

THE MIRROR

The International Newspaper of the Dzog-chen Community

Issue 18

New A.S.I.A. projects welcomed

A.S.I.A., the Dzog-chen Community's non-governmental organization (NGO), is well on its way towards getting the go-ahead for two important new welfare projects in eastern Tibet.

The first project is for the construction of a school and a hospital in the village of Dzam-thog in Chamdo province. Dzam-thog is situated on the border between Chamdo in the Autonomous Region of Tibet and Sichuan province. This means that the new facilities should become available to Tibetans living in nearby villages in both provinces.

A contribution of a figure in the order of a million dollars has been officially requested from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The project has already received the backing of the Ministry, the Italian NGO office of the Ministry and the Italian embassy in Beijing.

This project has temporarily replaced earlier plans for building schools and hospitals in Galen-ting village in Sichuan province and at Khamdo gar in Chamdo Prefecture. These plans had run aground over a series of bureaucratic difficulties.

The new project again reflects Namkhay Norbu Rinpoche's concern to help Tibetans in a concrete way in matters such as the provision of educational and health facilities.

The other project which A.S.I.A. is currently engaged in preparing is for a school in the area of Dang-che in the Amdo part of Qinghai province. Over six thousand Tibetans live mainly as farmers and nomadic shepherds in the villages around



Some of the Tibetan children in Dang-che

Dang-che. For the five hundred children of school age in the area a Tibetan language school would represent a major opportunity for their education. At present, the only school in the area is a Han speaking one, and few Tibetans actually speak Chinese.

At the recent conference on the Tibetan language organized by the Shang Shung Institute, speakers from all parts stressed the importance from a purely educational point of

view of Tibetan children studying all subjects in their own language.

Dang-che is also the birthplace of Cai Rang Tar (*Tse Ring Thar*), the Tibetan research scholar from the Chinese Centre for Tibetological Studies in Beijing, who in the last year has been studying and working at the Shang Shung Institute at Merigar. Tse Ring Thar has written to the Chinese local government, setting out the possibility of realizing the project with the help of A.S.I.A.

In their prompt response, the local government sent the necessary authorizations, designs for the school, photographs of the children (see above) and the village.

The total cost of the project is around 130,000 dollars, which will have to be raised privately. The project will be presented as soon as possible to the new 'running committee' of the Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzog-chen to discuss fund finding strategies.

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MOVING ACROSS THE WORLD MANDALA



After the successful conclusion of the Tibetan Language Conference held at the beginning of September at Merigar, Chögyal Namkhay Norbu set off on the second leg of his international teaching tour around the globe. After giving teachings in Vancouver, Canada, Rinpoche's journey took him to retreat venues in Santa Fe, San Francisco and Hawaii in the United States.

At all these places, in addition to the organization required to hold a large retreat there had been much careful activity beforehand to prepare Mandalas on which to practise the Dances that Rinpoche is teaching. In California, for example, Community people constructed a 25 foot portable Mandala from a plastic material which can be laid inside or outside for dancing. Many practitioners followed the steps of Chögyal Namkhay Norbu in this practise to integrate our three existences - the Dance of the Vajra.

From North America, Rinpoche continued his journey towards the west stopping to teach in Tokyo, Japan and Singapore. At the time of going to press he is giving teachings in New South Wales, Australia. From Christmas on Rinpoche will be travelling and teaching through Argentina, Peru and Venezuela in South America returning to Tsegyelgar and New York for retreats early in the spring. From April 9 - 18, 1993, Merigar will be host to a retreat given by Chögyal Namkhay Norbu, the first on his return to Italy.

Integration in the state of contemplation

By Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

To observe our condition, we must observe it through our thoughts, otherwise we cannot reach the empty state. If we want to understand the capacity and nature of the mirror, we have to stand in front of it and reflect ourselves in it. Reflections indicate that the mirror has the capacity to reflect. Through the reflection we can understand the capacity of the mirror. With our thoughts and movements we can also understand that we have emptiness. So observe the thought, and when you observe it, what happens? What you find is emptiness. Even if you observe it hundreds of times, you never find anything but emptiness because that is the conclusion at which you arrive. This is the real uninterrupted condition that is called Dharmakaya. This is not something you find outside. It is our own inner condition. Recognising this and being in this state means recognition of the Dharmakaya.

And even though we are in this emptiness, thoughts always continue to arise. There is always something moving. There is not absolute emptiness with nothing. In this emptiness clarity is never lacking and the clarity that manifests is part of our qualification and is called Sambhogakaya. The alternation of this emptiness and clarity is uninterrupted and in Tantrism is called tantra: continuation without interruption. For example, that is why, in Tantrism, we do transformation. We know that the transformation starts from emptiness and that its conclusion is emptiness. But there is always a way and possibility of working with clarity because it corresponds to our nature and its uninterrupted continuity is called tantra.

Tantra is not the name of a book or teaching or tradition. The real tantra is our own condition. If you really understand what tantra is then that is Nirmanakaya. Our existence, our condition, all of this is related to it. So concretely we can understand the three aspects in these three kayas or dimensions. But in reality they are not three things: they are the same as our condition. Being in this condition means being in the state of instant presence without distraction.

In order to continue and integrate whatever thought arises, if we observe and are in the same presence as that thought, then that thought self-liberates. When it is self-liberated, our consideration of the outer world or the objects of all the senses such as form or sound, or anything we have contact with, are liberated. When we are distracted we do not liberate them.

Let's take the example of sound. Someone may like music very much and even consider it sacred. It is true, music can be very sacred, but when one is conditioned by all of



ones attachment, it is not so sacred. But if one is not distracted and has ones self-liberation, that is presence that receives the contact of the sense objects, then that becomes part of clarity. Whatever contact we have, it is self-liberated. In that case, it is said that everything is Kuntuzangpo (Kun-tu bzang-po). Everything is Samantabhadra.

Self-liberation

What does self-liberation mean and how do we self-liberate our sense contact with objects? If we don't self-liberate these, then it means that it is just normal Samsara, and Dzog-chen is not working. When Dzog-chen is working it is guided by presence and we are able to integrate with circumstances as they are. This is exactly what the Teaching is talking about. The eyes see form and the ears hear sound, the tongue feels taste and the body feels touch, the mind feels sensations. These are all the contacts of our sense organs with objects and we live with these living circumstances. Integration means understanding that and governing it with awareness and presence. If we can understand that, then we can understand what is meant by self-liberation. If we don't understand that, then we don't understand self-liberation. And if we don't understand self-liberation, then we don't understand Dzog-chen.

Dzog-chen is not a school or a tradition. It is knowledge that is connected with the condition of each individual. Until we learn that, nothing else we learn will have much value. In front of our eyes there can be a form that is pleasant or unpleasant, likewise with sound, smell, taste, touch and in the mind - all these pleasant or unpleasant sensations are connected with attachment or anger. When there is anger we reject. Our concept of friends or enemies is based on this too, and all of our limitations arise in this way.

It is the same with the function of all the elements. For example if we have contact with the element fire, we will have the experience of heat. If it is contact with water, humidity. Each element has its characteristic. When we have that contact we have the living experience of that characteristic but usually we are distracted by all these experiences. If instead of being distracted we are present, with that presence, without changing or modifying anything, we can have that self-liberation.

Clarity

In the original Dzog-chen texts it says of this, that all of our sense contact with objects represents clarity. If this clarity is not distracted by our distracted mind, the clarity itself is a state of enlightenment.

In the Shijyed (Zhi-byed) text by Phatampa (Pha-dam-pa), the main master of Macig Labdron, it says that if one understands the meaning one notices the defects of thought. It is not that thought is a defect; when we have a thought that can be a part of clarity. But when we don't understand, we are immediately distracted and enter into judgment, in which case we create lots of karma and lots of problems. But if we understand that the defect is distraction, in that case there is nothing wrong if one has more thoughts arising because then we have a greater state of *nepa* or emptiness. It almost seems like a contradiction, but the truth is that it is not, because if we understand the nature of thought, then the more thoughts arise the more you observe them, the more you have thoughts the more emptiness manifests. The more reflections manifest in the mirror, the more possibility you have to understand the nature of the mirror. But that does not mean that an ordinary person (will understand this). For them having more thoughts doesn't mean more emptiness but more confusion because they don't understand the defect of thought.

And those who have more emotions will have more clarity of wisdom. Generally in Tantrism it is said that whoever has more passion, has more wisdom. But this doesn't mean passion in a normal way. It means somebody who has the capacity to be in a state of presence or has the capacity for transformation. In that case the greater passion becomes the greater wisdom. The more wood you have, the bigger the fire. But if you don't have the capacity for transformation or the capacity to govern it with presence, then the more passion you have, the more you enter into *samsara*. The more passion you have, the more suffering you create.

Nothing to renounce

So in the Dzog-chen Teaching, how can one find oneself in the state of contemplation? Whatever thoughts arise in the mind, whatever experiences arise through contact of the senses with objects (because in life everything is experienced in reality), in the moment of the state of contemplation, it is not that one has to renounce or accept, but one finds oneself in self-liberation. And without changing anything, being in that state governs everything.

Therefore, in the principle of the Dzog-chen Teaching there is nothing to accept or renounce. There is no Dharma that you create mentally with judgement because you self-liberate everything without changing anything. That is the state of Dharmakaya, beyond the mind and reasoning.

What we have been talking about is meant for people who have a superior capacity. Among the people of superior capacity there is a superior, medium and inferior capacity, and one has to introduce this to people and they have to experiment and try according to their capacities.

Now, we consider how people of average capacity can acquire knowledge with instructions on

shine and *lhagton* together.

Shine and lhagton

Shine is the calm state and *lhagton* means not only being in the calm state but noticing the movement of thoughts, and integrating with that movement. In the Dzog-chen Semde we talk about the four contemplations, in that case *shine* and *lhagton* are separate and they are gone into gradually. Whereas in this method it is different and *shine* and *lhagton* go together.

In the Gong Du, the original Dzog-chen text from which this is taken, it says, "If you don't find yourself in the calm state of *shine*, you cannot discover what *lhagton* means". That means if you don't understand the emptiness of your nature then you cannot discover the nature of movement.

Without discovering the movement of thoughts, one can't find oneself in the calm state. Therefore *shine* and *lhagton* are not something that you can separate. In reality they are the same principle. So *shine* and *lhagton* must arise together. This is the specific method of this Teaching.

And there is an example of this. In the same book it says, "How can there be a bird without an egg; and how can there be an egg without a bird? And how can one decide which of the two comes first?" It is the same for *shine* and *lhagton*. To discover our nature, neither *nepa* nor *gyuwa* ('gyu-ba) must be lacking.

This is very important in Dzog-chen. As I have said many times, in Dzog-chen the recognition of our nature is not only emptiness but also movement.

If you have the idea that our condition of Dharmakaya is only emptiness, as if *gyuwa*, movement, had no importance. This is an understanding associated with the Sutra teaching. But you must not understand this way in

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Integration...

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Dzog-chen. Even if we understand that our condition is Dharmakaya, there is no Dharmakaya that exists without the qualities of Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya; so clarity and emptiness are not something to separate, they are simply two aspects of the same nature. That is why in our condition we have emptiness and after this immediately there is thought, then immediately after this thought there is emptiness, then again thought, alternating. This nature is called *tantra* and it is never interrupted. This is our condition.

In order to manifest this clarity we need secondary causes, the right circumstances. If clarity doesn't manifest, it does not mean it does not exist; if you look in a crystal you might not see a rainbow, but when there are the circumstances of the sun's rays, infinite light manifests. But it does not mean that it manifests every day - it depends on the circumstances.

Likewise Dharmakaya has infinite wisdom, but it manifests according to the circumstances. That is why it is said that the Dharmakaya is our condition, but it does not mean that it is only emptiness. This point is very important.

In this way you must understand that *shine* and *lhagtong* have to arise together. As Gyalwa Yangonpa, a famous Drugpa Kagyud master said in one of his songs, "Through my understanding of that famous Teaching called Dzog-chen, a non-gradual understanding arose in me."

This doesn't mean that first there was emptiness and then there was clarity, but that our real understanding arises instantly.

"All of the thoughts that arise in the movement of the mind are the door to knowledge." Master Gotsangpa.

And how did Gyalwa Yangonpa apply the practice? In his song he says, "Since the nature from the very beginning is contemplation, there is nothing to contemplate on. Continuing in this real presence without changing anything, don't consider the thoughts that arise in the mind as something mistaken or erroneous, or something to renounce. Don't seek the state of *mitogpa* without thoughts".

Shine

Sometimes people who practice *shine* try to find the state of emptiness without thoughts, and when thoughts arise they are not happy. That means that they are seeking the state of *mitogpa* and Yangonpa is saying don't seek this. He says to leave the mind and the thoughts as they are, as they arise, like someone who is just observing what is happening.

So we leave our mind free without judging or blocking it or doing anything, but always observing it. He says that if you do it this way

then *shine* will arise naturally.

Continuing in this way, gradually thoughts continue to diminish and the nature of this state of *shine* or meditation develops the state of emptiness more; naturally emptiness with presence, otherwise one would be like someone without any consciousness. Presence means that in that state of emptiness, one sees and hears all the circumstances that are around one. All of the senses are functioning but one is not following or going after them; one always remains in a calm state. Continuing in this way one can have the experience of almost not feeling the presence of the body. This is a characteristic experience of *shine*. When one is more accustomed to *shine*, one can remain in this state for hours and hours, and finds pleasure in it. This is a characteristic of how *shine* develops.

Continuing in this, perhaps one develops clairvoyance of all the senses and certain types of clarity. This is a qualification of what is called *samten*, in Sanskrit *samadhi*. But in fact, *samten* and contemplation are not the same thing because in order for it to be contemplation, we have to integrate all these things in instant presence. Only being in the calm state is not perfect contemplation but is a state of *samten* that is very widespread.

From the point of view of Dzog-chen practice, *samten* is not integrated at all. It is just simply having relaxed the mind, that is why it is said to be pointing inwards. But pointing inwards does not mean that you do not see with the eyes or hear with the ears.

Certainly when you are in the state of *shine* and someone nearby you is playing the flute, you will hear it with your ears, but you will

try not to get worried by it. You become more attentive to what you are pointed at so as not to get distracted by that sound. So it means you are not integrating because all the senses are pointed inwards.

