

# THE MIRROR

The International Newspaper of the Dzog-chen Community

Issue 19

## BEST WISHES FOR THE WATER BIRD YEAR

This issue of 'The Mirror' marks the start of a new Tibetan year, the Water Bird year. May it be auspicious!

At Losar it is traditional to visit and make offerings to one's teachers, and since it is obviously not possible for all the members of the Dzog-chen Community to greet our principal master individually at this time, 'The Mirror' would like in a few words to do so on their behalf, thanking him for his continuing generosity and patience in guiding the Community, and for sharing his presence and his wisdom so freely with us in so many different parts of the world in his travels in the last year.

Imagining ourselves making the traditional offering of a scarf of pure white silk to him, symbolising our pure intention, we wish him long life, good health and every success in all he undertakes! We also send our sincere thanks and greetings to all the other masters who have so kindly given teachings to our members in the past year.

"Time always moves ahead; all we have to do is look at the hands of a clock: they never go backwards." Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has often used these words at the end of retreats to remind us of the preciousness of each day of our lives, and the importance of making the most of every opportunity we have for developing as practitioners and for working together to preserve the teachings.

The beginning of a new year is always a time for taking stock of



This line drawing shows the design selected by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche that is printed on the luntar or prayer flags at Merigar. The wind sets the mantras and auspicious symbols on the flags in movement, activating their beneficial power in the environment until the flags themselves are consumed by the action of the elements.

what has been accomplished in the year that has just past, for looking forward to the year ahead, for renewing commitments and for making contact with friends and relatives wherever they may be. In this spirit we send best wishes to our readers, hoping that they will have found the newspaper useful and informative, and thanking all those who have given us their support, whether by writing articles for us, or in other ways. We hope to continue to reflect the development of the Dzog-chen Community in the coming year, and hope to continue

to receive articles, information and subscriptions from you to enable us to do so.

Here at Merigar, the period since Christmas has seen some weeks of extraordinary bright sunny weather, quite exceptional for a winter in Tuscany.

We are all hoping it lasts, but concerned that it might be a false spring that will give way to a cold spell that may damage the trees and plants that have perhaps begun to bud too soon. In this bright sunshine we are preparing new prayer flags to hang in the crisp, clear mountain air.

Wherever you are, we hope that you are well and happy. May your wishes be fulfilled, and your prayers be answered. Should you encounter problems, may you overcome them. As Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche said in his last talk before leaving Merigar: "We cannot expect not to have problems; we will always find ourselves facing some problem as long as we are in samsara. But a practitioner must dominate the problem, and not be dominated by it."

May our aspiration be equal to his inspiration.

## RETREAT REPORTS



Impressions from some of the recent retreats held around the world with Chogyal Namkhai Norbu. pages 4 & 5

## TEACHING RETREAT

with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Merigar 9 - 18 April 1993

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will give Dzogchen Teachings every morning and afternoon and the retreat programme will include practice of Yantra Yoga, Kumar Kumari and Dance of the Vajra. The timetable will be finalised at the beginning of the retreat.

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# Understanding the difference between sutra and tantra

By Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

It is very important to know the difference between sutra and tantra.

In the sutra teachings the term 'dharma' is frequently used. The fundamental meaning of dharma is our own real condition, as when we refer to that condition as the 'dharma-kaya'. The same is also true as far as the term 'tantra' is concerned, which also refers to our real condition. But there is a difference in the view of sutra and tantra regarding the nature of our real condition.

In the sutra teachings we speak mainly of *sunyata*, the emptiness or absence of inherent self-nature of all phenomena. When you are explaining the sutra teachings you must always explain *shunyata* and compassion. What is referred to by the term *sunyata* is the absolute truth, the absolute condition, but then there is also the relative truth and there are two different ways of experiencing the relative condition, depending on whether you have real knowledge and understanding or not. If, for example, you have the realisation of the bodhisattva level, you still of course have impure vision, but you are not conditioned by it, and you have the knowledge that everything is unreal, like a dream. In that case even if you still have normal vision, your vision is different from the ordinary person's, and we consider compassion to be part of the relative level, because if one knows that there are many sentient beings who have no real knowledge of dharma, *dharma-kaya* or absolute truth and one has such knowledge oneself, one will automatically feel compassion for those who do not have it.

For those who do not have real knowledge, even if it is ultimately true that there is no 'I' or 'we', and even if it is true that the dualistic vision they experience is an illusion, they are nevertheless conditioned by it. To be distracted and conditioned in this way means one is caught in *samsara*, and there is infinite suffering in *samsara*. This is why compassion is essential in the relative condition. The practitioner of sutra has that knowledge, that understanding, and on the relative level tries to develop compassion and cultivate *bodhicitta* as much as possible, while at the same time on the absolute level trying to get into the *dharma-kaya* state.

