other's experience.

We would like to thank all the people who collaborated with us, and welcome all the friends who wish to participate.

May all the merits that arise from this endeavour benefit all sentient beings!

Signed: The Dzogchen Community of Argentina,

Cordoba,

February 2nd 1990.

Editor's Note:

We would like to thank the Dzogchen Community of

Argentina for sending us the above news by fax. On behalf of the other Dzogchen Communities in the world, the Editors and Staff of 'The Mirror' and all at Merigar send our warmest congratulations to the members of the Argentinian community.

We have also heard by telephone that the Dzogchen Community of Argentina has succeeded in purchasing some land with two houses as a base for the Community in their country. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has chosen the name 'Tashigar' for this Community, which means 'Gar of Good Fortune'. Rinpoche added that the name was also linked to the 'Tashipai pal rigpai kugyu' (bkra shis pai dpal rig pai khu byug) tantra, the 'Fortune bringing Cuckoo of non-dual awareness (rig pa) tantra'. The Six Vajra Verses are the content of this tantra. As the cuckoo is the first herald of coming Spring, so this tantra and these verses are the heralds of coming spiritual awakening.

Center of the world

by Martina Bignu



One winter many years ago, before Merigar existed, I was on holiday on Monte Amiata. By chance, one day, I found myself at the bottom of the road leading to what is now Merigar. Now it is asphalted, but then it was more like a dry stream-bed than a road.

I remember feeling it was an out-of-the-way place, in fact out of this world. I stopped there at the bottom of that unlikely track, where the familiar world ended. Fed up as I was with the noisy, familiar city roads of my home town, I was happy to have found two new Pillars of

Hercules. But I never imagined that before long that road would lead me to the 'centre of the world'!

My name is Martina, and for five years I have been living near Merigar with Patrice and our two children. This year I am in the yellow Gakhyil. What are my plans? To run off with the till, of course, and apart from that, try to do everything that needs to be done, in other words, to do my best.

Martina Bignu
Yellow Gakhyil

Why this newspaper is called The Mirror

continued from page 1

up in the net of conceptualisation. Relaxing body, energy and mind in the state of pure presence or 'rigpa', he or she allows the dualistic clinging of the mind to 'self-liberate', without renouncing, purifying, or transforming anything.

Thus the path of Dzogchen is called the 'Path of Self-Liberation'. On this path, all that arises in the practitioner's field of experience is seen to be essentially no more real than a reflection in a mirror. Finding oneself, through transmission from the master and through the various practices of the path, in the Primordial State that is one's inherent condition, one then continues in this state of contemplation, in which nothing can disturb the mind's natural spontaneously manifesting clarity. One develops in this state until one reaches total realisation, in which the bonds of dualistic existence are completely untied.

There are many methods and techniques in the Dzogchen teachings which can be learned and applied to enable one to know and develop the primordial state; but to enter and remain in that contemplative state in one's every moment is the essential practice of Dzogchen to which the symbol of the mirror points, and to the sustaining of which the Dzogchen Community and this newspaper are dedicated.



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Tel. 564/967392
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Patrice artist in wood



A long time ago, at the Monte Fauto retreat, a man showed us some pictures of his work: very beautiful inlaid wood. A few months later, I wanted to go on studying thangka painting in India, but Rinpoche suggested that instead I should look for that man and learn his art from him. Ten years have passed and now I am beginning to feel that I have acquired some skill in glueing together tiny pieces of wood..... but maybe you don't know what inlay is? Wood inlaying is a way of embellishing by forming images out of different contrasted woods, as you can often see on antique furniture. It is still done today, but

with paper thin strips of wood, artificially coloured and machine cut. Traditional inlay, however, the kind I do, is done using little tablets, three or four mm. thick, of natural-coloured woods. These cannot be used for mass production, and last much longer.

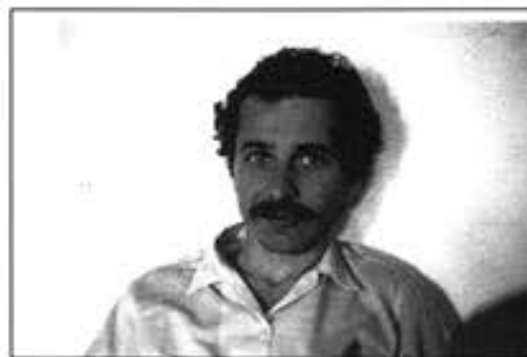
I have been living around Merigar since 1981, at first under Monte Labro, and now in an olive grove near Castel del Piano, with Martina and our children, Dewa and Ian. I have organized a little stable where I work, surrounded by many little pieces of perfumed woods I pick up around the countryside and that friends bring me from all over

the world, from Sicily to Brazil.