But in the Dzog-chen practice, it is the opposite. The senses are not pointed inwards but out towards objects and when the sense organs contact objects that means integrating.

Shantideva in a teaching called the "Bodhisattvacharyavatara" said, "Applying *shine*, *lhagtong* arises. And through *lhagtong*, one liberates oneself and overcomes all the effects of the emotions."

This is a sutra method so it is slightly different. Understanding in this way, first of all one must apply *shine*. From what Shantideva says we can understand that *shine* is not something specific to Dzog-chen or Buddhism but is also found in Hinduism and realisation through it exists in both Buddhism and Hinduism.

If you don't have *lhagtong*, you can't obtain realisation only with *shine*. The purpose of *shine* is only to find a calm state of the mind. When one practises something like *shine* and thinks that it is better not to have so many thoughts, then one should observe that thought itself in that moment. As soon as you notice that a thought is arising, relax in that observation itself. Observing in that way, the thought will disappear and the movement will dissolve in *nepa*. So you notice that movement and the state of emptiness have the same principle, that *shine* and *lhagtong* have the same base.

Tongnyid zungdren

The tradition of the Drugpa Kagyud says that when you reach this point, that is when you discover that *shine* and *lhagtong* are the same principle. They call it interrupting or breaking down the frontier between *nepa* and *gyurwa*. It is a characteristic of this practice that it is still conditioned by our intention, it is still not so natural because we must always recall our attention in order to continue and maintain this. For that reason the characteristic of this state in the Kagyudpa tradition is called *tongnyid zungdren* (*stongnyid bzung-'dren*); *tongnyid* means *sunyata*, *zungdren* means to maintain it with remembrance.

This is quoted here because they are saying that this state is not yet spontaneous and natural because it is still minimally connected with tension.

For it to become total contemplation there must be total relaxation. If one has a certain experience of contemplation but always continues it with a certain amount of tension, that can become a kind of obstacle. If there is an obstacle you cannot develop past it.

When one understands this principle and continues in this state of *shine* and gradually, maintaining this *zungdren* with attention, there comes a presence of clarity with less tension. One has to train in this because one is not able to integrate as soon as one has understood it intellectually.

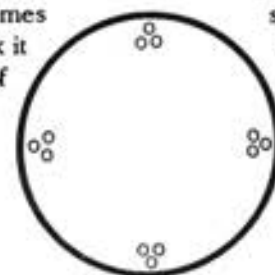
Our daily vision, which means our consideration of what concrete things are, distracts us and everything we see and have contact with, we believe in very strongly. Integration means we do not get distracted by things.

The great Drugpa Kagyud Master Gotsangpa said, "You must not think that all the vision that you see and all the sense contacts that you have are emptiness. Nor must you think or meditate that they are not empty. Everything that arises and that you have contact with, govern it in that moment with presence."

In conclusion, all that we have said about *shine* and *shine* integrated with *lhagtong*, being in the state of instant presence becomes contemplation. This contemplation is the union of *shine* and *lhagtong* itself. If you discover and find yourself in this state, it is called Mahamudra, Dzogpa Chenpo, Dzog-chen, the finality of all of these.

In a meeting of The Mirror staff in the early days of the paper, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche said:

"This newspaper must not contain too many things that people are not really interested in, just small problems or things concerning small groups of people, things that are not of broad interest to everyone. If we say 'newspaper', it means that we are giving news: what is happening here and what we are going to do. ... If we communicate what we want to do ... the interests of Merigar and of the Community and gakyils in other countries, it becomes something that is very useful to inform this kind." (See The Mirror, issue no. 5 - September 1990)



Message from the editors

So clearly The Mirror does not set out to imitate its namesake, the London daily of the same name. It is not designed to contain gossip columns or even 'page three' style Dakinis! Nor should it be seen as a sort of a propaganda rag for some kind of 'interest group'. What it does try to do - and maybe only in part succeeds in doing - is to let people know the way in which the Community is developing in the gars and around the world under Rinpoche's guidance. We feel that this is important and that, even if this general information does not arrive right away - after all The Mirror is a 'periodical' - it is none the less valuable for that. We also realize that articles regarding organization tend to make less compelling reading than do, say, teachings. But they are of importance.

To take an example, judging from the mail we receive, there still seems to be a considerable amount of confusion in some parts of the world about the membership card system. It has even been suggested that it is a sort of subterfuge for getting money out of people's pockets by means of 'teacher training'. This is not the idea at all! And if some readers are under this impression, then it may mean that The Mirror is not doing its job well enough in informing, communicating. What Rinpoche has actually said is that he only wants people to teach what he has transmitted to them with his personal permission and after proper training. Otherwise, anyone could go around, maybe using his name to give 'Dzog-chen teachings', but actually creating confusion for others whilst at the same time damaging the transmission. So one reason for the membership card system is to allow him to know who is who and who is doing what. Nothing very sinister! No blackmail, nothing.

Rinpoche frequently reminds us that he did not create the Dzog-chen Community and its many related projects merely for the sake of a limited group of people: its aim is the transmission, practice and continuation of the teachings. And the teachings are for the benefit of all sentient beings, not just a few.

So how can The Mirror be considered merely a waste of money if one of its main tasks is to communicate these sorts of developments to people who have received transmission from the Master, follow his teachings and, presumably, trust in his guidance? The important thing is that the message gets through. And if The Mirror is not a particularly professional-looking paper, is not always 'written in ... er ... beautiful, flowing English or whatever: well, please don't shoot the editors - they're doing their best. And we are also doing our best to try gradually to improve the various sections, make it more varied and, hopefully, maybe even a touch more light-hearted too. (Wow!)

We have heard that a variety of people have felt offended by the cruel fate of the material they sent in the past. Maybe something got heavily changed, a mistake in the typesetting altered the layout of a poem, or the article simply seemed to get lost and was never even acknowledged. And in fact working flat out in the very understaffed Mirror office is not very conducive to keeping up proper correspondence with our contributors, but this is something we intend to rectify.

On the other hand, as regards the editing down, or even non-publication, of some articles, this is normal practice in any paper and is unfortunately inevitable; the paper is read not only by Community members but also in libraries around the world (e.g. Lhasa, Dharamsala etc.). While we certainly do not intentionally mix metaphors or change meanings, we do have to try to ensure that material which we received in 'foreign' English ends up at least grammatically correct. But we feel these details are secondary to the main aims. And certainly, in the meantime, The Mirror has at least always published a considerable number of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's own words, as well as teachings by other masters. So we feel it can't have got absolutely everything wrong!

Land gift to California Community



Group photo at Camp Cazadero

by Carol Fields

When they arrived in San Francisco, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Fabio Andrico were greeted by various members of the Community who live in the greater Bay Area and travelled immediately to Berkeley, where they stayed before and after the retreat. For two weeks before their arrival, members of the Community participated in practices of the Dance of the Vajra, frequently twice a day, both in Berkeley and in Sonoma, led by Prima Mai. The Community was very fortunate to have the use of the Dharmadhatu shrine room in Berkeley, for holding dance practice, and it now appears that this room, which is centrally located and close to public transportation, will be available for on-going practice of the dance.

The time before and after the retreat was taken up with visits and interviews, a Community ganapuja, computer-shopping to find Rinpoche the ideal portable computer, book-buying for the Merigar library, correspondence, review and duplication of texts, Community meetings, a walk in the park at sunset,

and liberal servings of health foods, vitamins and sashimi. (Note: Fabio may soon decide to live on vitamin pills alone)

The retreat was held from November 5th - 9th at a lovely, spacious camp 2 1/2 hours north of San Francisco in the coastal hills near the Russian River close to the town of Cazadero. The camp had a very large green lawn, encircled by dormitory cabins, with a very large central hall and dining area, and various other separate lodgings, including a cabin for Rinpoche. Creekside trails and fire roads led up the hill to the ridge and a view of the coast and wooded hills. We were grateful for the spaciousness of the camp, since 170 people attended the retreat, 140 of them for the entire time. Rinpoche taught Santi Maha Sangha, and gave a number of empowerments. Quite a few students of Zen, therapists, vipassana practitioners, and movement therapists attended the retreat. Practice of the Vajra Dance took place outside both afternoon and evening, and introductory explanation sessions for newcomers were conducted by groups of older students each afternoon. Because the weather

was so mild, 70° during the day, meals were taken outside, and a brilliant waxing and full moon made it enjoyable to camp and take night-time walks.

The Community meeting and new Gakyil selection which was held in Berkeley after the retreat included a video made by Tsultrim Allione of the marvellous section of New Mexico land (95 acres) near Santa Fe which Richard Smith is donating to the Community. Everyone was extremely enthusiastic about the looks of this property, which is in the hills, has abundant water, forest, meadows and views, and borders on a national forest, which assures that it will have unspoiled nature as a next-door neighbour.

Seeing Rinpoche off to his next stop, Hawaii, we felt that the visit and retreat had been perfect; that we were closer to one another than ever as a Community and that now "there are many things to do" - such as continue the dance practice regularly in Berkeley (the dance was intensely popular before and during the retreat); bring our weekly study group on Santi Maha Sanga; hold yantra yoga classes in San Francisco; continue to try to sell our land; send the bulletin of our up-coming activities to the many new people (and old people) now on the mailing list; and organize local practices in a wide variety of locations in California. We have specific persons designated as liaisons in the northwest (Washington state), and Los Angeles, and have many informal interactions as well as designated liaison contacts with Tsegelgar.

The future: WE ARE ALL LINKED ON COMPUTER AND CAN SEND MESSAGES BACK AND FORTH!

Santa Fe hosts Dzog-chen retreat

by Lidian Watson

Greetings to the worldwide Dzog-chen community from New Mexico.

Our small but dedicated community of practitioners recently hosted a short retreat in Santa Fe led by our Master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. On October 28th, the day following his arrival, a reception was held at the home of Cynthia Jurs, where our members had an opportunity to greet Norbu Rinpoche and Fabio Andrico. We asked many questions about Santi Maha Sangha and about the direction of organization our group should take, including the possibility of forming a gakyil.

The retreat itself began on Friday evening, October 30th, in a local Catholic Seminary gymnasium, which we suitably transformed into an attractive space decorated with thankas, oriental rugs and complete with a comfortable podium for Rinpoche. Many gathered to hear the Master give general teachings

on the meaning of Dzog-chen as well as to clarify prevalent misconceptions about how to apply these teachings in daily life.

For the next two days, the more earnest students returned for detailed teachings on Santi Maha Sangha. Norbu Rinpoche explained that many varieties of teachings are necessary to meet the different capacities of people. He explained the principles of sutra, tantra and Dzog-chen and said that we must know how to apply the essence of the teaching. If we miss the principal point, which is being in the impartially reflecting, non-dual state of the mirror, then we have completely missed Dzog-chen. Rinpoche used many analogies and lucid examples to stress his points.

In addition to receiving these teachings, we were fortunate to have another room available where Rinpoche taught us the Om A Hum Dance and the Dance of the Vajra. Chod and xitro practices were done in the evenings.

Rinpoche gave many transmissions, explaining to the new people the importance and need for transmission, even though time limitations did not allow for much explanation of the practices. At the end of the two days, a number of new people expressed enthusiasm for joining our community.

On Norbu Rinpoche's final day in Santa Fe, November 4th, we gathered in Cynthia Jurs's barn (where our mandala is currently housed) to do the Om A Hum Dance at length with Rinpoche. A festive pot luck dinner followed, and the evening came to a close as we thanked Norbu Rinpoche for giving this retreat in New Mexico. At the same time an auspicious possibility of retreat land for the Dzog-chen community is currently being discussed. Later in the month, the Santa Fe community met, and is now in the process of forming a gakyil.

New retreat facilities in Wales

The U.K. Community has a retreat house!

As a result of the hard work of John and Claire Sharkey, and thanks to a kind landowner and everyone who contributed to the U.K. land fund, there is now a small site in Cardigan in west Wales for personal retreats.

Consisting of two retreat rooms accessible through a central common room for washing and cooking, the cabin can be used for dark retreats (following Rinpoche's guidance) and for personal retreats in general.

We hope to have a photograph for the next issue of The Mirror.

The U.K. Community is naturally delighted. (The Community's Annual General Meeting will be held at 2pm on Saturday January 16th at 2 Ulysses Road, London NW6).

A booklet containing guidelines and details is being prepared by Claire Sharkey and Penny Summerfield.

The cost will be a minimum of £6.00 a day payable in advance.

As regards furnishings, Claire is still looking for two low beds, storage trunks or cupboards etc., as well as bedding, cooking equipment and utensils, Thermos bottles and such like.

There is also another new possibility for retreats in Wales. Judy Allan writes:

"In July a small group of us met on a South Pembrokeshire farm to do a group (practice) retreat. The farm was a biodynamic one, run by people who were originally connected with Rudolf Steiner and was not only a very harmonious place; we were also supplied with superb meat and organic vegetables. We lived and practised in a converted barn, which was perfect for our needs.

"For those who wish to practise there in the future, it is an ideal situation for a group of about ten people to do practice."

The farm has full cooking and washing facilities and a dining room that could serve a larger number of people.

For information and bookings for the new retreat house, as well as for information on how to rent the farm in south Wales, contact Claire Sharkey at: Teg-y-pistyll, Glanrhyd, Cardigan, Dyfed, SA43 4AP, Wales (tel. 023-986 610).

She looks forward to hearing from people wishing to do either light or dark retreats.