This is how you apply the sutra teachings. So in the sutra teachings it is considered that absolute truth, or *nirvana*, is the real condition; but what is this absolute truth? It is the knowledge of *sunyata*, total emptiness. But total emptiness does not mean that there is no relative condition; even if our real nature is emptiness, on the relative level everything manifests as the world we experience, and we are distracted by this and we have *samsara* and suffering. So when we speak of relative truth in the sutra teachings



(photo Andrew Bagriansky)

that is what is called *samsara*. And when we speak, for example, of the method of the sutras as being the path of renunciation, what is it that we are renouncing? We are renouncing the relative condition and trying to find ourselves in the absolute condition. This is what is meant by *samsara* and *nirvana*, *nirvana* being the experience of true knowledge of the real nature of phenomena which is emptiness, also called the *dharma-kaya* state. This is the point of view of the sutra teachings.

But in the tantric teachings there is more knowledge of the energy level, which is not in the sutras. We can say that this point is ignored in the sutras. Why is this? Because the sutra teachings are for those people who have no capacity of having that knowledge. If you have that knowledge, that capacity, then you apply tantra, this is the reason why there are the tantric teachings.

Many people who are more accustomed to doing practice in the sutra style, and when they speak of doing meditation, they always consider it to be sitting with crossed legs and closed eyes. In the sutra teachings there are gradual and non-gradual methods. The origins of the non-gradual method are to be found in the history of the all present day schools of Zen. Zen methods are nowadays very developed, and are no longer exactly as they were in ancient times, since many methods from different sources have been integrated with them; but even if they have developed over time, they are still based on the sutra teachings. This is why in Zen it is considered that the main point of practice is to get into the state of *shunyata*, or voidness, and to remain in it. That is what meditation is considered to be

in Zen. In any kind of sutra teaching if you say you are practising meditation, it involves sitting silently in a quiet place. Many people are attached to that form of practice, and some people have an aversion to tantric practices because they feel that they involve so many things to recite and construct mentally and use so many ritual instruments for doing rites and pujas, etc. Such people prefer to simply meditate in silence.

## Contemplation

It is true that meditating or contemplating is the main path to realization, and of course everybody appreciates that. Tantric practitioners also like meditating and applying contemplation, but we must understand what we really mean by meditation. Meditation doesn't mean always sitting somewhere with closed eyes.

That is just one way to do meditation. It means you are working with the experience of emptiness. If through this experience you develop knowledge of contemplation, your practice may really become true contemplation, but if it does not you just remain in that state of emptiness, or *Shunyata*.

The state of emptiness is an experience, and there are many kinds of such meditational experiences that are not contemplation itself. Some people say that between two thoughts there is an empty space, and that is the state of contemplation. They believe that contemplation just means making this empty space between thoughts larger. Some people write and think this way, and consider that that is the teaching of the Buddha. But that is not the teaching of the Buddha at all. Being in the state of emptiness means only

that one is having that particular experience. Thinking that everything is empty and being in that state is only an experience of emptiness, but it is still very far from being in the state of contemplation. Real contemplation means being in one's real condition. One's real condition includes not only emptiness but also what we call 'movement'. So if one has no capacity of integrating or being in that movement one is very far from one's real condition.

## Movement

Tantric teachings have more understanding of this, knowing that movement is part of our real nature. There are many aspects to this movement, at the level of the physical body, of the energy and also of the mind. If you visualise, for example, that this house is not an ordinary house but a mandala, a pure dimension of lights and forms, and you thus transform this house and dimension into a mandala, what are you doing? You are working with your mind, you are thinking. When you are thinking that is not a static contemplation, it involves movement, the movement of your mind; but if you are present in that movement, that is contemplation. You can be in a state of contemplation with movement. If you have an experience of emptiness, that is not yet contemplation, but if you are in the state of instant presence in that emptiness, at that moment you are in the state of contemplation. In that case, what is the difference between being in emptiness or in movement? There is no difference.