Recently Rinpoche suggested I make some nice panels containing Garab Dorje's Three Word Testament, or the Six Vajra Verses: a way of inserting these teachings in a precious object, a protection for the future and a beautiful, meaningful home decoration.

I also inlay thick panels into wooden floors, and soon I am going to begin preparing a panel with a lotus-blossom design for the centre of the floor in the Gonpa.

Boxes, tables, games, antique repairs ... the difficulty is not production but trade come and visit me.



FACES IN THE MIRROR

July 1977, year of the Fire-Snake. My first Dzogchen retreat in Prata, some fifty kilometers from Naples. Maybe I should say something about the background I come from and the reasons that brought me there. I am one of those people - mostly born in the 50s - who did not like this world as it is and very idealistically wanted to change it. I tried to do it as a High School student involved in politics and big student demonstrations; Bob Dylan and Joan Baez were my prophets. But very soon, after the wind of '68 had stopped blowing, I realized that we, aspirants to a new world, did not know how to get there. Behind so many theories and speeches there was mainly one thing: confusion. The kind of confusion that very often is alive and full of good intentions, but still it is confusion. Like the coloured clothes, torn and faded blue jeans, long hair, long and big earrings that we used to wear. A very beautiful confusion. So I felt that I had to look somewhere else to find a reason for living, a basis for a change. But where? It was not easy. I slowly started to be attracted to something that in the Western world is called "spiritual teaching". Somehow that was the right choice, because every change in society must start from a change in the individual, this is the only guarantee of realizing something concrete. To meet Dzogchen means to start a big change in oneself, because - even if Dzogchen means that our nature is perfect from the beginning we have to overcome a good deal of limits to have a real understanding of this way of being. But I was lucky: at that time it was very easy for me to meet Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, I almost could not have missed him even if

I had wanted to. And I found that what he said was absolutely truthful and corresponded perfectly to my needs. I decided to join this group of people - at that time quite a small group mainly consisting of Italians - who called themselves "The Dzogchen Community" and, to go more deeply into it, I also became a student of Namkhai Norbu at the Oriental Institute of the University of Naples, where he teaches Tibetan Language and Culture. From that time on, the Dzogchen Community started to develop like a spiral, becoming larger and larger. England, France, North Europe, United States... what a nice chance to meet people from other countries and to open my mind in this way! Rinpoche used to say that he liked practitioners to mingle with each other, without limits of nationality and language. He did not have to say this twice to me! Like many others of his students, I started to follow him to the many retreats that he gave around the world, being always lucky enough to find the money when I needed it. England, France, Greece, America, Nepal. Travelling itself is interesting, but to me it also meant making connections with practitioners who live in different conditions and exchanging experiences. The most fruitful connection I made was with the Dzogchen Community of America, on both Coasts, first West and then East. It was wonderful to take part in the expeditions that brought us to find land for the Community, both in California and Massachusetts. It was wonderful to see something new starting: a new piece of land that focused people's enthusiasm and good feelings, a source of life. I liked that. It was wonderful to be invol-

THE HISTORY OF A CHANGE

TWELVE YEARS IN THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
CRISTIANA DE FALCO



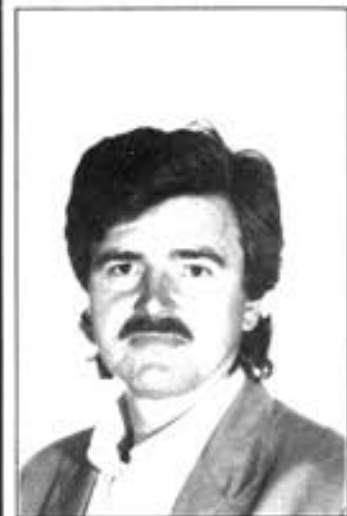
ved in projects for the translation and publishing of Tibetan texts, Dzogchen texts, texts written by our Master. It was a very rich experience. But everything has to come to an end, sooner or later. So I found myself back in Italy, having somehow to start everything again, from zero. And here I should say something about Merigar. A beautiful piece of land with a house, in a low mountain area in Tuscany, in the center of Italy. The seat of our meetings and retreats since 1982. The seat of the Dzogchen Community Publishing House, Shang Shung Editions. Many practitioners live in the little towns and villages nearby. They are all from somewhere else: some of them even came from other countries to settle here, in spite of the lack of work opportunities. Many little children cheer up the atmosphere, sometimes even a little too much! I decided to live here. The place was named "Merigar" by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who explained to us that "Gar" in Tibetan means "Settlement", and it is the term they use to designate Nomads camps. "Meri" means "Fire Mountain", i.e. volcano. He has established many "Gars" all over the world, wherever the Community owns land and people are willing to commit themselves to this experience. A "Gar" has a very precise meaning, according to Norbu Rinpoche: it is a