University of the Andes

Professor Elias Capriles from the Mérida Dzog-chen Community in Venezuela has begun teaching and researching in the newly inaugurated Eastern Studies department at The University of the Andes in Mérida. The new Chair of Eastern Studies is the first of its kind in Venezuela, and one of the first in Latin America. Among the first courses: Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, Buddhist Thought, Tibetan Culture, Comparative Philosophy and Hebraic Thought.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche Teaching Schedule 1993

25 December 1992	Departure for Cordoba, Tashigar
27 Dec '92 - 5 Jan '93	Teaching
Ricky Sued, Araujo 1271, Urca, Cordoba. Tel. 0054 51816222	
Alejandro Chaoul, Paseo Colon, 1131 2°11, Bs As 1063.	
Tel. 0054 1 361 2746	
25 January	Departure for Lima, Peru
29 - 31 January	Teaching
Juan Bustamente, Calle E. Palacios 1125-C, Miraflores, Lima 18.	
Tel. 14 791274, 14 455003	
3 February	Departure for Caracas, Venezuela
6 - 13 February	Teaching
Dr. Pablo Lau Rivera, PB. A. Res. Pedernales, Ave. Paez, Montalban II, 1021 Caracas. Tel. 0058 210584	
18 February	Departure for Merida
19 - 23 February	Teaching
Elias Capriles, Apartado Postal 483, Merida 5101	
9 March	Arrival in New York
	Tsegelgar, Mass., U.S.A.
16 - 21 March	Teaching
P.O. Box 277, Conway, MA 01341, U.S.A.	
Tel. 413 2568883, Fax 413 6651142	
2 April	Conference in New York
3 & 4 April	Seminar in New York
Tsultrim Allione, 361 Old Mill Road, Valley Cottage, NY 10989 U.S.A.	
Tel. 914 268 3050	
6 April	Return to Rome, Italy

It is obvious this is a very strenuous itinerary so nothing should be programmed for Rinpoche on the days when he is not teaching, because he will need to rest on those days.

Land Court upholds Tsegyelgar

by Woody Paparazzo

Here at Tsegyelgar we have just received the long-awaited decision of the Land Court and the news is good! The decision was extremely favourable and exceeded even our most optimistic conjectures. For those who are not familiar with the case, I will briefly summarise.

A nearby neighbour to our land objected to building permits we had received for the Guardian cabin and other structures and appealed to the Buckland Zoning Board. The Zoning Board decided we did not qualify for building permits because our land did not have frontage on a proper road. We then appealed the Zoning Board's decision to the Land Court based upon several theories of law:

1) as a religious organization we should be exempt from the Zoning requirement of frontage;

2) the roadway on which our property is located is a public way by virtue of its public use for over twenty years;

3) and even if the foregoing theories were not valid, the construction of these minor structures should be allowed as a reasonable use of the land given the totality of circumstances involved.

(This is a very simplified version of the several positions which we argued.)

The court upheld our position on every single issue which we raised. That is, it declared that we are exempt from the frontage requirement. But even if a reviewing court did not agree with that issue of law, the



court found that sufficient evidence was presented to establish the fact that the road was public in nature and therefore we met the frontage requirement anyway. As a procedural matter, the court held that the neighbour who originally brought the complaint was so unaffected by our activities that she had no sufficient legal interest to have brought the complaint and the Zoning Board was therefore without jurisdiction to have heard the matter in the first place. The court ordered

the Zoning Board to reinstate the building permits. Going even beyond any argument which we had raised, the court surmised that the Town's extreme position and "strained reasoning" gave rise to an inference that it was motivated by religious discrimination.

Assuming that further appeals are not brought, this decision should allow us to obtain approval for the remaining cabins which Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has requested. In fact, it would appear that this decision allows us to make full use of our land (with the implicit limitation that the use must be reasonable in view of the circumstances). Of

course, we are still considerably limited by the physical aspects of the land making anything but limited development impractical at this time.

We all have the sense that many unseen forces were at work on our behalf and several very fortunate circumstances arose which contributed immeasurably to our success. Thanks for the prayer, support, and "good vibes."

STOP PRESS - The town of Buckland has decided to appeal the decision so the battle isn't over yet.

Dancer's diary



By Prima Mai

During recent months, Prima Mai has been travelling to various Dzog-chen Communities around the world to teach the Vajra Dance. The Dance is principally a means to harmonize the energy of the individual and integrate our three existences of body, voice and mind into the state of contemplation. This particular Dance is a gongter received through the dreams of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

When I left Germany in October, the sky was already grey and the first autumn wind carried the promise of the coming winter.

With a six hour time difference that left me in a dreamy unreal state for a few days, I arrived in San Francisco in the afternoon where

Margaret Bradford and Bodhi Krause picked me up at the airport. We went to Anastasia McGhee's house in Berkeley and confirmed the final organisation of the course.

The next afternoon we started the Vajra Dance Course in the Gonpa of the Dharmadatu in Berkeley, a Buddhist centre founded by Chogyal Trungpa Rinpoche. The Gonpa was just big enough for the small mandala which is 25 feet (7.6 m) in diameter.

The California Community has made their mandala from a plastic material which is usually used for covering trucks. It is painted with an acrylic water-based paint. My experience is that for dancing on a variety of different materials, the best type of footwear is thick socks or shoes with leather or synthetic

undersoles.

We started with a short Tun and learned the first steps of the Vajra Dance. We met together for eight days with teachings in the afternoon and evening. In between we found ourselves sitting in one of the many Chinese restaurants in the area, eating won ton soup and sharing the news from our fortune cookies.

In addition to the Vajra Dance Course, we had a weekend course of the Om A Hum Dance for people who couldn't come to the course during the week. In all we were 10-13 practitioners.

This course was held in the Community house of Sonoma, a small town which is about two hours from San Francisco. We were invited to stay overnight at Lynn and Jon Weinberger's house and because it was new moon, we did a ganapuja together.

Next morning, Lynn showed us a little retreat house they had built on their land. It was made out of haybales and covered with cement. It is very economical and takes a very short time to build.

After this weekend we continued the Vajra Dance Course at Berkeley.

As in Greece and Tsegyelgar, Massachusetts, practising the Vajra Dance released us from many of our tensions and made us feel closer and more open to each other. Everyone also experienced the individual benefits of this practice.

Meditation centre planned



by A. Viaznikovtsev

During the July retreat in Buryatia with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, a second Dzog-chen Community and gakyil were formed in Buryatia. The first group is centred at Rangdrol Gar, about 200 km from Ulan-Ude while the new group is based in the city itself.

During the time spent in Buryatia, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche expressed his view about the new Communities, giving great importance to developing a correct attitude especially in the initial organization of the Community in new places. He said it was essential to keep present the true intention for following the teaching and particularly the motivation for collaboration.

Since the summer retreat a small group of people meet regularly in Ulan-Ude to practise and do Yantra Yoga.

There are already many people in Buryatia who are sincerely interested in the Dzog-chen teachings and a group has been formed to organize Dzog-chen practitioners. One of the aims of the group is to get a plot of land from the government where a meditation centre can be built. This could be a base for a future gar.

The new Gakyil is composed of the following people:

Blue	Yellow	Red
A. Viaznikovtsev	Dugarma Kimova	Olga Pokatskaya
Batodalay Dugarov	Dorjo Dashitserenov	Vladimir Dukhovnikov
Bair Ochirov	Erdeni Dambayev	Zorik Dugarov

The Dzog-chen Community in Ulan-Ude can be contacted through: Alexander Viaznikovtsev, Karl Marx Boulevard 9 - 26, Ulan-Ude, Buryatia, Russia. Tel. (30-112) 3-09-02.

Gakyil elected at Rangdrol Gar

The Community of Rangdrol Gar in Buryatia have elected a Gakyil after the Lake Kotokel retreat in Buryatia last July:

Blue Seraphim Sidorov, Director
Red Vladimir Bardakov, Vice-Director
Yellow Nikolai Dudka.

Since last summer, Farida Malikova, Rangdrol Gar's secretary, has been busy working on translations of practice books into Russian. These include "Collective Practices for Special Days" and "Green Tara". She has also revised and corrected the Russian translation of "Dzogchen Ritual Practices".

At the moment, the Rangdrol Gar Community is working on creating a foundation for their group and their plans include purchasing land for building a Gar.

Community in St. Petersburg

From a not very sunny St. Petersburg in Russia, here is a little news about the activities of the new Community that formed there after the visit of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche last summer.

Director of the Gakyil, Anna Rudneva, tells us that the group of about 30 practitioners there come from many different backgrounds and did not know each other until coming together for the teaching retreat. During a period of getting to know each other, the group is learning how to live with a new knowledge and apply it; transcribing tapes of the teachings given by Rinpoche during the retreat there, learning practices and distributing books, tapes and transcriptions.

The Buddhist House has given the group two rooms, free of charge, to use for collective practices.

A room in the Biohouse?

What is *bioarchitecture* ⑥? In brief, bioarchitecture can be said to be a way of designing living spaces that takes into account factors such as: the influences of the electromagnetic and ionisation of the ground; the best possible orientation, the selection and employment of natural, non-toxic building materials which do not generate electromagnetic fields; the possibilities for optimising the usage of solar energy; the use of recycling systems that avoid pollution, and so on.

As to the Biohouse project, we at the Coabit cooperative felt a residence in harmony with the five elements at Merigar could be of value for avoiding all the usual pollution for a week or two every year, so as to leave the person in better condition for the more important work of 'inner development'.

Although there are people in the Community who work on bioarchitecture, the field of study is too vast to be covered by a single person and has become the province of Universities, research departments, etc. This is why an international competition has been announced for the design of the house with a cash prize for the winning specialist.

Once built, the biohouse will be available for use by its various time-share owners. We have chosen the multi-ownership/time-share scheme so as to make the initiative economically accessible to more

people, not just to a few particularly wealthy ones.

As regards numbers, if we assume that there will perhaps be room for around thirty residents at any one time, and that each part-owner will wish to have the use of a double



room for let's say for three fortnights a year, that would mean a total of roughly 240 part-owners. This is just an approximation, as individual participants in the scheme are free to choose different time-share formulas. The choice will be made on a 'first come, first served' basis.

When all the time-share, part-ownership spaces have been taken, there will still be some openings for other people to use the biohouse. Firstly, a part-owner who does not wish to use his time-share period personally may either allow somebody of his choice to use it, or else entrust those responsible for the running of the house to rent his room out for him to anyone interested. Also, as and when biohouses are built in other Gars, it should become possible for part-owners to swap their time-share periods with someone from another Gar.

As regards the responsibility for running the house, so as to have good all round relationships, we feel that this would best be taken on by

Community members. This should produce some full-time and part-time job possibilities at Merigar for anyone with the skills required.

As to the prices, those put forward may seem to some people to be rather expensive. However, bioarchitecture does involve higher design and building costs with respect to the more usual methods. It also has to be remembered that the house will be built on community land, with a contract drawn up with the Community itself: this represents a way for Merigar to put its land to good economic use, and it means that the participants in the scheme will actually be contributing to the financial well-being of the Gar. Finally, if a participant opts to rent his period, this should result in a partial recovery of the original investment.

Some applications for places in the biohouse have already come in. There are also places available in the running group which will be responsible for everything from booking and maintenance to catering and cleaning etc..

Anyone interested in participating in the scheme, or in working in the running group should contact: COABIT, c/o Merigar, P.O. Box 47, 58031 Arcidosso (GR), Italy. Tel 564/966837, fax 564 966608.

(This article is based on information provided by Leopoldo Sentinelli of Coabit for the Merigar Bollettino. A previous article containing proposed time-share options and prices etc. appeared in issue 16 of The Mirror.)

THE FUTURE GAKYIL AT MERIGAR

"In order to avoid people unsuited to their tasks entering the Gakyil, and so as to allow sufficient time for applicants to be accurately assessed, it seems to me that it is necessary to request (by way of the "Bollettino", "The Mirror" etc.) that those who intend to take part in the new Gakyil make themselves available at least five months before its formation.

Although the roles within the Gakyil are assumed on a voluntary basis, they comport precise responsibilities without conferring any power or special prestige. Rather, they are an essential service, without which the Dzog-chen Community could not function. So it is important for everyone to become aware of this, making themselves available to offer, in a responsible way, a little of their time and work".

(From the motion presented by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at Merigar, 26th September 1992)

The election of the upcoming Gakyil and new Gekos will be made during the Easter '93 Merigar retreat. Applications should be addressed to the Merigar Gakyil.

Library books wanted

The library of the Shang-Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies is looking for the following books on Tibet and Tibetan culture. If readers are able to donate any of the following titles, please send them to Shang-Shung Institute Library, Via Olmi 1, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

Goldstein Melvyn - Essentials of Modern Literary Tibetan
Goldstein Melvyn - Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan
Tulku Thondup Rinpoche - Hidden Teachings of Tibet
Dudjom Rinpoche - The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism
Lancaster L. and Lai W. - Early Cha'an in China and Tibet
Bhattacharya D. C. - Studies in Buddhist Iconography
Aris Michael - Bhutan
Snellgrove D. and Skorupski T. - The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh (2 vol.)
Snellgrove D. - Himalayan Pilgrimage
Snellgrove D. - The Four Lamas of Dolpo

Cataloguing the library

The Library of the Shang-Shung Institute has begun the initial work of an inventory of its texts in Tibetan, Chinese and western languages. In order to go ahead with a complete cataloguing, a Committee has been set up, coordinated by Mauro Nascari.

The cataloguing will be based on the Dewey classification system which is used by libraries around the world. Currently the Institute is

looking for funds to carry this important project ahead.

The Shang-Shung Institute is in touch with several prominent libraries of oriental texts so that the Institute's library service can be made readily available to international scholars.

Shortly, the Institute looks forward to welcoming the assistance of Shampur Rinpoche, a Bonpo scholar from Amdo, eastern Tibet

who will start the work of cataloguing the two editions of the Bonpo Kangyur belonging to the library which will be transcribed on computer.

In the near future, the library of the Institute hopes to make an inventory of texts on Tibet or in Tibetan that are available in the libraries of Tuscany, a project which will, at a later date, be extended to all the libraries in Italy.

COURSES ON TIBETAN MEDICINE

The Shang-Shung Institute is organising courses on Tibetan Medicine to be held by qualified Tibetan physicians. An introductory course will probably begin early in 1993 followed by a four year course starting in 1994. On conclusion of the four year course, a certificate of attendance will be issued.

Anyone interested in participating should contact the Institute (tel. Italy (0)564-966940 or fax 564-966846).

ADVERTISE IN THE MIRROR

The Mirror is read by Dzog-chen Community members, and in Buddhist centres and libraries worldwide. So placing an advertisement in The Mirror means that you will be letting an extensive international readership know about your product. You will also have the benefit of helping support the main news organ of the Dzog-chen Community. Since the price of a subscription does not entirely cover the high costs of printing and mailing, funds to defray expenses must be found through other means. Advertising is one of these.

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Community membership at Merigar

As we have been reporting in recent issues, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is currently guiding us all in the task of reorganizing the Community in such a way as to lay a solid foundation for its future survival.