The same is also true for physical movement, which is why in Tantrism there are many methods such as *yantra* movements or sacred dances. Of course it depends on who is dancing; if you have a real knowledge of the tantric teachings, you know how to be in movement and at the same time in the state of contemplation. Then if you dance all day or sit all day without moving there is no difference. Perhaps someone who has the capacity of integrating with movement can become realised more quickly, which is why in the tantric teachings movement is used more. You see there is also the movement at the level of our energy, so in tantrism the method of transformation involves integrating everything into that principle. I am not saying that it is easy to integrate and enter into that knowledge; it takes a long time and it is not so easy at all. But it is very important that you know how tantric methods work and what contemplation means. If you do transformation practice visualising a mandala and are only working with your mind, thinking for hours and hours and developing transformation in that way without knowing what the final goal of this transformation is, which is to be in that clarity and at the same time in

the state of instant presence, if you miss this principle there is not much sense. It is the same as living in an empty state for days and days and having no knowledge of how to be in real instant presence in that state.

## Vajra

The symbol of tantra is the vajra, which has five points above and five points below and a sphere in the middle. That sphere represents a 'ticle', our potentiality, which means that our real condition is beyond limitations and beyond any kind of division into this aspect or that. But at the relative level there are manifestations of all kinds of aspects, and the two main aspects are impure and pure vision, which we normally call *samsara* and *nirvana*, in tantrism represented as the five aggregations and the five *Dhyana* buddhas, and in the sutra teachings referred to as relative and absolute truth. In the symbol of the vajra, both these aspects are linked to the central sphere, which reminds us that in the real sense both of them are our own nature, our own energy; energy is part of our real nature.

## Transformation

Based on this recognition of energy being part of our own nature, the tantric teachings work with the path of transformation. When we speak of transformation it means that we understand the true value of things. At the level of *samsara* or impure vision we have the five emotions, but in tantra we understand that their inherent nature is energy; that energy is our real nature. Only the ways it manifests are different. That which manifests as the five passions when we have impure vision, in pure vision manifests as the five wisdoms. In the central sphere, or 'ticle', of the vajra both of its seemingly opposite ends join, showing that pure and impure vision, wisdoms and passions, are both aspects of our own energy. At the level of the ticle there is no difference between the two manifestations: that is the knowledge of tantric teachings.

## Continuation

So why is this level of teaching and practice called 'tantra'? The real meaning of 'tantra' is 'continuation', something continuing without interruption, that is what our real nature is considered to be. But what is it that continues? And how? And why is that called 'tantra'? We can discover it by observing ourselves. For example, if we observe ourselves we know that we have thoughts. If we observe attentively where the thought is, where it arises from and where it disappears, you can search for a long time but you won't find anything concrete. What you find in the end is always emptiness. Why emptiness? Because emptiness is the basis of our condition.

*continued on page 3*



## Tsegyalgar and membership

As with all non-commercial organizations, the life of the Dzog-chen Community depends on donations and membership contributions. Donations, while greatly appreciated, tend to be sporadic and unpredictable. Over the past summer in meetings with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, we formulated many short and long range plans that will be of benefit to all those involved with the Dzog-chen teachings. Some of these include finding an additional piece of property where we may hold longer and more comfortable retreats, making a more permanent office and library for our archives and growing correspondence work, renting or buying a house where we may hold practices and practice retreats, and where out of town members and teachers may stay for periods of time, continuing our work on the land here to build seven cabins for personal retreats, etc. With this in mind, we, in accordance with the wishes and plans of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, have decided to initiate a formal membership plan for those interested in the continuation of the Dzog-chen Community, Tsegyalgar. Membership formalities are under way at the three main Gars: Merigar in Italy, Tashigar in Argentina, and Tsegyalgar in the United States.

Those who wish to become members can request either a preliminary or a full membership card. Those who have been involved with the Dzog-chen Community for at least three years and have attended at least three retreats would request "full" membership. Those who have not yet been involved for that period of time would request a

"preliminary" membership.

Both preliminary and full members can choose to become either "basic" members for \$300.00 per year, or "sustaining" members for \$600.00 per year depending on their financial ability. There will be financial benefits for both basic and sustaining members. For example



both will receive our newsletters free of cost, sustaining members will also receive a free subscription to *The Mirror*, there will be reductions of retreat costs at different percentages depending on whether you are a basic or sustaining member, there will be discounts on our various publications.

Most importantly, membership will indicate your commitment to the continuation and preservation of our lineage of teachings. As Rinpoche has stated, it will be a requirement for participation in certain teachings, such as the Santi Maha Sangha.

Therefore, we will issue membership cards in one of four colors:

Basic preliminary membership - light pink  
Sustaining preliminary

membership - dark pink

Basic full membership - light blue  
Sustaining full membership - dark blue.

All community members will become members of Tsegyalgar, however community members who participate in the large communities of New York and California, for example, would join through the Gakyil that they are involved with. Half of their membership fee would go to Tsegyalgar and the other half would remain local to fund the needs of that Gakyil's activities.