place where some practitioners live and apply practice in daily life, collaborating and working together, a place where the "spirit" of the Dzogchen teachings should always be present, because that is the center from where all its energy develops and spreads, like the heart in the human body. To me living in a place like this means a concrete opportunity to try and live in a different way. But what does "living in a different way" mean? I think it means in a more human way, with more freedom and mutual respect. Our modern society has completely forgotten about some values that are essential to the human condition, it has forgotten any real knowledge of human nature and of nature in general. This knowledge is still alive in the world - I know that this is true whenever I hear the truthful words of a Master - and some people have been lucky enough to connect with it. It is up to these people not to miss this chance. This means also that I found what I wanted, a way to live corresponding to my deeper nature. Life in this world is almost impossible: pollution, chaos, people struggling everywhere and in every possible way, the human dimension is no longer respected within this jungle - everybody has some experience of this. I find that living according to the principles of the Dzogchen teachings is the only possible solution to these problems. In this way

it is possible to create some space where things are not so wrong and some harmony is present. This will always be a point of reference - as long as its "spirit" is alive - for anybody who wants to improve. It is a pure space, always expanding, and an example for everybody who is interested. In this way living in Samsara can lead to enlightenment. I would like to share with those who will read this article a dream that I had three years ago in New York City: somebody was telling me that a big change is happening, in this world and society - a change on a "cosmic" level - and that all of those who are aware of the role they are playing in this change are blessed. Somehow I believe that this is true.

Cristiana De Falco
Merigar 1990

Giovanni Boni



I started to work for Merigar as soon as it had been bought. I live and work in Reggio Emilia and come here when I have to organize something. If I cannot manage to come I try to get the collaboration of people who live in Merigar.

I am an engineer by profession and it is in that capacity that I work to help The Community. The first work that I did was giving technical engineering assistance in the restructuring of the house; and then in the building of the "big barn"; and lately for the construction of the Gampa. If it does not get finished in time, it will be finished when it is finished.

I am at present the co-ordinator of the people who are working for the Gampa. I am not alone. There is a committee of architects and engineers and other people who live around here; we are all working together to get these things done. Those on the Committee are: Mario Maglietti, Michel Bricaire, Tericle Tattarini, Leopoldo Sentinelli, Francesco Marinelli, Anna Fiori and there was Colin El-lar. Then those who will do the building work are: Colin, Giorgio Minuzzo, Franco Branca, Paolo Simonato, and others. And then there is also the co-operation of all those who give and collect money.

Giovanni Boni.

Prayer flags for the great event



Would you like to buy prayer flags like those printed for "the Great Event", the visit of the Dalai Lama? If so you can order a set of them by sending an international money order for 50 US dollars to
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One set of flags consists of:
2 large flags with prayers written by
Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche (140 by 60 cm) and 10 small flags.
2 flags in each of five colours (35 by 20 cm)

The Morning Song

by Jean Mackintosh



I first met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in January 1988, at a ten day retreat near Sydney. It was Rinpoche's second Australian retreat. It was my first retreat. Towards the end of the retreat, I felt very sad that Rinpoche was leaving. These Teachings were new for me, and at first I did not understand very much about them. But then, at the same time, I knew that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was my teacher. So I often practised with my friend who lived one hour's drive away. I live in a country town in the southern tablelands of New South Wales not far from the capital city of Australia, Canberra. There were few other practitioners living nearby.

In October, 1989, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche returned to Australia, and all his students were delighted to see him again. About one hundred of us spent eight days with him at a country centre near Melbourne, in the cold southern winter. It was distressing for us that our Master was so tired from his heavy travel schedule and we were concerned for his health. But he still gave us weekend talks in Melbourne and eight days of precious Teachings at the retreat. We also had a picnic at Hanging Rock, with Rinpoche singing 'Hum' and listening to the vibrations in a rock cave. I remember Rinpoche running with the children through rock tunnels, crevices and winding paths; he lost the adults as he played Pied Piper to the children. And, I remember Rinpoche watching a koala bear uncurling from its sleep high in a tall gum tree. Later we all sang the Song of Vajra on top of a huge rock in the warm winter sunshine, and the vast blue space that surrounded those haunting rocks. Our picnic ended in a special way, as peacocks paraded on the roof of the tea pavilion while we drank tea and lemonade with Rinpoche.