Rinpoche often underlines that money is a relative consideration, but that sound financing is an aspect of the Community's life which certainly cannot be ignored. The Community's expansion has been fast.

Up to now, things have gone ahead pretty much on a day to day basis, thanks to the good will of many members. However, trying to continue in a haphazard way would run us into a lot of risks, especially now that everything is inevitably becoming so much bigger.

In order to be self-sufficient, the Community needs to be able to count on the regular - rather than sporadic - support of its members. For a non-profit-making association such as ours, the one regular source of income is its membership payments. And it is only thanks to these that essential activities can be realistically planned. Rinpoche certainly did not propose the membership card system for financial reasons alone, but it does provide a means for arranging regular contributions.

Below are listed the procedures drawn up by the Merigar gakyil regarding membership applications, and various discounts etc. available for those who wish to take advantage of them.

This can be used by the other main gars as a general model.

Bearing in mind that at present the only way of formally belonging to the International Dzog-chen Community is by adhering to one of the three main gars (Merigar, Tashigar, Tsegylgar), anyone who feels part of the Dzog-chen Community and wishes to belong to Merigar should officialize their membership position within January 1993.

The current membership procedures for Merigar are as follows:

- When requesting membership, it is essential to send the completed application form, three passport size

necessary to send a photocopy of the permanent banker's order of payment.

- Membership will be confirmed by the end of February each year (the exact procedure has yet to be decided upon).

- Residents in Italy can apply for membership directly through Merigar, or the Azamgar or Brescia gakyils.

- Those living outside Italy should apply for membership through their local gakyil. The various gakyils should request the number of membership cards they require from Merigar, collect the membership fees directly, and send at least 50% of the amount to Merigar. They are also responsible for annual membership renewal, and for verifying in all cases the conditions for 'full

membership'. (As in many countries membership payments are only now being introduced, many people will not satisfy the third condition of full membership: at their discretion, the local gakyils can propose to Merigar those cases where convalidation seems most opportune.)

- Membership fees may vary from year to year.

- There is a 30% discount in membership fees for: i) students and retired people over 60; ii) persons who belong to a member's immediate family.

- Ordinary members (whether preliminary or full) can: i) have 30% discount on retreat payments; ii) have 20% discount on courses organized by the Dzog-chen Community; iii) either request the *Bollettino* gratis or have 20% discount on *The Mirror*.

- Sustaining members (whether preliminary or full) can: i) participate gratis in retreats; ii) have 30% discount on courses organized by the Dzog-chen Community; iii) request the *Bollettino* and *The Mirror* gratis.

- Any other benefits will be communicated once they have been defined.



photographs, and a receipt showing that the membership fee has been paid.

- On the basis of Article 7 of the statute: i) all those who have taken part in the life of the Community for at least three years, have attended three retreats and have paid their membership fees for the period can become 'full members'; ii) all those who do not satisfy the above conditions, on payment of the same fee can become 'preliminary members'.

- Both preliminary and full membership can be of two types: 'ordinary' or 'sustaining'.

- For 1993, the fee for ordinary membership is at least 360,000 Italian lira, while those wanting to be sustaining members should pay at least 600,000 lira. (Special conditions are in the course of being drawn up for developing countries and those of the ex 'eastern block'.)

- Payment can be made either by means of a banker's draft or a money order (specifying the motive), in one of the following ways: a) in a single payment by the end of January; in two instalments (January and September); in monthly instalments, in which case it is

Teachings Retreat on the Foundation of "Maha Santi Sangha"

Merigar

from 27-12-1992 to 5-1-1993

During the retreat, the Tibetan Lama Kunzang Dorje will hold a daily programme of teachings indicated by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche on the Foundation ('Basis') of Santi Maha Sangha. As it is a single, self-contained cycle of teachings, it is a good idea to follow the whole retreat.

There will also be sessions of Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, Kumar Kumari Yoga for children aged 5 to 13, and other practices.

Lama Kunsang Dorje

Lama Kunsang Dorje was born 1935 in the Nagchu area of northern Tibet. His father was a Ngagpa-lama of the Nyingma tradition and he was the first teacher of his son. Lama Kunsang Dorje continues the Ngagpa-lineage of his ancestors - the knowledge and lineage passes from father to son. In addition he studied and practised the Doctrine of the Early Translations under the guidance of various Lamas, particularly concentrating on the doctrines of Longchen Rabjampa and Jigme Lingpa.

Due to the occupation of Tibet, at the age of 25 he fled with his wife, his small daughter and son to India. He lived there for about twenty years, in Orissa, Varanasi and finally in Dharamsala. After six years of study at the Tibetan Department of the Sanskrit University of Varanasi he received a degree corresponding to 'Doctor of Philosophy'.

In 1980, at the suggestion of H.H. the Dalai Lama he moved with his family to Switzerland and has lived in Bern since 1984. Here he supports the Tibetan community in maintaining and continuing their spiritual tradition. Lama Kunsang Dorje speaks no western language and due to this he has been teaching westerners up to now only on very rare occasions (public teachings in Munich and Austria). In the east he has initiated a project of reprinting rare Tibetan texts for providing the monasteries and practitioners of his native area with these precious books.

MERIGAR CALENDAR

WINTER 1992 - 93 (2119)

Sunday 27 December 1992		Teachings retreat begins
Sunday 5 January 1993		Teachings retreat ends
Wednesday 6 January	18.00	Long life practice U.P.E.
Thursday 7 January	18.00	Long life practice U.P.E.
Friday 8 January		Full moon
	18.00	Long life practice U.P.E.
Saturday 16 January	10.00	Purification with Sang
Sunday 17 January		Dakini day
	16.00	Ganapuja
Wednesday 20 January	18-21.00	Naggon
Thursday 21 January	18-21.00	Naggon
Friday 22 January		New moon
	18.00	Purification of the Six Lokas
Saturday 30 January	10.00	Practice of Tara
	18.00	Practice of Tara
Sunday 31 January	10.00	Practice of Tara
	18.00	Practice of Tara
Tuesday 2 February		Guru Padmasambhava day
	18.00	Long life practice U.W.U. with ganapuja
Wednesday 3 February	18.00	Practice of Ekajati
Thursday 4 February	18.00	Long life practice U.P.E.
Friday 5 February	18.00	Long life practice U.P.E.
Saturday 6 February		Full moon
	10.00	Long life practice U.P.E.
	15.00	Karma yoga
Sunday 7 February	10.00	Medium tun
	15.00	Karma yoga
Tuesday 9 February		Anniversary of Longchenpa
	18.00	Guruyoga with white A
Tuesday 16 February	18.00	Dakini day. Ganapuja
Friday 19 February	18.00	Naggon intensive for 24 hr
Saturday 20 February	18.00	End of naggon practice
Sunday 21 February		Last day of the Tibetan year
	10.00	Purification of the Six Lokas
Monday 22 February		Tibetan New Year 2120

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Gheshe Lobsang Gyatso is the Principal at the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics at Thekchen Choeling in Dharamsala, India.

Until comparatively recently Buddhism was a way of life rather than a mere discipline to be studied in schools and monastic colleges. The mantra *Om mani padme hum* came as easily as the words 'mother' or 'father' to the lips of small children, even though the Mani mantra contained the essence of Buddhism itself and was recited by the most learned. Buddhist teachings were practised by elderly housewives as sincerely as by highly honoured Rinpoches, and a shepherd's devotion was no less than that of the abbot of a great monastery. So the Tibetans did not develop teacher training as a separate discipline. Nevertheless, there are scriptures that describe the qualifications of spiritual teachers and their students.

Buddhism is complex in the sense that its philosophy and religious practice are intertwined. Traditionally Buddhism is divided into sutra and tantra or, alternatively, into Mahayana and Hinayana. There are different norms for spiritual teachers set out in each. For example, a tantric teacher should be qualified to explain esoteric practices which a spiritual teacher of sutra need know nothing about. Nevertheless, there are also shared norms. All describe a teacher as possessing sound moral character, patience and loving kindness on top of his or her expertise in an actual subject matter. So in this article I propose to briefly consider the implications for teacher training contained in some Tibetan Buddhist literature, touching briefly on tantric literature and discussing in particular the qualifications of a Mahayana teacher and student.

Through this article I intend to convey the message that non-Tibetan speaking people can learn a great deal from normative descriptions of Tibetan Buddhist teacher-student relations which emphasize character building based upon analytical wisdom.

The fostering of courage, honesty, kindness and a belief in universal progress and the individual capacity to make a difference is of paramount importance in the Buddhist system. Even the everyday communication of a teacher is seen within the integrated - holistic if you will - approach to learning which characterizes Tibetan Buddhism. It is not something separate from the 'teaching of Buddhism' but is a crucial form of training students to become better human beings, this always being the implicit and sometimes explicit goal of educational endeavour. In theory at least, teachers should be perfect models for their students, and this implies that they live their lives in accordance with what they preach. A teacher and his or her philosophy of life should reveal a basic harmony.

The qualifications of a tantric

master as outlined in an important text on 'The Guru in fifty verses' (*Bla ma lnga bcu pa*), associated in the Tibetan tradition with the name of Asvaghosa are:

1. well-disciplined body, speech and mind;
2. discerning wisdom;
3. patience and fortitude towards obstacles and hardship;
4. an honest and open mind;
5. freedom from all forms of deceptions;
6. special power aided by tantric rituals;
7. compassion for all sentient beings;
8. expertise in the 'three baskets' (*Skr. Tripitaka*) of teaching;
9. knowledge of mandala drawing and painting;
10. skill in teaching tantric and Mahayana theory and practice.

A teacher with the above attributes is a truly worthy master and should be honoured and respected. A student who seeks and finds such a teacher is bound to benefit immensely, and can be enriched both intellectually and spiritually. On the other hand, according to the same text, a person with the following negative qualities cannot be accepted as a worthy tantric teacher, and before committing himself a student should use his discerning intellect in order to detect such faults.

The negative qualities are:

1. lack of compassion;
2. possession of anger and hatred;
3. lack of proper regard for other people;
4. arrogance and a haughty disapproving attitude;
5. attachment to material possessions;
6. disregard of his own vows and precepts;
7. deceitful attitude;
8. lack of desire to improve his own knowledge;
9. coarse behaviour in body and speech.

The entire process of acquiring knowledge is geared toward the pacification of negativities and generating enlightened and positive thoughts and actions.

The Mahayana tradition

The relationship between a teacher and a student is a life-long commitment and not a temporary professional exchange. It is certainly not defined as a business transaction where the education product is purchased at an agreed price by the student. Therefore both sides are advised to look for the right counterpart.

There are many scriptural references to the effect that they each must thoroughly examine the other's suitability. Therefore, a student must search for a qualified teacher. In the process, a student not

only looks for the positive qualities that are essential but also examines any negative qualities to be found. Investigating the negative qualities is as crucial as looking at a teacher's moral virtues and intellectual knowledge. And the implication is that mere learning and intellectual qualifications do not make someone a good teacher. If a scholar has a serious negative quality like hatred or is deceitful, etc., that person is rejected from consideration as a qualified or good teacher. It seems that in the absence of any written manuals for training teachers, the Tibetans still followed a very pragmatic and realistic approach. In their quest for good teachers during the last several centuries they weeded out intuitively those whose shortcomings did not qualify them for the job.

A very interesting aspect of the normative teacher-student relationship, which may be exclusive to Buddhist literature is that it is a two-way street. It is not only the student who puts the teacher under investigation but the teacher, too, takes a long hard look at the aspiring student. A student's general behaviour, physical and mental well-being and his or her intellectual disposition are all examined before any agreement is entered into. Often they might spend some time together in a sort of 'negotiation' process during a trial period. This period also serves as a trust building exercise. The positive qualities prerequisite in a student are a desire to be virtuous, an interest in learning, and also a respect for the teacher and, given the Buddhist context, for the Buddha. Those students who lack these attributes and are really vicious, arrogant and merciless would have little chance of being accepted as somebody's student.

In the Buddhist world, the law of cause and effect is considered the major point of reference in everyday life, not just in the philosophical

and means of helping them to develop interest in the world of learning and education. Such a person should pay extra attention to the control of negative impulses like anger, hatred, jealousy, etc., and maintain a compassionate attitude to all beings. The teacher should realise that thoughts and actions have direct and indirect influences on students.

So within Tibetan Buddhism, teacher training was understood as a continuous process rather than a trade learned and then mechanically applied. Since the qualifications of the students are properly scrutinised, their viability is not chiefly determined by their ability or willingness to pay a certain amount in fees. In the end, the learning process depends on the compatibility of the two partners in virtue, and is not simply one more social exercise.

The *Mahayana-sutra-alamkara* outlines the ten essential attributes of a Mahayana teacher as follows:

1. behaviour controlled by training in moral ethics;
2. peaceful composure and ability to suppress delusions by training in meditative stabilisation;
3. possession of a state of great peace and control of delusions by training in higher wisdom;
4. more knowledge than the students in both scriptural teachings and experiential insights;
5. the ability to put concerted effort into the quest for the final goal;
6. wealth of knowledge of the 'three baskets' of teaching;

7. possession of the great insight into the true nature of phenomena;
8. skill in the art of imparting instruction in accordance with the attainments and needs of the students;
9. compassion for all beings;
10. special concern for the students and tireless activity in the interest of other sentient beings.

The teacher who possesses the above attributes will make a fine teacher.

As for the student, he or she should be open-minded and not opinionated. The student should have an adventurous and discerning intellect, or the very exercise of study will be in vain. The students should demonstrate an interest in and aptitude for study in general, and for study of Mahayana-type teaching in particular. Another important criterion in the normative definition of the good student is that the student pay due respect to the teacher and his teaching. The idea is that a feeling of gratitude towards those who contribute towards one's education should arise as a product of understanding the value of what is taught.

The Vinaya

The qualifications of the teacher according to the Lesser Vehicle are summed up under four general headings. The teacher should have the attributes of being:

1. a devout practitioner;
2. stable in spiritual practice;



Beyond mere and intellectual

by Gheshe

According to traditional Tibetan Buddhist education



Are learning all qualifications

Geshe Lobsang Gyatso

3. academically sound;
4. deeply motivated to benefit students.

Although strictly speaking this literature is relevant only in a monastic setting, nevertheless amongst the many qualities mentioned as being necessary in a perfect abbot or teacher, two may be of particular relevance.