Membership is due by January 31st of each year. You must be paid in full before receiving a card, and must have paid for at least six months in order to receive any reductions in costs. If you absolutely cannot pay, but feel you are entitled to membership, please feel free to make special arrangements with the Gakyil to work out a payment plan or special work plan of payment.

Several people have asked: What should members from other Gars such as Merigar expect when attending retreat in Tsegyalgar? We have discussed this at several Gakyil meetings and we feel that we can only offer the same discounts which we offer to Tsegyalgar members. Therefore, regardless of what your membership entitles you to at the Gar where you joined, here you will be given benefits as comparable members of Tsegyalgar.

There are, no doubt, many details and unanswered questions which will arise and which we will need to address. But we thought it best to begin, knowing that we will continue to refine and adjust as we proceed.

## SPRING 1993 RETREAT at Tsegyalgar

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will be coming to  
Tsegyalgar to give Longde teachings  
from March 12 - 21.

The retreat will be held at the Stoneleigh Burnham School in Greenfield beginning at 3.00pm on March 12 and ending on the morning of March 21. We will be meeting in a carpeted lounge at a private school; the premises are available for our use to practice and to dance. Please do not contact the school directly for retreat information.

There will be a fee of \$325 for the retreat which will cover lunch and dinner. Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian meals will be served in the school cafeteria.

Limited space is available for children so please make reservations immediately.

Both audio and video taping will be done by a designated member of the community.

A portable mandala will be available for the dance all day and evening. Bring clothes for cold weather and wet weather, a cushion and a mat and, if you have them, a meditation belt and stick.

All lodging will be at the expense of those who attend the retreat. A list of motels can be supplied on request by the the Dzog-chen Community of Tsegyalgar.

For registration and further information contact:

**Dzog-chen Community**  
P.O. Box 277,  
Conway, MA 01341, USA.

## Retreat in Japan with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche August 20 - 30, 1993

The retreat will take place at the ancient temple  
of Kouyasan, the main seat  
of the Japanese mantrayana or "Shingon"

For information contact:

Tsugiko Kiyohashi, 4-11-21-30 Shimomoguro  
Meguro-ku, Tokyo, Japan  
Tel. 03 371 67248

## Understanding the difference

*continued from page 2*

So when you try to find your thoughts you find this base. Even if you find the base that doesn't mean that your thoughts disappear forever. After a few seconds you have another thought. You can observe it again but you won't find anything. You can do this research for many days but it will always be the same, you'll find only emptiness. At the same time you also have infinite thoughts arising and continuing; they are also part of our condition, which means that our condition is the alternation of thoughts and emptiness. Emptiness is the base, and thoughts are its manifestation. This manifestation occurs because there is the continuation of energy. Since this is so, how can we remain in our real nature? If you think a little of how thoughts arise, sometimes it seems that there is a connection between one thought and the next. But in the real sense they are not connected, there is always an empty space between two

thoughts. If you are doing practice like 'shine' (the meditation practice used to develop a state of calm) sometimes you can discover that this empty space is there for longer, and you can stay for some seconds without any thought. You have a longer experience of emptiness, and then you notice that a thought arises again. Without practice, just observing in the ordinary way we habitually think, it is sometimes not so easy to discover this empty space; but in the real sense thoughts and empty space are always alternating in continuation whether we are aware that this is so or not. So that continuation is our real nature, and that is what is meant by tantra: tantra means our real condition. When you say the word tantra or speak about it you already have a recognition of your own energy.

The commitment of tantrism, particularly of the higher tantra, is to train oneself to remaining in pure vision. If you transform into a deity, in wrathful or a peaceful or a joyful



form - depending on your root emotion - transforming your impure vision in this way into pure vision, you are applying that method. When you use this method according to the tantric point of view you are always working with pure vision. If for example you are working with

your anger, and to transform that passion you visualise yourself as transformed into a wrathful manifestation, when you make that transformation you are in pure vision, and you are not anymore bound up in impure vision. When you are angry with someone in the ordinary dualistic state of mind, you are caught up in thinking that that person is very bad and that you don't like him or her; you are angry and you are charging up and developing that emotion. This is impure vision. But the anger that you feel is your own energy, so it is not necessary that you stop it; rather you can transform your feeling, so that instead of being angry with someone you transform this anger into a wrathful manifestation. You don't manifest as a wrathful form to fight with that person, you are no longer caught up in that impure vision, you are in pure vision, so that even if you were to continue for hours and hours in your feeling of anger you would have no problems.