Rinpoche returned to Rome by plane, on a 26 hour flight, after a weekend Seminar on Tibetan Medicine in Sydney. He had spoken in Australia about the possibility of his doing a personal retreat and perhaps not giving Teachings next year. So I made a quick decision: I would go to the last three retreats of the year, Argentina, France and Merigar. I found the money and bought the ticket before I could change my mind.

Time and space then became for me like a dream. Ignoring my fear of flying, I boarded the plane. I concentrate on the white UN and remember that it is all a dream. Argentina: how romantic! The land of the gaucho, vast plains, passionate politicians, corruption, inflation, the tango, lilting guitars, rancheros and herba mate. I stay one night in the vast metropolis of Buenos Aires, with its constant traffic, small cobbled shopping plazas, smart shops and echoes of its Spanish inheritance. I travel to Cordoba in the Sierra, through green fields and wide plains. There, Ricky and Marisa, with much kindness and generosity collect me from the hotel for coffee at midnight. The next day they take me to their home, and on to the retreat in an old monastery at Alta Gracia, just outside Cordoba.

The retreat was held for five warm sunny days and clear, mild nights with the southern stars shining brightly in the Argentine sky. We drank herba mate under the pepper trees at night after the teachings of our wonderful Rinpoche. This was the first retreat in Argentina, but nevertheless there were over one hundred people there, from many places in Argentina and Uruguay, as well as one person from Venezuela. Rinpoche seemed much rested, and we swam in the river with him every afternoon. Jennifer Fox had travelled to Argentina with Rinpoche to help with his travel programme, to make sure he was well looked after and could rest. Fabio Andrico also accompanied him, and taught Yantra Yoga every morning. These were hazy days in an unknown country, lost in a

world without much language. I remember carelessly floating in the black water, diving off the smooth warm rocks, and eating mulberries from the trees by the river in the warm sunshine. Rinpoche sat like a Buddha under a small waterfall, so that we could just see his face through the clear water. The dream continued. My refuge is the Teachings and our Master, who spoke in English, and in a language that we all understand. At night we integrated with the southern stars and the full moon, whose immense white light enveloped the vast flat plain of the dry inland estancias. By day, there were the pepper trees and the fine, white, brown dust of the Argentine summer. I lost myself in space: 'Me encanta'. We were all enchanted by this short beautiful retreat with Rinpoche. My thanks to our Master, and to Marisa, Ricky, Beatrice, Alicia, Antonella, Adriana, Stella Maris, Maria Elena, Patricia, Jorge, Paola, Raquel and all the other Dzogchen practitioners I met in South America. 'Que barbaro, que precioso'.

After a few days in Buenos Aires, I left for Paris and found that my fear of flying had vanished. I enjoyed the fourteen hour flight, learning some French phrases from a retired French tourist guide who had, escorted groups to Tibet. In Paris I went to Rinpoche's afternoon talk at the Rigpa Centre, and then caught the plane with Rinpoche and the French students to Perpignan, in the south of France. We then went by bus up the winding mountain road to Marcevol's Monastir in the Pyrenees. It was an old, old monastery, built of stones. So many stones. I felt as if I was in an ancient cave. The Teaching room to me was like a heavy dark tomb with one door to let in the light. I felt claustrophobic, surrounded by the earth element. Outside the view was fine on sunny days over the snow-clad Pyrenees. The village was surrounded by grape vines, and you could buy goat cheese and red wine there, from an old Catalan woman. But the days were not fine. Fog and white mist surrounded us constantly, enveloping us in our stone haven. The retreat began, and Rinpoche began to teach. My claustrophobia disappeared. I walked in the mist. In the mist there is nowhere to go. You can go in any direction, but still there is only mist. There is no way out of the mist. Integrate with the white mist, grey stones and the colours of the tige. I again found myself in an unknown world without language, but Rinpoche spoke in English.

The French Community are building a dark retreat house which will accomodate eight people. They have already bought the land, designed the house and have begun the building in February. It is in Brittany. Many thanks to Alain, Isabelle, Maiety, Jean, Lilian; to Maria, Curro, Pilar and Prima Mai of Spain and to Annalen and the others of the Dutch community that I met.

After some time in Paris, I travelled overnight by train to Grosseto and then on by bus to Arcidosso.