The first is that the Vinaya texts speak of a teacher being skillful in the process of educating students (the context is counselling people who have taken vows who are having difficulties with strict monastic discipline). When a student is initially not making good progress and might be inclined either to drop out or at least sink into a sort of depression then the teacher must show great skill. At one and the same time, it should be explained that some leeway in keeping strict adherence to the letter of the rule is possible insofar as the basic spirit of the rule is not transgressed, and insofar as the teacher's explanation is understood to have been given in the context of long term academic interest or gain. Again the emphasis, as usual in Buddhism, is on altruism, in the sense that the teacher should have the welfare of the student foremost in his or her mind. The teacher should be broadminded enough in particular situations to sacrifice time and energy in activities which, although personally unrewarding, nevertheless contribute overall to reaching the goal. It is stressed, however, that the

teacher should be extremely careful to avoid even the semblance of hypocrisy. This can only be guaranteed when the teacher's conduct is beyond reproach. Furthermore, it says that the teacher should not confuse personal interest with the long term interest of the students, in the sense that when the student understandably wishes to study with somebody else or in a different institution a teacher should be free from jealousy or competitive motives.

As for the qualifications of the student suggested in Vinaya, the following passage is perhaps relevant:

One in possession of the dharma has reverence for the Guru, has perfect morality, consistently perseveres at meditation and prayer, is disciplined in the pursuit of religious practice, puts up with monastic rules and is devoted to keeping ordination.

In general, in Buddhist education the spirit of investigation is well respected. The following verse, attributed to the Buddha himself is well-known:

*Bhiksus! Scholars should not accept my words
Merely out of respect for me,
But only after a thorough examination of them
Like gold after it is burnt, cut and rubbed.*

There are occasions when a student must politely but firmly avoid a teacher's non-dharmic counsel. Within the context of the student respecting the teacher and

the Buddhism that is taught out of a sense of gratitude, both the Vinaya and Mahayana say clearly that everything that a teacher says should not be followed blindly. It is even said that a student may protest directly to the teacher if the teacher persists in asking the student to engage in a non-dharmic activity or endeavor. If that protest does not stop the problem the student is advised to use the influence of a person nearer to the teacher to get his or her concerns across.

Perhaps Sa skya Pandita had this sort of difficulty in mind when he wrote in his *Sdom gsum rab dbye*:

*A monk who does not keep ordination,
a Bodhisattva who is not altruistic
and a tantric practitioner who has
not received tantric empowerment:
these are the ones who steal the
Buddha's doctrine.*

A student must remember to be realistic in his or her attitude towards a teacher and not expect enlightened spotless perfection. Like owls that do not see things in broad daylight, present-day merit vessels are not capable of that which is free from all faults and possesses all good qualities and, though such perfect beings are no doubt there, we are usually blind to them.

It hardly needs restating that traditional Tibetan education has been greatly influenced by Buddhist philosophy, and that we find in it an emphasis on techniques for removing deluded thoughts and ultimately gaining liberation. The entire process of acquiring knowledge is geared toward the pacification of negativities and generating enlightened and positive thoughts and actions. And a noble aim this is indeed.

An interesting statement that can

to the extent that the subject matter taught in it relates to the needs and capacities of the students. Such a curriculum should be geared to inculcating virtuous dharma. This means that the teaching techniques should be geared toward creating wholesome behaviour of body, speech and mind. To bring this about the teaching material should be oriented in such a way that it becomes a powerful weapon to destroy afflictions (*klesa*) such as hatred, craving-desire and jealousy, etc. Through such an education process the student will come to attain nirvana which is the final goal of freedom from *dukkha* and its cause.

Perhaps the traditional Tibetan patterns of education most similar to the modern post-industrial model was that found in the large monastic colleges in and around Lha sa. Since this is the case, it may be appropriate to briefly mention the education system in the best known of them, the so-called 'three seats of learning' (*Gdan sa gsum*): Dga' ldan, Se ra and 'Bras phung. In these seats of learning, a sense of rational understanding of Buddhist philosophy was strongly promoted. A great deal of emphasis was laid on acquiring knowledge of dharma by way of a gradual process (*thos bsam sgom*) in which study played a major role. An exciting and strenuous dialectical system was used as the main technique of learning philosophy. The students were greatly encouraged to analyse and scrutinise the finer points of Buddhist philosophical views through debate and discussion. In these monastic colleges, four Indian sastras, the *Abhisamayalamkara*, *Madhyamakavatara*, *Pramana*

completing his courses a student in any of the three monastic colleges could apply to graduate. If successful, a degree was awarded after which he would get the name 'virtuous fellow' (*dge bshes*). Although smaller in all ways, the colleges and their traditional curricula have been restarted in the refugee camps of south India.

As pointed out earlier, also in these monastic colleges the teacher-student relationship was not based on a theory of material-consideration but on a striving after virtue. It was the virtuous ideal that guided students as they gravitated towards their future teachers. Interestingly enough, some of the teachers supported their students in terms of their material needs.

This often happened since many of the students came from afar or from poor families and did not have the means to support themselves while they studied. Such students would have a main teacher who practically took the place of a parent, looking after their physical well-being and material needs. The converse might be true in the case of students from rich families. Teachers would be greatly respected by the parents of such students and would receive sumptuous material offerings from them.

As they progressed up the traditional education ladder, the student encountered a number of teachers. Students developed a profound sense of respect and a feeling of affection for their teachers while at the same time the teachers came to be held very much in a sort of awe, a combination of fear and respect. This feeling functioned as a positive force in a student's education and general sound morality.

The tradition of respecting teachers is as old as Buddhism itself. The great Arya-sura puts it lucidly in the *Jataka-mala*:

*Take a much lower seat (than the teacher),
And generate a glorious sense of discipline.
Show through the eyes that joy shines in the heart,
And learn the lessons as if tasting nectar.
Bow down with complete respect
Attending to the lessons with a clear and stainless mind,
Like a patient listening to a doctor.*

A final comment based on Vasubandhu's *Vyakhyaya-yukti* is well-known in traditional education:

*Those who teach the meaning of sutra
Should follow these five principal techniques.
First introduce the subject matter of the text,
Followed by a brief presentation of its theme,
Then a detailed explanation should be followed
By an explanation of the relevance and correlations.
A thorough analytical debate is equally essential.*

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Geshe Lobsang Gyatso (right) with Rakra Tethong Rinpoche at the Tibetan Language Conference in September

be interpreted as setting out the four major characteristics of an enlightening education system is to be found in the *Ratna-gotra-vibhaga-mahayanottara-tantra-sastra*:

*That which is purposeful and related to dharma,
That which helps to get rid of the delusions of the three realms,
That which expounds the advantages of liberation,
Thus are the words of the great sage.*

A curriculum will serve a purpose

varttika, *Abhidharmakosa* and a study of the Vinaya texts, along with their numerous sub-commentaries formed the basis of the academic curriculum. Equal importance, however, was placed on character building, spiritual experience and academic learning. Tibetans can be justly proud of the remarkable scholar-saints produced in these seats of learning. Their top adepts (*sgrub thob*) underwent a rigorous training sometimes lasting thirty to forty years. After

Guess which world you're in!

by Elio Guarisco

In 1987 I went to meet the aging Kalu Rinpoche in France. It was on the last of his visits to Europe. When I had just got up to leave the room and go his secretary called me back hastily. "I'd like you to come to India this autumn. We'll meet up at Bodh Gaya to translate a book." True to his style, Rinpoche told me nothing more - he did not say what book it was or how long it would take. I accepted out of respect for his noble intentions, and to repay my debt of gratitude.

From then on, I entered a never-ending odyssey in the world of Tibetan translations. It should have been a book translation like any other, but instead it turned into the unfolding of my life.

The book that, along with others, I was entrusted to translate is called *Sheja Kunkhyab*, an encyclopaedic work on the Buddhist teaching and its history. The author is Jamgon Lodro Taye, an eclectic Tibetan master from the last century. Both master and disciple of Jamyang Khyentze Wangpo, Kontrul is considered one of the promoters of the Rimé (*ris-med*) ecumenical movement amongst the various traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

It was years before I overcame the scepticism I had about both the author and the work. Time has shown me the various connections between the chapters and topics of the book, bringing out the exceptional knowledge of its author. I now consider this work as the best synthesis of the many aspects of Buddhist doctrine in existence in Tibetan literature.

Myriad of realms

The first part, which will probably be translated under the title of "A Myriad of Realms in the Buddha's Palm" presents different cosmographies and geneses of the beings that inhabit the Universe. These cosmographies are in clear contrast to our way of thinking of the Universe and its origin which, according to our psychological tendency, may be either eternalist or nihilistic. For the eternalists, the Universe was created by a God or by an impersonal principle. For the nihilists, the Universe was born spontaneously and without precise cause, through the force of an anonymous destiny, and beyond that there is nothing. As against this, there is the radical, non-theistic approach of Buddhism, in which the Universe is born out of the evolutionary actions of beings. The phrase "evolutionary actions" refers to the cumulative potential that remains in every individual at the end of a physical or mental action. The cumulative potential of beings' actions hold energies which contribute to the creation of the world where the beings live. The energies



'Dus 'khor gyi nyi zla skar gsum gyi rgyu lam
Represents the path of the sun, moon and stars according to Kalachakra

act as a bridge between mind and matter: moving through space they collide, and it is from their friction and pressure that the primordial water element is born. The water element contains the potential of other elements which, through their development, give birth to our Universe with Mount Meru, the Axis Mundi, at the centre, and with the continents surrounding it.

According to the Kalachakra Tantra, the energies interact with particles which escaped the destruction of another Universe. These particles constitute the primal substance, what could be considered as galactic seeds that, coalescing together, become the planets, stars and so forth.

However, this does not represent the creation of the Universe, but rather an example of a creation within a cyclical process whereby world systems are continually being born and dying, in a sphere in which space has no boundaries and time no beginning.

The universal way

Beings' actions are not the only cause of the Universe, and there is not only one world system. In fact, according to the Universal Way (Mahayana), an infinite number of world systems come into being as a result of the relationships between enlightened ones and other beings. This interconnection involves the compassion of the enlightened ones, the dispositions and destinies of sentient beings, the laws of nature

and the vows of the bodhisattvas. Through the mutual dependence of these factors, myriads of worlds appear in empty space. These constitute the field of play, the amphitheatre for the miraculous powers of enlightened beings, the ground where bodhisattvas exercise their skillful means to help others overcome confusion.

There is an infinite number of world systems and their arrangement is beyond the reach of rational thought. They are of all shapes and sizes, and rest on lotuses and jewels or simply on the Buddhas' radiance. They are scattered in the ten directions, and yet millions of world systems penetrate each other, each one containing billions of universes, billions of which are contained in a single atom of each world.

These innumerable realms manifest within the "ultimate realm" of emptiness: they exist and are destroyed within it. So, in reality, the realms have never existed, they have never been lived in and never die.

What actually propels beings into these realms is their unawareness of their nature - emptiness - a nature they share evenly with the world into which they are born, the buddhas and with everything that exists. In fact, the empty nature of each being is the Buddha-nature or the potential for awakening from the sleep of ignorance. The basis of beings' beginningless confusion is also the basis of awakening from confusion: i.e. one's buddha-nature has to be unearthed from within

Infinite world systems, the ultimate sphere of emptiness, and the Dzog-chen "non-cosmology" of pure awareness. Elio Guarisco and others were asked by the late Kalu Rinpoche to translate "Universal Knowledge" by the 19th century Rimé master, Kontrul Lodro Taye.

the adventitious stains that cloud it. But for this nature to be revealed two factors have to be intertwined: the compassion of enlightened ones that take form as the manifest dimension of awakening found throughout the ten directions, and practice of the spiritual path on the part of the beings.

Sambhogakaya

Among the three dimensions of awakening (*ka-ya*), the enjoyment dimension (*sambhogakaya*) has a special place in the Universal Way. It represents at the same time the richness and fullness of being, the spiritual path it embodies, and the final result of that path. The Universal Way is dominated by the resolve to awaken oneself for the sake of all living beings. Therefore, the welfare of others takes precedence over the other relative aspects of the training, such as ethics. This is why when buddhas are depicted in their enjoyment dimension of awakening, rather than being dressed as monks they appear as princes and princesses, adorned with jewels and fine clothes. And it is this form of the buddhas that has an important place in the Universe. This form or dimension is associated with the pure land called "Unsurpassed" (*Akanistha*).

Whenever a being attains enlightenment, an "Unsurpassed realm" manifests with a palace, adorned with every marvellous ornament one can possibly imagine. That being is the lord of this 'realm',

appearing as Vairocana, the enjoyment dimension of enlightenment, undifferentiated from all the buddhas of the ten directions. Vairocana has a special place in the universe probably because he symbolizes the purity of form - the form that makes up all the universe. Infinite world systems are to be found in each pore of Vairocana's body. And within each atom of each of these world systems lie other infinite world systems and forms of Vairocana, while each form of Vairocana in turn contains infinite buddha fields and buddhas. Vairocana includes all the universe and the universe is encompassed by Vairocana. Every being that attains enlightenment is the embodiment of such a display of universes and he encompasses them all. Consideration of the infinite buddhas of the ten directions would give an unimaginable and unfathomable picture of the cosmos where each detail includes the universal and the universal is included in every detail (i.e., everything is included and includes everything).

"Endurance" (*Saha*), which is the name of our world system (though there are infinite other ones similar to ours) is just an infinitesimal part of all this display, the thirteenth of a series of multi-tiered world systems, in an ocean of infinite world systems, all resting in the palm of a Vairocana.

In Dzog-chen

The Dzog-chen system is less preoccupied with the arrangement of the universe, and focusses instead on its nature. In this system, the Universe is the movement or excitement of the total and pure state of awareness that "strays away from itself".

However, the expression "awareness straying away from itself" is merely a figure of speech, because awareness never actually strays. But the deception of cyclic existence begins when the manifestations unfold from the ground of being and are not recognized as the ground of being itself or as the play of the total and pure state of awareness. First the ground of being manifests as lights and because of lack of awareness, the lights are taken to be concrete objects, and thus appearances themselves become a deception.