This is an example of how to use your pure vision; training in pure vision is the samaya of the tantric teachings. That is good also for Dzog-chen practitioners. For example if you see your vajra brothers and sisters as enlightened beings, as if they were your teacher, you will never have problems with them, while if you always think that it's him or her that's creating difficulties, you will always have problems. So if you train a little in pure vision according to the tantric system, that has a great function, this is why we also need this knowledge, this understanding.

Of course the methods of the various levels of the path are different. In tantrism we use transformation methods, whereas in Dzog-chen the method used is that of self-liberation. But if you understand how tantric methods work, when you learn the method of self-liberation as it is practised in Dzogchen you can understand better what the difference is between them.



## Christmas retreat at Tashigar, Argentina



by Jacek Machowski

On the drive from the airport to Tashigar, we got a glimpse of the varied conditions in Argentina: slums and beautiful residences, Fords and Fiats from the 70s alongside new Renaults, Porches and Cadillacs. After World War 2 this country was one of the richest in the world, but since 1950 it has had a series of military governments which have destroyed the economy. Today, however, Argentina is still one of the richest countries in South America, and Buenos Aires one of the most expensive cities in the world.

The Argentinian people are a beautiful mixture of European immigrants and South American Indians. We met some of them at a small Christmas party at the house where Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche stayed in Buenos Aires. The next day he flew across the vast, green Pampas to Cordoba.

Tashigar is situated in the stone hills near a small village called Tanti in a beautiful valley with many varieties of trees and bushes and singing and screeching birds. In the

evening there are so many fireflies that some trees look like Christmas trees with pulsating lights. The entire area is one great green space filled with birds, frogs, and crickets singing their songs which flow in the space of the five elements.

There are not a lot of mosquitoes here, but we have been warned to be careful of rattlesnakes and scorpions. The second day we were here, we found two tarantula spiders nesting under a canvas tarp.

When we walked up the hill behind the Gar we could see across the valley to other not too high mountains. In one direction we could see the small village of Cordos Paz and in the other direction the rock covered hills.

The day before the retreat, people joked that the Gar's name was "Taxigar" because so many people took taxis from the small village of Tanti, 8 kilometres away, to Tashigar. Over 100 people came to the retreat. They mostly slept in tents or in a new age ashram close to the Gar.

The first day, Rinpoche gave teaching on the mandala under many huge pine trees close to the main

house. The next day the new thatched roof pavilion was ready and Rinpoche gave the rest of the teachings there.

The first teaching was an explanation of Dzogchen, how to recognize a qualified teacher and what the student's attitude should be. Rinpoche talked about Buddhism in the West which he said is becoming "Dharma business". He also criticized mixing dharma with administration and social position.

In the evening of the second day we saw a video of H. H. the Dalai Lama's visit to Argentina. The film maker had incorporated some Dzogchen symbols in parts of the film.

In general the retreat was dedicated to Santi Maha Sangha. Rinpoche taught about the sutra and tantra point of view, about bodhicitta, emptiness and the tantric transformation. He also gave us some methods to separate mind and nature of mind called rushen, how to find ourselves in the calm state, semzin, and how to develop clarity by kumbaka exercises.

On New Year's eve, Rinpoche was with us at a wonderful party. At 11 o'clock, some people from Buenos Aires wished everyone happy new year because it was 12 o'clock in Buenos Aires (there is an hours time difference). It was a joke but I noticed some confusion among those from other countries. After this people sang many songs from all over the world. After midnight, we went to dance under the thatched roof pavilion.

On New Year's day, Rinpoche explained how to take initiation in the correct way and he gave us the initiations of Vajrasattva, Guru Dragpo and Simhamuka.

January 2nd was Guru Rinpoche day with teaching on the Ganapuja. On the 3rd Rinpoche gave us teachings and lung on the practices we use in Dzogchen. Also, for the first time in public, he gave the lung

10-12 Teachings  
15-16 Dance  
16.30-18 Teachings  
18.15-19 Practice with Rinpoche - every day he did a different practice

Each day Rinpoche stayed after the teachings for a long time and talked individually to those with questions and talked and joked informally with us.

The last day was the Ganapuja and the election of the new gakyils for Tashigar, Cordoba and Buenos Aires. Later Rinpoche told us that Tashigar is one of the three Gars of the Dzogchen Community and it is very important for it to function well and for everyone to collaborate. Rinpoche suggested that the Tashigar gakyil be composed of people who live in Buenos Aires and other places as well as those who live nearby in Cordoba. Many people said they didn't want to be on the Gakyil because they had been active in the past and will continue to be and they wanted to give a place to others on the Gakyil.