I slept in the dormitory downstairs at Merigar with fourteen others. What is Merigar like? I came early and spent Christmas Day at Merigar. Rinpoche and his family were staying upstairs. The sun shone and I walked in the fields of Tuscany overlooking the clustered houses on the hill-sides. The small fields were full of stacked hay, and the lanes were bordered by hawthorn bushes and rosehips growing in the fences. About twenty of us ate Christmas dinner together, chicken, salad and Italian red wine. Then we relaxed in the sun. At sunset we practised by the Stupa. It was freezing cold but wonderful, in the smoky blue, pink and yellow light of the sun setting over the hills of Tuscany. There is a special tranquility by the Stupa, as if the Master himself were there. Back in the warm dining room, drinking tea, Rinpoche came down and taught us

a Dorje Legba dance. People leapt about in the hall trying to get it right, with Rinpoche counting time 'uno, due, tre, quattro'.

The retreat began and people came from the four corners of the earth. There were six hundred or so, all crammed into the 'Capannone', where the Teachings were held. I have never seen so many people in such a small space. I wondered how we would all breathe. I started to panic. But Rinpoche of course was calm, and asked everyone to move up a little to let others in. In the end we all fitted in, and listened to the Teachings translated into English and many other languages. The weather was so fine during the ten day retreat, but the next day it snowed. Everything was so beautiful, cold and white, snow covering the whole fire mountain.

I stayed on in January. I liked Merigar. There is a strong sense of commitment among the practitioners, and things seem to run smoothly without too much fuss. The house, the cleaning, the cooking, the translating, the 'Merigar Rivista', the practise sessions and Yantra Yoga all happen regularly. People come and donate their time and skills. Rinpoche was at Merigar for many days throughout the month. It was wonderful to be there in those days. For me, I remember, washing dishes, mopping floors, lighting fires, looking after sick people, drinking coffee in Castel del Piano, walking to Monte Labro and enjoying times with the special people of the Merigar community. But especially I remember the many nights of dancing and singing with our Master playing the flute and teaching us how to play 'Samsara and Nirvana' and many other Tibetan games and dances. My special thanks to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and at Merigar to Anna Eid, Karin, Cristiana, Michel, Cicci, Claudio, Elisha, Anna, Gigi, Kumar Lama, Paola, Alix, Cesare, Mario, Tiziana and John and Jo Shane.

We are all the eyes of the world. We are the song that the morning brings.

Jean Mackintosh

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Gabrielle Kearney
8/148 Howe St
Freemans Bay
Auckland, New Zealand
Tuesday 13th Feb 1990

Greeting Rinpoche, and Hello Everyone,

I have just received news of the "Mirror". I am very excited by the idea and wish the project much success.

I hope too that the newspaper will become a forum where we can get to know each other better and enjoy the richness of our Vajra link.

As you know we have two Gakhyls in New Zealand and a stretch of water between our two islands. Both islands have had small Dzogchen retreats this summer. For us, in the north island, it was a very satisfying few days, and I think we all realized the benefit of group retreats, even in the absence of our Master. For most of the practitioners there is much to learn in terms of the actual practices, and this was an opportunity to deepen our familiarity with some of them. We had two sessions of Yantra Yoga with Mario every day: one before breakfast and one in the late afternoon. We also did the practice of Rushan and the Long Thun, and every night we studied and practiced the Chod. On the last night we performed the Ganapuja.

Part of the joy of this retreat was just being together, eating swimming in the ocean and being with our children. We hope to have another retreat at Easter, and perhaps integrate individual contemplation Thuns into the structure.

Love to All

Dear Friends,
Regards from your northernmost correspondent! The appearance of a new monthly newspaper in English was here in Finland very much appreciated. We were actually wondering where to get the news of what's happening in the Community since the newsletter in English was discontinued.

The announcement of "THE MIRROR" was circulated here among the community members and seven of us wanted to subscribe to it. So please send me the copies and I'll send them onwards. Later on we shall send you some news from us as well; this time we couldn't make the deadline.

Good luck to you in your new undertaking!

Love and light

Kaisa-Liisa Puonti.



Siena, Easter 87, professor Paula Crouzet and Elisabeth

TAIWAN

Dzogchen Community Members,

Thank you for the kind invitation to participate with the Community in producing "THE MIRROR". Prior to Rinpoche's visit in April, I guess I am the only Community member in Taiwan; however, I can assure you that there is great interest in such teachings here.

My friends are making preparations for Rinpoche's short stay by translating into Chinese the practice manual and portions of some of the materials necessary for understanding his approach with greater ease. Hopefully, copies of these materials will be available shortly for other Community members in Chinese speaking areas. In the meantime, we would greatly appreciate receiving a clear negative of a photograph of Rinpoche in order to produce copies to be placed in personal shrines (common here) for distribution during his visit.

Again, thanks to everyone, especially Rinpoche.