When the seal that metaphorically keeps the total and pure awareness in the original ground of being is open (i.e., the creativity of awareness moves) the whole universe, which is just a manifestation of one's awareness, comes into being in eight ways. These eight ways contain all the realms that represent cyclic life and liberation from it. As the title of one of the principal tantras of Dzog-chen says, the total and pure state of

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Pictures from Buryatia - a conversation with Batodalay

Fabio Andrico: Could you introduce yourself briefly.

Batodalay Dugarov: I was born in 1946 and grew up in a village. My grandparents were common shepherds and my parents were farmers.

I grew up in a religious family which preserved the Gelugpa tradition and even though religion was still prohibited, my grandmother had an altar at home. When I was five I already knew the prayers to the 21 Taras and to White Tara by heart. I studied at the Soviet school and passed all stages common for Soviet children from the "Pioneers" to the "Young Communist League" as well as a period of military service.

I was fond of drawing from my early childhood and after 1971 I began drawing religious subjects. I took part in constructing Ivola Datsan (monastery) and painted the dragons and the ornaments in the main temple. I became very interested in painting *thankas* and asked the permission and advice of the old lamas who still lived in the monastery. They revealed some of the secrets of traditional Buddhist painting to me and gradually I began painting *thankas*.

Since 1978 painting has become my full-time activity and I have received many unofficial orders from the Abbots of Ivola Datsan even though religious painting was prohibited. Almost forty of my works are now in different Datsans and there are many of my *thankas* throughout Buryatia in private homes.

Fabio: How has Tibetan culture influenced Buryatia?

Batodalay: The influence of Tibetan culture in Buryatia came about through the Buddhist tradition. Although it is officially considered that the Russian Emperor gave permission for the Buddhist religion to spread in Buryatia and its 250th anniversary was celebrated last year, in reality the Buddhist religion came to Buryatia a hundred years before that.

After the arrival of Buddhism the lifestyle of the Buryatian people began to change. Until that time there had been constant rivalry and military conflicts among the Buryatian tribes and a traditional folkloristic religion similar to shamanism existed. Shamans did help people but they didn't have a general influence and couldn't make people more peaceful or friendly to each other. But with the spread of Buddhism in Buryatia, *Bodhicitta* began developing among the people. That meant compassion not only for humans but for all sentient beings. And so people became more friendly and peace came to the land.

Tibetan and Mongolian lamas began to come to Buryatia and they became the abbots of the monasteries and taught dharma to the local people. Later Buryats went to Tibet and Mongolia to study dharma there

and they became lamas themselves.

At first there were no official tantric or philosophical schools and only rituals prevailed in the local Buddhist tradition. When lamas came from Tibet and Mongolia they gave tantric transmissions and philosophical teaching officially. Up to the late 19th century ritualistic power prevailed in the local Buddhist

a tendency not to harm things, not to go to extremities, they feel compassionate towards people and they don't have exaggerated qualities of hatred or greed. These qualities are evidence of their Buddhist style of life.

Fabio: What kind of rituals are performed in Buryatia when

hour and direction in which they should carry the deceased person from his temporary shelter.

When the prayers have been read then all the objects still belonging to the deceased person, his mala and his clothes, are brought and the lama calls the soul of the deceased person and explains the impermanency of life on earth to him.

Fabio: On which day after death does this happen?

Batodalay: The second or third day after the death. The lama tells the deceased that after visiting his relatives he should now go to a higher sphere such as the paradise of Buddha Amitaba. After finishing this ceremony *Monlam* is read. Then the objects which belonged to the deceased person are shared among the relatives.

The coffin is brought out of its temporary shelter, opened and the family say their last goodbyes to the deceased. The eldest of the relatives takes a Buddhist sutra, perhaps the "Diamond Sutra" or the sutra of the "Golden Radiance" or the *Prajnaparamita* and the wife or the eldest daughter of the deceased brings some milk food. Close relatives hold the various objects and food and they circle the coffin three times. It's believed that this gives them wealth as the deceased will not take these things with him.

According to astrological calculations only a person born in a particular year such as that of the Tiger or the Monkey should touch the corpse. If none of the relatives was born in that year, a person having this year of birth will be invited to touch the deceased with the book of sutra. Then the coffin is closed.

sticks in the four cardinal directions having special signs on them. According to the mandalas they put five *tsa-tsa's* of clay with special signs on them. Then they walk around the grave three times clockwise and then very quickly they return home.

Fabio: Are there special days for doing ceremonies in the period after the death?

Batodalay: During the 49 days after the death, a light should burn all day and night and if relatives know some prayers they perform them or invite special lamas to do so. *Chöd* may be read on the day of the funeral and for three evenings after.

When the 49 days are over the last ritual takes place. *Chöd* and various sutras may be read and then *monlam*. Everyone wishes the deceased to acquire a good rebirth and if the deceased has ordered some ceremonies or *thankas* during these 49 days his wishes should be carried out. Many people consult an astrological lama or clairvoyant about the new incarnation. He may advise the family to do a particular ritual and if he believes the person to have taken a bad incarnation then new rituals will be performed.

Fabio: I've heard that sometimes they do a kind of *jinsege* (fire ritual).

Batodalay: Yes. Sometimes sesame seeds are made into a figure of a scorpion and burnt on the fire. In some regions there is a special kind of fire *puja* made when particular problems arise.

The *jinsege* ritual is made together with the *choga* ritual the first three evenings after death to



During the July '92 retreat at Lake Kotokel in Buryatia, Batodalay Dugarov, a well-known *thanka* painter, talked to Fabio Andrico and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche about his life and Buryatian customs

tradition, but since that time special philosophical departments have been organised in various monasteries. At the end of the 19th century schools of tantra began to develop and after the beginning of the 1930's the teaching and the various schools flourished in Buryatia. Even after the October Revolution, after the time when Buddhism began to be persecuted, various kinds of schools came here in order to develop. But after the beginning of the repression, Communism managed to annihilate everything.

Fabio: Is the influence of Tibetan culture mainly or only related to religion or is there an influence on the common life of the people?

Batodalay: If you compare eastern Buryats who have preserved the Buddhist faith and western Buryats who never adopted Buddhism, you will see the difference. In the western part of Buryatia they were forced to become Christians but in their heart they have remained Shamans. If you compare these two branches of the Buryatian people you can clearly see the influence of Buddhist and in particular Tibetan culture in Buryatia. It concerns moral behaviour. The eastern Buryats have

someone dies?

Batodalay: In those regions where people have adopted Buddhism, the first thing to be done is to light a lamp on the altar. After quickly constructing a light shelter outside,

they place the deceased person there with an image of the Medicine Buddha hanging above his head.

A lama makes some astrological divination based on the date of the person's birth and the time of his death. After consulting his astrological calendar, he tells the relatives what the last experiences and wishes of the deceased were. These are very powerful. The lama can say whether the death was premature or not. He tells the relatives what prayers to make and which *thanka* will help the person to have a good rebirth.

He may indicate what particular object or animal the deceased was attached to in his life and advise the relatives to make an image of it from bread and paint it in particular colours so that it can be placed in the coffin. Then he suggests the day,



They set off for the cemetery in a direction and at a time which the lama has advised according to astrological indications. Even if the cemetery is not in that direction the lama insists they have to go several metres in that direction and then turn. When leaving home and burying the coffin a conch shell is blown.

Near the grave they make a special hole and put a vessel containing five kinds of grains and five kinds of precious stones and before putting the coffin into the grave they draw a swastika there. Where the coffin is buried they make a little hill of earth and stick special flags there with mantras on them in the direction of the head and legs of the corpse. One of them has a design of a stupa and mantras and others have only mantras on them. They put four

help clean the obstacles of the dead person by burning his impure consciousness.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche: How are small children buried?

Batodalay: Now they bury them in the same way as adults, but in past times there was a ritual called the "lost ritual". The child was wrapped in some cloth or put in a little coffin and his father would put it on a wagon, or a sledge in winter. He would go to the forest and make his horse gallop and the movement of the sledge or wagon as the horse was galloping would fling the little coffin or bundle from the sledge. The father would not notice it and wouldn't know where he had lost the corpse of his child. Then he would make a circle and turn home. That was the old custom of burying children.

I will cover three main topics. First, we must establish the view of Dzog-chen. But knowing the view and being able to practise meditation is not enough: we need to be able to "cross the pass", that is to bring our practice into daily life. Then, thirdly, to measure our practice through our dreams. We can see the effect of practice from our dreams. So the three points to be covered are first, establishing the view, second, crossing the pass, and third, seeing results in dreams.

Usually we talk about meditating on something such as a deity, compassion, etc., but from the Dzog-chen view this is not what we mean by meditation. From the Dzog-chen view, when we talk about meditation we mean maintaining the natural flow of our basic nature, the continuity of our ground state, our basic essence. This is Dzog-chen. So in order to be able to maintain the flow of our natural state we must know what this primordial state is.

The basic ground nature is described in the well-known prayer of Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa which is known as "The Aspiration of the Ground, Path and Fruition". I will use this prayer as a basis to describe the primordial state.

The primordial state has not been improved by Buddhas and Bodhisattvas or damaged by the minds of ordinary sentient beings. Even in the mind stream of tiny insects this Buddha nature exists as a potentiality, a seed, an essence that has always been there and which is free from all elaborations. This is the primordial natural state which, from the beginning, has had no negative qualities or defects and has had all the qualities of enlightened beings.

This primordial natural state is free from the four extremes (of existing, not-existing, neither existing nor not-existing, and of both existing and not-existing). Freedom from these four extremes is the very nature of the primordial state.

Even enlightened beings such as the Buddhas have never been able to perceive the essence of mind as an object. So we cannot say that the nature of our mind is something that exists as an object. It is not something which can be seen or tasted or touched. Nor does it exist in the past, present or future.

The Buddhas of the three times will never be able to perceive it as an object. Yet we cannot say that it does not exist since we experience happiness and sadness. The mind is the basis of experience through samsara and nirvana. So we cannot say the mind exists or does not exist and yet these two statements are not in opposition to each other.

We cannot say that the mind does not exist and does not 'not exist'. The mind is not something we can define in words - it is beyond existing and not existing.

Take, for example, a musician playing a musical instrument. If it is pleasant to hear, what is the basis of this? In order to have the sound we have the bow, the wood, the strings, the pegs, the leather, the right hand, left hand, the musician, the sound.

Last September Khamtrul Rinpoche gave a talk to the Dzog-chen Community in New York

Bringing the practice into daily life

By Khamtrul Rinpoche



Khamtrul Rinpoche is the fourth incarnation in a Nyingma lineage from Kham in eastern Tibet. He was made co-abbot of Gaje Kamtu Min Dol Jang Chol monastery at the age of eight, having been recognised as the reincarnation of Dorje Namgye Khamtrul Rinpoche. He fled Tibet in 1960 and went to India, where he has held several important posts in the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala.

H.H. the Dalai Lama refers people to him who wish to study and practise Nyingma teachings, but he also imparts teachings from other lineages. He is very much aware that he is "the only living person outside Tibet who holds direct and unbroken empowerments, transmissions and teachings of the great Fifth Dalai Lamas complete works of 32 volumes", which he has been urged to pass on for their continuity.

Where is the music coming from? Is it from the left hand or the right hand, or the instrument, or the whole combination?

It has been said by the great master Nagarjuna that all phenomena are interdependent. 'We have interdependent connections and all phenomena are dependent on these connections. Nothing exists in isolation.'

Generally, in the lower vehicles, there is the idea that everything exists in this interdependent stream. From the Dzog-chen view this is accepted and there is also a primordial ground which is the matrix for all which arises. If we look at the nature of this ground it is completely natural and unfabricated. This goes beyond the statement and dependent arising in the lower vehicles.

If we look at the nature of our minds we can see that there is this nature in all beings. We can call it the mind of Kuntuzangpo, Samantabhadra, the Buddha nature, or the *rigpa yeshe*, the wisdom of non-dual awareness. We can give it many names but in any case it is free

from all defects and also has all the perfected qualities of enlightenment, the basic original state.

So for ordinary beings we say that their nature has been obscured and dualistic thinking has arisen. The primordial mind has been clouded like a mirror that has been clouded and we have fallen into ignorance. Our original nature is obscured and we cannot see it. Based on this ignorance we fall into attachment to what we like and aversion for what we dislike and all of our experiences arise from that ignorance. Even though all sentient beings have fallen into ignorance, the Buddha nature is still the mind stream of all beings.

So when all beings have gone through their path and approach enlightenment, the qualities of attachment, aversion and ignorance begin to fall away and the qualities of Buddha nature begin to come forth naturally since they are underlying all the time. Our Buddha nature is always present. When we are ignorant it is there, and when we are enlightened it is still there, never

changing. This is what is called the view of Dzog-chen.

An example of this is that just as gold is the most valued thing in the world, likewise the nature of our minds is equally precious. We could say that the primordial nature is like the gold that has been there right from the beginning. If gold falls to the ground or in dirty water, it can become dark, obscured. If we have a piece of blackened gold and we show it to someone they will say it is not gold. In the same way our nature has become obscured so we don't see our own pure nature. If we have a blackened piece of gold, we can see that it is black, but this is only the surface. Likewise our minds have been obscured by emotions, but this is only temporary, it is not our own true nature.

In the same way our true nature has been clouded by the *klesas*, the obscurations which are hiding the gold-like nature of our being. Thus through meeting a qualified teacher who is able to point this out, our *klesas* will clear and we will see the true nature of our mind, like the gold emerging from under the blackened surface.

This is the first point, to establish the Dzog-chen view. We say that our Buddha nature has been temporarily obscured by the *klesas*, and as they are removed the Buddha nature which has always been there will be revealed. This Buddha nature has always been there, it is a matter of uncovering it.

If we think that just hearing this or reading about it will enlighten us, this is a grave mistake. It is not enough to have an intellectual awareness of this. We must, through our practice, learn to be in that natural state. Just remaining in our primordial nature will gradually diminish the power of the *klesas*, the obscurations.