At the end we all made a circle like a ring with Rinpoche on the throne like a precious stone and we sang many songs, including one in Tibetan which Rinpoche taught us.

As you spend cold winter days in Italy, you may all think that we are here enjoying the

summer sun. Not so, as often happens when Rinpoche comes to a place, it rains. According to Fabio, Rinpoche said this is a message that the Nagas are happy, but perhaps they could show us they are happy with some sunshine at times.

### Working for peace

During Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's visit to Cordoba in Argentina this January, he was invited by Dr. Galindez, the President of FUNSFA (The Saint Francis of Assisi Foundation), to plant two Sophora japonica trees as a symbol of peace.

In memory of his visit, Rinpoche wrote the following in the "Guest Book": "Although the peace of the world is of common interest to all sentient beings, most beings are conditioned by attachment and anger and for this reason peace does not manifest in a practical way. However, there is an increasing number of people who have knowledge of the benefits of peace and the desire to have peace and I hope that the development of knowledge in many different places will be a reason for a concrete peace. I, myself, am also doing my best in this field."

For all of you here who have taken this responsibility, I would like to say thank you."

on Yantra Yoga In the evening there was a gakyil meeting with Rinpoche.

Every morning Fabio taught Yantra Yoga and Prima Mai taught the Om A Hum dance on the mandala. The program was:

8-9 Yantra Yoga

## A Retreat in Paradise

by Jim Raschick

For me the Hawaii retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was like a paradise; a beautiful island, a warm ocean, perfect weather and great food. We were on the island of Hawaii, the only island with an active volcano. The members of the Hawaiian Community live on different islands but the retreat was held at Barabara DeFranco's residence on a piece of land overlooking Kaealakekua Bay, the place where Capt. Cook first landed when he discovered the islands.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, when the old kingdom was still intact, there were 40,000 people living in the area. Now there are only a few people of Hawaiian blood remaining. The land was at an altitude of about 500 feet, below the modern town of Captain Cook and above the ancient walled "City of Refuge", a place where generations of Hawaiian shamans, the "Kahunas", have lived and practised. The entire island is the top of a great



Practising Chöd in the cave

(photo Fabio Andrico)

easy-sloping shield volcano rising to over 13,000 feet above sea level. Measured from its base on the Pacific Plate, it is the tallest mountain in the world.

The morning teachings were given under the roof of what used to be a green house on a deck that had just

been built. It was designed for the dance mandala. Big, large-leafed banana plants filtered the sun when we danced there in the late afternoon.

One afternoon we did a Chöd practice. It was close by the mandala but underground, down inside

the black stone confines of an unusually large "lava tube"; a smooth-walled tunnel formed by hot flowing lava. The tube was, at one time, very long, but portions have since caved in. We entered through an opening that was once a thin roof section. About 30 feet away was another area of the tube that was "Kapu" or forbidden because it is a burial place containing human bones from the old kingdom.

The land we were on had been graded flat about a decade ago. It takes the largest bulldozers for this kind of work because the black rock is heavy and the terrain is so rough. There is no soil at all. I was told the bulldozer operator was careful to avoid the pit-like openings to the lava tube but at one point the complete 20 ton machine broke through and disappeared into an unseen continuation of the subterranean lava tube not far from the burial cavern. The machine was eventually lifted out of the hole with a moveable crane. A statue of Padmasambhava

now sits on the location and nearby, on one side, is a big white stupa.

The afternoon talks were held on the other side of Guru Rinpoche's statue in a small pavilion, shaded on two sides by woven banana leaves. About thirty of us sat on the grass in a tight group around Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and listened to teachings on Santi Maha Sangha. Rinpoche's low seat faced the open side of the pavilion and looked out over what seemed like half of the Pacific Ocean. I saw the view as an incredible perception of the element of space. A seasonal shift in the trade winds left the air completely free of "Vog", the mix of sulfurous volcano smoke and fog that often lies on the horizon of this part of the island. It was just ocean, sky, and clouds.

Rinpoche stayed in a cottage a short walk from the dance mandala, and a few people camped on the land in tents. Margaret Bradford and her son stayed in a one time rain

continued on page 5



## Mount Fuji hosts November teachings

by Tsugiko Kiyohashi and Tetsu Nagasawa

We are very happy to inform you of the three-day retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Japan. More than 50 people and many guests gathered at a hotel at Oshino-Hakkai at the foot of Mt. Fuji to receive his teaching from the 27th to 29th November, 1992.