Best wishes
Daniel C. Clouatre

AUSTRALIA

Dear Friends,

I write at Lisse Stutchbury's request enclosing two contributions for "THE MIRROR". These articles appeared in our December Newsletter, but since your letter regarding "THE MIRROR" did not reach Lisse until today, there has been no opportunity to generate new material in time for your deadline. I have also arranged for a number of photographs to be sent to you by another member of our Community.

Members of the Australian Community will be asked to offer material for the next issue. There should be no difficulty in sending you contributions by modem or on floppy disk in any IBM-compatible word-processor format, if this is more convenient to you than hard copy.

Very best wishes,

Hamish Gregor
Newsletter Editor.

Contribution from Australia to the Tibetan Village Project.

In March of 1989, we obtained a copy of "Timeless Present", the film which Rinpoche and some of his students made of his return to Eastern Tibet and the place of his birth, the areas in which he lived, travelled or taught, and the village of Changchub Dorje, his root master. This film not only portrayed something of the personal lineage of Rinpoche in an audio-visual description of Dzogchen in Eastern Tibet, but also showed much of the present conditions and the state of the culture in that area.

Having been inspired by various aspects of the film and the conditions depicted, I organised public showings of the film. With the cooperation of the Melbourne Gakyil, six screenings were organised with some success; and moreover considerable interest was generated in Rinpoche, Dzogchen and the conditions of Eastern Tibet. All costs were covered and although profits were initially meagre, we were on our way toward raising money for the Tibetan Village Project. With further screenings more money was raised. In June, the Melbourne Community had an opportunity to be part of the Tibet Himalayan Festival, which was held at the Exhibition Buildings near the heart of the city. We also managed to sell books from the Theosophical Society Bookshop who provided the Community with whatever was required in the way of publications and we received 20% on all sales generated. I also had postcards of Padmasambhava and facsimiles of Tibetan currency notes printed, which were sold. The Festival spanned five days and our book-stall was staffed by Community members. In five days we made approximately \$810, for the Tibetan Village Project. During Rinpoche's workshop in Melbourne in September 1989, a percentage of the book sales was again steered towards the Tibetan Village Project.

Brian Snowden



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John, Jessie and Jo Shane in front of the Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet, October 1987

Bern, 3-2-'90

Dear Master and Dear Community,

It was with great pleasure that I received the news about the new project of "The Mirror", the monthly newspaper of our community and I am very honoured by having been chosen as a local representative and correspondent and I am glad to fulfil this function.

I would like the following consideration to be my first small contribution.

I find this new project an excellent idea. My impression of the communication through the different Dzogchen newsletters so far is that sometimes the work is a bit unco-ordinated and repetitive. I imagine that if "The Mirror" can become one of, or the main, newspaper of our community with its different correspondents all over the world, then a big step will be taken towards clear communication, real co-ordination and true collaboration.

My opinion is that the contents of the different Dzogchen news-letters should be limited to local information and that we should concentrate more on "The Mirror".

In this way we will save a lot of energy and our work will become economically and ecologically more convenient, and maybe our contributions more precise.

Maybe the time has come for a general reflection about communication within the community and for a new structure of the news-letter system. "The Mirror" as a monthly international newspaper offers us these opportunities!

Finally some information about the Swiss Dzogchen community: as a consequence of Rinpoche's coming to Switzerland in '88 (for the first time) and '89, when he gave very concentrated and precious week-end teachings, a little group (of about 30 persons) is coming together. Some elder students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche are trying to create a local connection between Swiss practitioners and to facilitate the contact between them and the other communities; and last but not least with the one spatially most near our Master, Merigar. I wish a good start to "The Mirror" and everybody involved with it.

May it become of great benefit to everyone!

Aline

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Shang - Shung Edition

A Journey into the Culture of Tibetan Nomads by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

The book contains a description of the world in which the nomads lived in East Tibet, as well as their life style and customs.

It is a very important text for the understanding of the epic poem of Gesar of Ling, a king of ancient Tibet, whose culture is linked to that of the present day Tibetan nomads.

A useful glossary with commentaries of some of the terms completes the work.

It is beautifully illustrated with original colour pictures and drawings.

Available editions: Tibetan (foreword and index in English). Italian. English edition forthcoming.

THE MIRROR

Advice on the presence of awareness by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

This text contains the essence of a very ancient spiritual tradition, still alive today and now being taught in the West. The title, "The Mirror", reflects the heart of the Dzogchen teaching, the mirror of our true nature, the authentic condition of each person. One should continuously observe oneself, and realize one's practice and behaviour with awareness, so that this knowledge does not remain mere theory or become a way of deceiving oneself.

Available editions: English. Italian.