People have developed in a material way through western science. Particularly in New York, people are very busy and feel that they are not able to do this. But if you are not doing this then you are not entering into the state of Dzog-chen. If you think you can't do Dzog-chen practice, remember that in Dzog-chen, meditation is not on a deity or on the channels and prana where you need a quiet environment (to practise). Dzog-chen can be practised in the busiest place in the world. We can still observe the nature of mind while walking, talking and eating. We can always return to the primordial state without needing any particular environment. So we shouldn't think we can't practice Dzog-chen because we live in a big city. When we are watching the nature of mind it is as if the primordial mind is the sky and the *klesas* are like the clouds. If we don't engage in the *klesas* they will gradually dissolve back into the primordial state like clouds dissolving into the sky. Or like the waves of the ocean arising, thoughts will naturally dissolve back into the ocean if we don't engage in disturbing emotions.

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Khamtrul Rinpoche talks about his connection with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Chang Chub Dorje

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was recognised as Adzom Drugpa Rinpoche by Gyalwa Karmapa. Adzom Drugpa established a large Gonpa at Tromkha. His son, Gyaltzen Gyurme Dorje, stayed there in retreat for several months with Rinpoche's family, and it was then that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche first received teachings from Gyaltzen Gyurme Dorje. So, as well as being the Tulku of Adzom Drugpa, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche also received extensive teachings from his son, Gyurme Dorje - he is a very important Lama.

My own connection with Adzom Drugpa goes back to my previous incarnation called Gyurme Trinley Namgyel, in which I was one of his foremost disciples. So my previous incarnation was a disciple of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's former incarnation. When I was 25 or 26, I received many empowerments and teachings from Gyurme Dorje - especially Dzog-chen teachings. In particular, I received the seven treasures of Longchenpa and the Nyingthig Yabshe. So Gyurme Dorje was one of my principle Dzog-chen masters. There has been a strong connection between Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and me for several lifetimes, and particularly during the last two.

I met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in New York this summer for the first time since leaving Tibet and coming to India. Previously, we had only corresponded by mail. So I was very happy to meet him in person. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama is the main lineage holder of Tertön Dorje Tsegal, a disciple and heart son of Chang Chub Dorje. There are several volumes of Dorje Tsegal's collected works. When Dorje Tsegal was about to die, he announced that the holder of his teachings would be His Holiness. When, around 1974 or 1975, a disciple of both Chang Chub Dorje and Dorje Tsegal, called Derge Jangya Rinpoche, came to India bringing with him all the collected writings of these two masters, I requested and received many empowerments and transmissions.

Last year, Dorje Tsegal's son, Osel Dorje, came to Dharamsala, and I received all the teachings and initiations of Dorje Tsegal from him. I then went into retreat to practise Dorje Tsegal's divinity yoga (*lha-sgrub*) of Pema Gyalpo, the Lotus King. During the retreat I had many signs of the practice.

Unlike Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, I was not one of the principle students of Chang Chub Dorje, although I did study with them. Chang Chub Dorje's daughter, Ahtse Lhamo, reached the rainbow body, as did Trayang Rinpoche's daughter, another of his disciples. I believe that anybody who really applies the teachings of Dzog-chen, even myself for example, can attain the rainbow body.

BOOK RELEASES

THE NYINGMA SCHOOL OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM

by Dudjom Rinpoche, Jigdrel
Yeshe Dorje

Translated by Dr Gyurme Dorje and
Dr Matthew Kapstein
Wisdom Publications
1600 pages, 110 in full colour



The late Dudjom Rinpoche, who was the supreme head of the Nyingma tradition, famous tertön (discoverer of termas), and a great master of Dzog-chen, died in 1983. His monumental work on the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism constitutes the most complete and exhaustive reference work of its type in the West. It includes the lives of the Dzog-chen lineage holders up to Longchen Rabjam, the unbroken distant lineages of Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga up to the present day, the lives of the major tertöns, and much else besides has recently been published by Wisdom Publications in two beautiful cloth-bound volumes.

e. d.

STOP PRESS

We are delighted to hear that the new reincarnation of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche has been found in Kathmandu.

WHERE TO ORDER

Many readers of The Mirror have written and asked where they can get copies of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's recently published books that were reviewed in the last issue (no.17).

THE SONG OF THE VAJRA
is published by the Dzogchen Community of America at Tsegelgar, P.O. Box 277, Conway, MASS 01341, U.S.A. Tel. 0413 2568883. Fax 0413 6651142.

THE 21 SEMZIN OF DZOG-CHEN UPADĒSA
is published by Rinchen Edition (PTE) Ltd., 15 Phillips Street, #09-00, Singapore 0104.

DREAM YOGA AND THE PRACTICE OF NATURAL LIGHT
is published by Snow Lion Publications, P.O. Box 6483, Ithaca, NY 14851, U.S.A. Tel. 800 950 0313. Fax 607 273 8508.

LOST LHASA

Heinrich Harrer's Tibet



LOST LHASA

Heinrich Harrer's Tibet

Text and photographs by Heinrich
Harrer
H N Abrams, Inc., Hood River,
Oregon
pages 228
200 black and white illustrations

Here we have a wonderful book, impressive for its valuable documentary character, leading the reader to a world that seems to have furtively sneaked through a crack in the wall of time.

Many of the people represented in the pictures were not even aware of what a camera was; they look on at a strange man handling a strange metallic box. The result is that their vivid glances almost jump off the page.

More than just a book of photographs, *Lost Lhasa* is a charming story, depicting all the major aspects of the life in and around Lhasa, just before the enchantment was to be broken.

The pictures follow the narration and attract like windows opening out onto the great city of Lhasa.

The book is never boring, nor redundant: it is a carefully selected constellation of themes, made by an old gentleman, who treasures Tibet in his heart, without any rhetoric.

During his many years in Tibet, immediately prior to the 50's, Heinrich Harrer had the unique opportunity of taking a couple of thousand pictures, two hundred of

which he has chosen for this book, with the affection he feels for his memories.

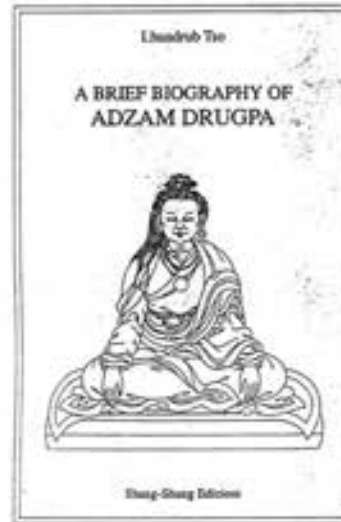
The author dedicates the book to the children of Tibet, "with the hope that they never forget their origins".

At the end of a brief and touching preface, Heinrich Harrer writes:

"Whatever fate decides for Tibetans, their snow-covered mountains, the throne of their gods, will stand unchanged. Unchanged also are the flights of wild geese and black-necked cranes in the cold, moonlit nights over Lhasa. Their wingbeat make a sound like Lha gye lo: the gods shall prevail!"

"Memories make me happy, for only nice things stay clear: therefore the work on this book has given me great pleasure. I do hope that the Tibetans and their friends will also find pleasure and happiness in these pages".

Giovanni Arca



A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF ADZAM DRUGPA

Lhundrub Tso

Italian translation from Tibetan and notes by Adriano Clemente.
English translation by Nancy Simmons.
Shang Shung Editions, 1992, Italy.

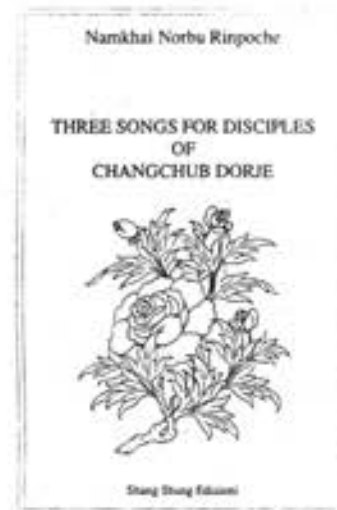
This brief biography of Adzam Drugpa Drondul Pawo Dorje (A 'dzam 'brug pa 'Gro 'dul dpa' bo rdo rje) (1842-1934), a renowned Dzog-chen master from eastern Tibet belonging to the "non-sectarian" (ris med) lineage - initiated by such teachers as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po) (1820-1892) and Kongtrul Lodro Thaye (Kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas) (1813-1899) - is, perhaps, the only one extant, or at least his sole life history found until now. It was written in verse in the form of an invocation by his disciple Lhundrub Tso (Lhun grub mtsho) (1864-1945), paternal grandmother of Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

Lhundrub Tso, disciple also of the yogini Achi Ugdrön (A phyi 'ug sgron) (1759-1887), met Adzam Drugpa when she was twenty-five years old, after an emergency which

caused her to abandon her home and to dedicate herself to the teachings. After a three-year retreat at Tungkar Ritrod (Dung dkar ri khrod), she remained at Adzam Gar (A 'dzam sgar), the residence of the master, until his decease in 1934. She then moved to a retreat place not far from her son's family, in whose house she spent the last years of her life.

Her works, unfortunately incomplete, have been collected and edited by her grandson, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. This anthology, in manuscript form, bears the title, "The Precious Necklace: a collection of writings by the aged yogini Kun Bzang Chos Dbyings Mtsho" ("A phyi mal 'byor ma kun bzang chos dbyings mtsho'i gsung phyogs btus rin chen do shal").

e. d.



THREE SONGS for Disciples of Changchub Dorje

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Translation from Tibetan to Italian and notes by Adriano Clemente.
Translation into English by Barrie Simmons.
Shang Shung Editions, 1992, Italy.

The three songs translated in this collection were written by Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche during the spring of 1988, on the occasion of a visit to Khamdo Gar (Kham rdo sgar) in eastern Tibet, once the residence of Rigzin Changchub Dorje (Byangchub rdo rje) (1826-1961), his principal teacher of Dzog-chen (rDzogs chen).

The day of his departure, Norbu Rinpoche was asked by several old disciples of Changchub Dorje for advice about practice, and he then offered these three spontaneous songs, which contain the essence of Dzog-chen.

e. d.

"A Brief Biography" and "Three Songs" are available from Shang Shung Edizioni, Merigar 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.
Cost per book is \$10 US including postage and packing.

THE MAGIC LIFE OF MILAREPA

TIBET'S GREAT YOGI



THE MAGIC LIFE OF MILAREPA

Tibet's Great Yogi

Eva Van Dam
Shambala

It could easily have fallen into caricature, parody or cheap thrills. But surprisingly what is probably the first-ever graphic biography in Tibet-related literature does none of this. On the down side, there are one or two awkward junctions, where you turn back to make sure you haven't missed a page. And there is Marpa, portrayed as an 11th century male chauvinist bully-boy, complete with crew cut and steroid physique. But the rest of the book reveals meticulous research, so perhaps he really was like that and the manifestations of his Buddha nature did not seem incongruous to the Tibetans of his time.

On the up side, Eva Van Dam's artistic vision is beyond reproach. She must rate among the most accomplished illustrators of our time. Her drawings blaze with dramatic effect, evoke atmosphere, catch fine nuances of mood and movement and she has obviously studied her Tibetan characters in fine detail.

To the uninitiated it would stand in its own right as a cracking good yarn, full of magic, mystery, high drama, death and destruction - rounded off with glorious fulfillment. If you came to this book knowing nothing about Milarepa, you would leave it loving the guy. Which suggests it probably has sales appeal outside Dharma circles. Eva Van Dam knows her Tibetan Buddhism very well, too. Meditating Mila could have been a bit phoney, so there I was poised for the New Age kitsch, but amazingly everything the book has to say about Tibetan yogis rang 100 per cent down the line authentic. Truly some achievement. Which all goes to show that it is possible to produce entertaining Dharma books. Those of us who thought it would never happen chortled when Keith Dowman's "Divine Madman" (also illustrated by Eva Van Dam) was published. "Milarepa" takes it a few steps further. My vote is on Drukpa Kunley as the next suitable case for graphic treatment.

Mary Finnigan

Reflections Reflections Reflections

French weekend practice

"When in Rome, do as Romans do". So, having been sent from Bristol to Geneva to work for a few months, I tried to get into the swing of things. One of the things that I managed to do was to meet up with people of the community in and around Geneva to do practice and other things together. One of the activities was the practice weekend organized by the French Gakyil, which took place in the last week of September. This was in fact the first of a series of four weekends that the Gakyil organized aiming to bring both old and new students together to meet and practise. (OK, Geneva is in Switzerland, but something is happening only in France, so what the hell...)

We met in a small village, at a gîte, which is, I was told, something similar to a gar where a traveller can stay for a night.

The village is roughly half way between Paris and Geneva, and has a classical French surrounding: there is a lake, with woodlands, green hills, and some herds of cattle on the far side... So, even though the place where we slept was not that great - some of the beds we slept in squeaked not only when one turned over, but in synchronism with ones breathing in and out - the setting definitely more than compensated for the lack of sophistication in the dormitory.

At one point, when a somewhat enthusiastic discussion opened up as to the timing of the Ganapuja, it was rather like the French having to decide "yes" or "no" to the Maastricht treaty, the votes for doing the puja before lunch were exactly the same as the votes for doing it after: by 1:30, the stomach gained the upper hand, and the puja was practiced after lunch.

Everybody was glad to have participated in the weekend and grateful to Patrice for the initiative. I hope that more people can take part in such meetings more often, and in more places!

Cheh Goh

New arrivals

Austria

Anna Elisabeth Lhadon

Born to Gabriele and Oliver Leick
on Tuesday, May 19th

USA

Olympia Valentina Dhevi

Born to Miranda and John Shannon
on Monday, June 29th

UK

Alexander

Born to Carola Beresford-Cooke and John Rowley
on Sunday, September 13th

Italy

Gabriele Gang Shar

Born to Iacobella Gaetani and Alex Siedlecki
on Thursday, September 10th

Amedeo Mingyur

Born to Cristina and Matteo Silva
on Sunday, June 7th

Beatrice Ye-she

Born to Rita Degli Esposti and Gianantonio Pozzi, on Tuesday, July 28th



Experience of a Tara Retreat

I received an invitation to take part in a week long Tara Retreat with the Dzog-chen Community of Amsterdam at the end of May.

My feelings and thoughts about the retreat were very mixed. On one hand I was glad to have the opportunity to have a deeper experience of the practice while on the other hand I had some fear about practising so much. I had never done a practice retreat before and I was full of images and fantasies about how beautiful or ugly it would be.