Oshino-Hakkai, which may be translated as the "Eight Oceans or Springs of the Secret Field", is famous for its pure water and a goddess who resides there. The rain and snow which fall on Mt. Fuji melt and penetrate into the depths of the earth and then well up after 80 years. The goddess of Mt. Fuji, "Konohana-sakuya-hime" or the "Queen of the blossoming tree flowers" is one of the most ancient and important figures in Japan. She appeared to the people of the area during a severe drought and eruption and promised that she would save and protect them with abundant water as long as they didn't forget to pay respect to her. So people of the area have continued her worship from the distant past. They are also devout believers of the Tendai sect of Japanese Buddhism whose lineage comes from Mt. Wutaishan in China.

Many practitioners came and practised there. We felt the retreat was blessed by "Konohana-sakuya-hime" and other local guardians. We are very grateful to the dharmapalas, especially to Ekajati for helping us find the place.

During the retreat, Rinpoche gave basic teachings of Dzog-chen and also kindly granted us the *dbang-bskur* of shiro.

Those who had received his teachings were more than happy to meet their great master after three

years, while newcomers were deeply impressed by the incomparable kindness and the deep knowledge of Rinpoche which derives from his own realization. The yantra yoga teacher, Mr. Fabio Andrico, taught us the basic movements each morning. People were impressed by his skill and deep knowledge of yantra.

We were more than happy that Rinpoche decided to return to Japan to give a 10 day retreat on his way back from Tibet next August.

We ask all the Gakyils of the Dzog-chen Communities to inform their members of the retreat, which will start from the 20th of August this year, 1993. We are planning to have the retreat in an ancient temple in Kouyasan, where Kouboudasishi Kukai used to practise and which is the main seat of the Japanese mantrayana or "Shingon". We feel

this will be a very auspicious event, because this will be the first time that the inner tantra will be taught at Kouyasan. We will be very happy to receive our Vajra brothers and sisters.

Since the retreat we have been working to transcribe the tapes of the last 3 day retreat. We hope to finish processing this transcript and also that of the 5 day retreat of 1989 by the time Rinpoche comes back to Japan next summer. We are sure that the Japanese translation of "Dzogchen - the self-perfected state" will be published in time for his visit. We greatly hope that Rinpoche will decide to stay here at least one month every year to give teachings and also to relax.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to Rinpoche and Fabio. And we pray for their good health during the hard trip.

### DANCE OF THE VAJRA COURSES

The courses will be guided by Prima Mai a student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who has already taught the Dance of the Vajra in many places around the world.

#### ARGENTINA - Caracas

Starting February 25th 1993

Contact Patricia Feldman: 54-51-226845

#### USA - New York

March 26th - 4th April 1993. Dates to be confirmed

Contact George Quasha, Station Hill Press, Barry Town, New York 12507 NY.

April 9th - 18th 1993. Dates to be confirmed

Contact Tsultrim Allione, tel: 914-268-3050, fax: 914-268-4280  
Tara Foundation, 361 Old Mill Road, Valley Cottage, New York 10989 NY.

#### USA - New Mexico

April 22nd - May 5th 1993

Contact Stephanie Garcia, tel: 505-473-0649.

## Retreat and Gar in Australia



by Alexander Hood

The Australian Dzog-chen Community had been waiting for Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's return to Australia. When he did so in December 1992, the Community had grown to include many who had not yet been able to meet the master and receive teachings.

We were lucky enough to receive Rinpoche in Sydney for his birth day on the 8th of December. We practised together with him; for some of us the first time even though we had been practising within the Community with his approval.

By December 11, all was prepared for the vital Guru connection at Tiona Park, five hours north of Sydney by road. This Christian-owned Centre was an excellent location, one used also by Sogyal Rinpoche's Rigpa Association. Situated on a long strip of land between a lagoon and a beach, it offered a paradisaical environment for retreat.

As the retreat progressed, there was much talk of the need for a Gar in Australia. It was said that the Australian Community had come of age and the time was right for the establishment of an independent place for retreat.

In the ten days of the retreat there was much to receive. In between sessions of teaching there was time for Vajra Dance practice, Namkha making and numerous meetings. The retreat was very fruitful for everyone. We also had time to relax at the lagoon and on the beach where Rinpoche seemed in his element. There were many powerful times with a vast natural spectacle across the lagoon in the afternoons.

Rinpoche stressed the importance of the Santi Maha Sangha training and the need for land. Many of us yearned for Rinpoche to stay longer and knew that this would be possible if the Community had land. We agreed that a place by the coast would be the best and we hope that wheels are turning to bring this about.