The Little Song of "Do As You Please"

IN TIBET

A Journey from China to Tibet with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

by Raimondo Bultrini

Raimondo Bultrini, a student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, is a journalist who has worked for "L'Unità" and "Paese Sera". His book is the diary of a journey, lasting nearly a whole year, during which the author had the unique opportunity to accompany Rinpoche in all his travels and in most of his encounters. A lively account, told in plain style, of the meeting between two different cultures.

Available editions: Italian. English edition forthcoming.

In the Introduction the author says: "On the morning of 20th January 1984, while I was teaching in a Buddhist temple in the city of Sydney, Australia, a young man, who said he belonged to a centre of the glorious incomparable Riwo Galdan, asked me: "How can you practise the teaching and be a teacher for others when you live like a lay person?"

On the morning of the 23rd January, while on the aeroplane from Sydney to Koolangatta, the Dzogchen practitioner Namkhai Norbu spontaneously wrote this little song which presents in a few words the essence of the reply to that person."

Available editions: English. Italian.



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THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
INSPIRED BY THE TEACHINGS OF AND UNDER THE
SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF
NAMKHAIR NORBU RINPOCHE

Periodical of general information
about the activities of the
Dzogchen Community worldwide

Published by
Associazione Culturale Comunità
Dzogchen
Merigar - 58031 - Arcidosso (GR)
Tel. 0564/966837 - Fax 966039
Part. IVA 00839940533

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Shang-Shung Edizioni

Graphics:
Rigel, Grosseto

Layout:
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Coordination of Artwork:
Weldon & Labor

Advertising sales manager:
Mario Maglietti

Photo Editor:
Liane Graf

Printed by:
Tipolito VIERI - Roccastrada (Gr)

NUMERO 0
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THE MIRROR NEWS

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
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Richard Eagleton
Project Co-ordinator of the
Tibet Benefit concert
6, Hartham Close, Hartham
Road, London N7 9JH
telephone 01 / 370 / 3130

In the next issue:



Michel Bricaire on
Tibetan medicine



Nicoletta Liguori on first
retreat



Anna Eid:
The blue Gakyil



A message from Azamgar

NEWS FROM TSEGYALGAR

LAMA TENZIN WANGYAL'S DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

On January 25, 1990 Lama Tenzin Wangyal arrived in New York. The first two days were spent relaxing and going for 'walkabouts' - we heard the news in Massachusetts that Lama Tenzin Wangyal discovered the only two Tibetan restaurants in all of New York on his first days in the City.

In Amherst, Mass., we had rented the 'Unitarian Church' for a public talk; Lopon Tenzin Namdak had spoken in the very same church the previous year. Around a hundred people came, which was a very good turn-out for a small town. Amherst has a student population of about 20,000 and the talk was planned before the beginning of a new term. So we were happy to see so many people. There was a good question and answer session after the talk, and one of the big questions was: "What is dualism?"

Throughout the weekdays we altered the schedule by inviting newly interested people to come every other night for further teachings, and the remaining nights we went to the houses of older students. Everyone wanted Lama Tenzin Wangyal in their houses and the whole feeling was very joyous. We were grateful to be brought back to the basics of Concentration, Fixation and Contemplation. Most nights we gave out A's in five coloured tiges fastened onto wooden sticks on a base and we enjoyed the thought of how they may adorn so many interiors, and hopefully be integrated into people's lives.

On two consecutive week-ends Lama Tenzin Wangyal gave teachings in Shelburne Falls. People who had come to last year's summer retreat may remember the oasis of civilization not far from our camp-ground: the famous McCuskers store: our lunchtime soups had come from there. On the upper floor there is a very beautiful space, and about forty to fifty people came from all directions to participate.

Lama Tenzin Wangyal taught from a text from the Shang-Shung Nyan Gyud on Dzogchen. He had received this transmission from his own Master, Lopon Sangye Tenzin. Through the process of transmitting and translating and explaining the text he gave such a vivid example through his own being: how what really counts is indeed one's very own experience and understanding of whichever practice one may choose to do. I think everyone participating respected his honesty and courage - as well as the fact that he had been somewhat rebellious in his response to the structure of his persona education.

For the second week-end we moved on to Powa teachings and practiced together on both those days. Lama Tenzin Wangyal urged everyone not to be satisfied with an idea or a concept, but really just to do it: practice for a full week, twice daily and then see for oneself whether there might be a change - something to be noticed.

We all did notice a feeling of inspiration - and back-to-the-roots experiences - simple distinctions of feeling and sensation. In that way it was a very successful process.

On February 13 we sadly waved bye bye to Lama Tenzin Wangyal - on his way to further Americas. We have invited him to come again - hopefully for a longer time.