On Saturday morning, two children and six adults started the practice. During the first session, I had many thoughts arising. There were long passages of mantra recitation and while we were doing them I was very distracted. I started to think, "What am I doing here?" I

felt nervous and agitated and sometimes I wanted to jump up and leave the practice. I asked myself if this is really my path? My tensions and emotions increased and I felt as if I had no capacity to do the practice. I considered whether I should do the practice or not while I was so tense.

The answer to all the questions was that I could decide whatever I liked and that all decisions are fine as long as I remain aware.

And it was helpful for me to remember that I could decide and instead of pushing myself to do the practice, go and visit the sights instead.

During this week of intense practice, I made some new decisions to continue the practice and to have some more experiences.

On the second day of the retreat it was completely different. I got more energy from the practice and my concentration was better. The experience was completely different to that of the first day. During the following days I experienced all colours of emotions, but the thoughts and emotions were lighter and did not oppress me like those of the first day. And so day by day I felt more relaxed and centred.

The experience of the retreat was very real and I felt I understood the teachings better. It was good to do the practice together with other people because there was a chance to talk about our experiences and so they became more relative.

Many thanks to the Community of Amsterdam.

Carmen Beck

THE BUDDHA SAYS
EVERYTHING IS
ILLUSION.



I WISH MY BOSS UNDERSTOOD
THAT.



NOT TO MENTION MY WIFE,
THE LANDLORD, THE BILL
COLLECTORS...



SO MANY IGNORANT PEOPLE...
NO WONDER ITS SO HARD
TO GET ENLIGHTENED!



W. 14/11/2008

International Appeal

Dear Friends in the Dharma,

A new history of Buddhism began in the new land of Russia when, on January 9th, 1992, the Institute of Buddhism was launched in Moscow at the Old Ceremonial Hall of Moscow State University.

Preparations to inaugurate the Institute were initiated by scientists, artists, religious people and the general public. This period coincided with the dramatic transformation of this country, unparalleled in its scale and historical significance.

The spiritual treasures of Buddhism are little known to this land. The systematic survey and proper guidelines for application of such spiritual wisdom have yet to be initiated.

We call upon the friends of Buddhism throughout the world to render their solidarity and participate in the activities of the Institute of Buddhism. Under the enormously difficult social and economic conditions, any form of support is essential for the development of the Institute.

The Institute of Buddhism undertakes the academic research of Buddhist literature such as the unique manuscripts preserved in the monasteries, museums and research institutions of this country, their authoritative translation into Russian and subsequent publication. The Institute will offer the public a wide range of lectures and courses on the history and modern state of Buddhism, Buddhist philosophy, meditation, art, classical oriental languages: Pali, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese and Mongolian.

The Institute's activities include projects connected with Buddhist culture, architecture and arts and projects on the preservation of Buddhist cultural monuments in Central Asia.

It will provide assistance and guidance to the newly emerging Buddhist movement in this country. With international cooperation the Institute will take part in the construction of temples and memorials.

Our world is on the edge of a new era. Our future is deeply connected with each other. Buddhism in this country will play an important role in shaping the spiritual foundation of the new society.

With your solidarity, the Institute of Buddhism will make its best efforts to fulfill its destiny and responsibility.

The Institute of Buddhism
Mokhovaya Street 8
103009 Moscow, Russia
tel. (095) 245-22-89
fax (095) 248-02-64

Beyond mere learning

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This fivefold technique for exegesis of the sacred word has governed at least part of the long course of traditional education followed in the monastic colleges because the basic texts and systematic commentaries (yig cha) were closely modelled on the Abhisamayalamkara, itself a *karika*-style text adhering to Vasubandhu's pattern of exegesis. Given that no small number of competent religious scholars have been turned out from the monastic colleges it may be worthwhile to consider the relevance that this fivefold technique could have for a modern curriculum structure.

The student would first be introduced to the aims and purposes of the course (or of a text or topic, depending on the specific context): this would serve to generate interest in the subject as well as to give the students a sense of direction. The teacher would present a summary of the course material and provide the students with its guiding principles to provide an overview of the course. Then in a third stage, the teacher would move on to provide a detailed explanation of the course material. Most of the actual education time is included in this stage, where students would be introduced to the material in a systematic fashion.

Vasubandhu's fourth principle is an insight into the need for a teacher to clearly be able to explain the connections or relevance of each earlier topic to the latter as the course unfolds. This means that the course material must have an inner coherence and be properly related.

Finally Vasubandhu seems to have recognized the need for student participation, a fifth and final stage in which there is discussion and debate. When students are familiar with the subject matter they should be encouraged to find out about the more subtle and difficult aspects by way of analysis and investigation. Mahayana Buddhism has always been fairly open to enquiry and examination, as a result of which debating became an accepted method to penetrate intricate philosophical views. In the monastic colleges referred to above much time was spent debating. Questions arising in the debate would be referred back to senior students and teachers.

To sum up, Tibetan traditional education gained its inspiration from Mahayana philosophy and provided it with its guiding principles or norms. These boiled down to two main points: (i) that teachers should be qualified in their own field, and (ii) that they should be morally 'superior' persons, meaning that they encompassed virtues like compassion, patience and integrity. The teacher was expected to make a constant effort to stop negativities like hatred, jealousy and malicious scheming. The teaching profession was not a trade learned and then mechanically applied to earn a living. As for the teacher-student

relationship, it was seen as a two-way process where both parties were at liberty. Optimally, students would have intelligence and an interest in learning. Their respect for the teacher and the teaching would arise spontaneously as a variable of their learning. Within this system both the teacher and student were to make a conscious and concerted effort to see that the necessary causes and conditions were met to bring about the accepted purpose of the education system, that of producing a virtuous and well-educated person. Underlying the entire process was the idea of karma, namely, "how you sow thus shall you reap".

Guess which world

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awareness is The Majestic Creativity of the Universe (*Kun-byed-rgyal-po*).

Implicit in the presentation of this system is the fact that if the ground of being (*gzhi*) is primordially pure, one is not subject to any limitation and one is actually already enlightened from the beginning. One is already complete in whatever knowledge or quality a buddha possesses, just as everything is already complete in the state of pure and total awareness. Freedom and deception are simply the play of the excitement of awareness (*rig pa'i rolpa tsam*) and the ground of being is the basis for both, although in itself it is neither. One's own enlightened nature, however, needs to be made conscious through a "reawakening". When objectifying thoughts arise, which are a movement of the pure and total awareness, one recognises these movements as one's inner radiance manifesting outwardly and in this way one does not make anything concrete. When such understanding comes, the movements of thought/awareness cease without applying artificial meditation techniques to transform or stop them. At that moment realization is attained and all the wisdom and qualities of a buddha become totally manifest.

The perspective of the Dzog-chen system on cyclic life is the key to understanding its path and fruit. It is a perspective which seems to be disjointed from the traditional presentation of the two truths and causality found in all different aspects of Buddhism, and it leaves the mind astonished. It simply states that everything remains primordially pure, and that when this truth is recognized within one's natural awareness, one becomes enlightened within one's nature - which is actually already enlightened.

The world we live in

We are confronted here with three views on the universe. First, that of a finite cosmology (linked to the Individual Way or *Hinayana*), where the world amounts to an impure vision created by the actions of beings, and which has to be transcended if one is to gain liberation. Then there is a cosmology of infinite buddha-fields, (linked to

the Universal Way or *Mahayana*), where the universe is the manifestation of the buddhas, a pure vision that does not need to be transcended, but instead needs to be recognized in its empty nature. And last but not least, there is the "non-cosmology" of the Dzog-chen system, where the universe is simply the play of one's individual awareness.

These views give a wider perspective to our relation with ourselves and the world in which we live. They push the mind beyond its limits into an immense space of interrelations where fixed concepts and certainties vanish.

Bringing the practice

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Gradually our *klesas* will naturally become less powerful. Thus if our Dzog-chen practice is working we will see that. For example if we have been someone who got easily upset or angry we will notice that gradually our angry nature will become weaker and other qualities like compassion, love, renunciation and devotion will become stronger.

Here we come to the second point: crossing over the pass through our daily actions. Some people think that in Dzog-chen there are no good or bad actions, no suffering and no happiness. People fall into this extreme of nihilism. But if we are really practising Dzog-chen, one's daily activities will always be in harmony and will not cause any problems. So we can see by looking at how we act whether or not our practice is being integrated into our lives or not.

The third point is to measure whether our practice of Dzog-chen is really transforming us. We can gauge this from our dreams. We should not be having impure phenomena appearing in our dreams, or be caught by our dreams. We will realize that we are dreaming. Our dreams in general tend to proliferate but if our practice is good we will tend to have less dreams. If our dreams are going well we will dream of Buddha fields and see lights and rays in our dreams.

To help with that practice, it is important to recognize the illusory nature of all phenomena during the day. When we sleep it is important not to fall into too heavy a sleep, not to have too much to eat or too many blankets on us. Before we go to sleep we can pray to any teacher that we feel a strong connection with or any deity that we are connected to. This will help with the practice of the dream.

If we start to have good dreams at night, dreams free of delusion, then during our waking state we will also have pure vision. This means you may see Buddha fields and get a true perception of reality. This will not happen all at once but gradually. What we perceive will change. If our practice is really going in this direction, it will manifest in our dreams.

(Translation from the Tibetan by David Christiansen, transcription by Tsaltrim Allione)

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“Little Buddha”

Bernardo Bertolucci's inner quest



Bertolucci and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Gadelling

By Paolo Brunatto

While passing over the Himalayas on board a flight from Kathmandu to Paro in Bhutan to reach Bernardo Bertolucci who is shooting his latest film, 'Little Buddha', I think back over the first meetings the great Italian film director had with Namkhay Norbu Rinpoche and H.H. the Dalai Lama in 1991 before beginning to write the script for the film. A conversation between the Dalai Lama and Bertolucci comes to mind. It was the first day of August.

"Your Holiness, I intend to make a film on Buddha, but I'm not a believer in Buddhism", said Bertolucci.

"That is not the most important point", His Holiness replied. "What counts is the motivation, a compassionate attitude."

I'm travelling to Bhutan together with Fulvio Rossi, the producer, and a film crew to realise a documentary about the making of the film in general.

I will recount the experiences we had on the 'Little Buddha' set in greater detail in a future article for *The Mirror*. Right now, having just got back from Bhutan, I will simply make a few off the cuff remarks

So 'Little Buddha' is a film which is set both in the present - in the form of Buddhism today as practised by the Lamas - and in the past - the story of the historical Buddha. It is also a gripping story that ideally bridges East and West.

Bertolucci seems to be fascinated by the central idea of Buddhism; that work on oneself to discover who we really are is the key to realization. One day, during the takes of 'Little Buddha', Bernardo remarked to me, "the making of this film corresponds for me to an inner quest."

For Bertolucci and his troupe, the period of preparation of over a year prior to shooting meant coming into contact with the international Buddhist community, and meeting masters, Lamas, Yogis, hermits, monks, hermits, disciples and scholars of Buddhism (from the West as well). And visiting temples, monasteries and hermitages in Nepal, Bhutan and India, spending time with Buddhists in the States and Europe, and venturing into the Himalayas in a search for sacred spots. During the film, he was assisted by Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, from whom he received teachings on the Four Noble Truths and on the true nature of the mind.

Shooting began in Bhutan and Nepal at the end of September '92 and will terminate on December 20th. Then work will start up again in Seattle in America, and will continue throughout January '93.

Among those collaborating on the film, there are Europeans, Tibetans, Americans, Chinese, Nepalese and Indians. The main actors are Yimg Ruo Cheng in the role of Lama Norbu, and Keanu Reeve as the Buddha. But many of the actors are not professionals, and amongst them there are many Tibetan Lamas and monks.

Little Buddha will be released at the end of 1993.

PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL DAYS

Tibetan date: 11th Month, 8th day Western date: Friday 1st January 1993
This is a particular day for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a long or medium Tun with intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

Tibetan date: 11th Month, 10th day
Western date: Sunday 3rd January 1993
This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. If you have the time and possibility it is good to do a Ganapuja collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, otherwise you can do the Long-life practice of Union of Promordial Essences "U.P.E."

FULL MOON
Tibetan date: 11th Month, 15th day
Western date: Friday 8th January 1993
This is an important day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus. U.P.E.

Tibetan date: 11th Month, 25th day Western date: Sunday 17th January 1993

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

NEW MOON
Tibetan date: Western date:
11th Month, 30th day Friday 22nd January 1993
This is a special day for purification practices so try to do Purification of the Six Lokas.

Tibetan date: 12th Month, 10th day
Western date: Tuesday 2nd February 1993
This day is the anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava's coronation as Prince of Orgyen at the invitation of King Idraboli. We can perform a ganapuja collectively or do the Long - life practice, U.W.U. either collectively or personally, according to circumstances.

Tibetan date: 12th Month, 11th day Western date: Wed. 3rd February 1993
Today it is good to do a medium or long Tun with intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

FULL MOON
Tibetan date: 12th Month, 15th day
Western date: Saturday 6th February 1993
It is in general a day for honouring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the long - life practice of Guru Amitayus, U.P.E.

Tibetan date: 12th Month, 18th day
Western date: Tuesday 9th February 1993
This day is the anniversary of the great Dzog-chen master Longchen Rabjam Longchenpa (1306 - 1363). On this very important day try to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lama'i Naljo" Guruyoga with the White A.

Tibetan date: 12th Month, 25th day Western date: Tuesday 16th February 1993
This is a Dakini day, so try to perform a Ganapuja with the transformation of the Dakini Simhamuka together with your Vajra brothers and sisters. Otherwise you can do a medium or short Tun in the usual way.

NEW MOON
Tibetan date: 12th Month, 30th day
Western date: Sunday 21st February 1993
This is a good day to do Purification of the Six Lokas.

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Secretary to

A message to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche from the
Private Secretary to H.H. the Dalai Lama

12th October 1992

*To Tulku Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche whose
judgement is without equal in its discretion:*

Following your hard work on the difficult task of organizing the Second Seminar on the Tibetan Language, the conference participants have now returned. Thanks to your skillful organisation, Tibetan scholars from inside and outside Tibet have had a good opportunity to meet and to deliberate on the main topic, the Tibetan language, about which they have done their heartfelt best. Because of this it went very well. H.H. the Dalai Lama is very happy about this, and has asked me to thank you.

Tenzin Chonyi

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