NEWS FROM THE USSR.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has kindly informed 'THE MIRROR' that he has been receiving letters from several cities in the Soviet Union where there are a number of people interested in the Dzogchen teachings. Rinpoche has been invited to go to the Soviet Union to teach, but has unfortunately had to decline the invitation for the present. He has said that he will, however, send one of his students there to teach Yantra Yoga in the near future.

The various letters to Rinpoche have informed him that in Moscow, Leningrad, Vilnius, Riga, Lithuania and Latvia, there are people studying his teachings by reading his books and some videotapes of his teachings.

A newsletter from Leningrad enclosed with one of the letters has one page written in English, from which we include the following information:

"On June 28th, 1989 the Buddhist Society of Leningrad was legalized. Buddhism first reached our city in the early 20th Century, when in 1915, the Buddhist temple was constructed on the initiative of Lharampa Agwan Dorjiev, with the blessing of H.H. Dalai Lama XIII. Means for building the temple were collected by the Buddhists of Buryatia, Mongolia, Tuva and Kalmykia. Considerable sums of money were also donated by H.H. the Dalai Lama and Agwan Dorjiev. The temple functioned until about 1932. In 1938 it was nationalised, and since then has served to house various state institutions.

"The temple cannot remain alive without those who come to practise at it. The history of the Leningrad Buddhist Community can be traced to 1965, when the transmission of the Buddhist teaching to Europeans was started by B.D. Dandaren (1914-1974), the well known Buryat Buddhist Scholar known to be a tulku of Jayagsy Gegen, the Lama of Gumbum (sic) monastery... Several Buryat Lamas followed his example. At present the transmission is carried on by the 90 year old Tarmadode Lama, as well as by shiretul of Tsugolsky Datsan Jimba Jamtso Tsybenov. All these years the number of Buddhists in the city has been growing and finally, after its 20 year long unofficial existence the community has acquired legal status." Rinpoche's correspondents state that many of the Buddhists they know would like to follow the Dzogchen teachings, which they feel to be "the best way to practise Dharma in our very confused and rather hard western way of life." One writer, a physician cardiologist by profession, has followed Zhimba Zhamtso, the chief Lama of Tsugol monastery in East Siberia (Chita District). He informed Rinpoche that "this monastery was closed and extorted from the Buddhist community more than fifty years ago, like many, many others in Buriat-Mongolia and Eastern Siberia, and till now was exploited for various purposes. Last year, due to the new attitude of the Soviet Government towards religion this monastery was given back to the Buddhist community. Now it will be restored and opened in the near future."

Another letter, from the Latvian Buddhist Community, which was revived on the 18th of October 1989, formally asks Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to accept the role of its spiritual patron, and several other letters report that Dzogchen Communities have been informally started in Moscow and Leningrad, Vilnius and Riga, where Rinpoche has been invited to go to teach. Rinpoche has agreed to extend invitations to those who wish to attend the Massachusetts retreat so that they can present these invitations to obtain the necessary visas.

On behalf of the Dzogchen Communities of the rest of the world, **THE MIRROR** would like send Best Wishes to all Dzogchen practitioners in the USSR, hoping that the secondary causes for them to meet our precious Master will arise in the very near future, and welcoming them to the Dzogchen Community world-wide. We hope they will write to **THE MIRROR** regularly to send news of the development of their Communities. We will be glad to pass on any information that will further collaboration between Communities.

THE TIBETAN VILLAGE PROJECT

Tibetans are facing the question of the survival of their population and culture. In former times Tibetans lived in their own country and, according to Chinese sources, numbered ten million at the time of the last kings of Tibet. Since then the total population has decreased to about three million, according to recent Chinese sources.

Tibetan culture is a treasure belonging not only to Tibetans but to everyone on earth. In fact, any knowledge that exists is precious for all beings and belongs to all of us. If we ignore this and let this value disappear we will all feel sorry afterwards. That is why anyone who is interested, not only Tibetans, should intervene and help preserve this precious heritage.

In order to further the preservation of Tibetan culture a project for a model village for Tibetans in exile in India has been launched by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in collaboration with the office of H.H. the Dalai Lama.

Whatever your qualifications and your expertise are, there may be some way in which you can help this project, even if it is just by telling your friends about what we are trying to do and enlisting their support. Offers of help or requests for further information should be addressed to A.S.I.A., the non-governmental organization which is directing and co-ordinating the project in all its economic and technical aspects. The headquarters of A.S.I.A. are based in Italy at Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso (GR), Italy. Telephone: 0564/966837.

Contributions can be made by check, Bank Draft or International Money Order to the following account: A.S.I.A., account No: 3893, at this bank: Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Arcidosso (GR), Italy.

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