A good amount has been pledged to realize this much-needed place. We all gained in many ways from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's teachings, while the energy was set in motion for the coming together of a Gar in Australia.

May Rinpoche soon come here again to inspect the site of the new Gar.

### Australian Gakyil Members

#### Victoria

Red: Sandra Johnson  
Yellow: Michael Leyden  
Blue: Jan Taylor

#### A.C.T.

Red: Jean Mackintosh  
Yellow: Lydia Hopkins  
Blue: Peter Oldmeadow

#### New South Wales

Red: S. Fielding and A. Hood  
Yellow: H. Jelinek and C. Lennon  
Blue: C. Rees and L. Mills

#### North Coast and Queensland

Red: Jill Streit-Warburton  
Yellow: Amare Pearl  
Blue: Kyogen Hartley

### A Retreat in Paradise

continued from page 4

water catch tank that had been converted into a roomy cottage with a tall ceiling. A door had been cut into the wood stave perimeter. Others were the guest of Miles and Greg, friends of Barbara's. Their place was "The Big House in the Jungle With No Walls" where about ten of us slept, spread out on the floor of a living room big enough for three mandalas. The house was three stories high with all levels off the ground, up in the trees. You could reach out and grab fresh limes to squirt on your fish dinner. The house had literally no walls, (except for the toilet), just railings and big leafy green jungle all around ... a somewhat primordial experience.

One morning Rinpoche and others arose early and met at Napaopo beach at sunrise with the hopes of swimming with the friendly wild dolphins that come in near shore every so often. We had arranged for fins, masks and snorkels. The dolphins did not show up but the

snorkeling near the rocky shore with the bright colored reef fish was nice. They come very close if you feed them wads of bread or frozen peas, meat is not good because it may draw sharks. Energetic waves created by the recent hurricane had lifted the white sand off the beach and transported it some distance out into the shallow bay. A swimmer can float weightlessly, with mask and snorkel, 30 feet above the bottom in the transparent clear water. It's a great, quiet, featureless blue-white desert that extends out indefinitely into a fuzzy blue oblivion in every direction. Something like a billion gallon swimming pool with no walls in sight. The contemplation was water and space.

At the end of the retreat some of us got into a van and made a four hour road trip to the other side of the island to see the active volcano flow. We got to the end of the road (it was buried in fresh lava) at dusk just as it began to rain. After an hour's hike over a rough, trailless, black moon-

scape with weak flash lights, we arrived at our destination. It was a sacred place. We approached slowly until it was too hot to go any further. It was like a battle of the elements every time a wave would wash over the thick pudding-like lava that oozed out of the cracks near the waters edge. The smell of sulfur was in the wind. The rain let up slightly and we did a practice. Contemplation arose out of fire and earth. There was a powerful presence of the Hawaiian guardian "Pele". She has blond hair and her sister is a red-head. They danced with us.

After a while a tourist came and took a flash picture ... immediately we had to leave quickly because a wind shift brought strong clouds of sulfur gas. We eventually got to sleep in our beds many hours later.

The retreat went very well. Prima Mai taught dancing, Fabio led a Yantra Yoga class and Rinpoche had a few days to himself at the end. He went sailing off the north end of the island on one of those days.

### Vajra Dance retreat in Santa Fe

The Santa Fe Community in New Mexico, USA will be having a Vajra Dance Retreat with Prima Mai from April 22 until May 5, 1993. For more information contact Stephanie Garcia (505) 473 0649 or Naomi Zeitz (505) 983 9345.

The new Santa Fe Gakyil is composed of:

Blue Jim Casilio, Lidian Watson, Dhayana Eagleton  
Red Judy Herzl, Stephanie Garcia, Naomi Zeitz  
Yellow Donna Boner (only 1 person)

His Holiness the Dalai Lama will be giving five days of teachings in Tucson, Arizona from September 11 - 16, 1993. Further information from: Arizona Teachings, Inc., 4725 E. Sunrise Drive, Suite 137, Tucson, Arizona 85718, USA. Tel. (602) 624 4517.



## Dzog-chen in Latvia

After Namkhai Norbu's visit here in May/June of last year, the Dzog-chen Community in Latvia started to get organized. We have rented an office which is now the "Contact" address in Latvia:

Dzog-chen Community of Latvia, Tadaiku Str. 8/1, No. 7, Riga, LV-1004, Latvia, telephone 007-0132623259, fax 4698828040 (Victor Gabov).

We have elected a new Gakyil which is composed of:

Blue: Pustorit Trind, Plastun Gend.

Yellow: Sinicina Natasha, Gavriljonok Trind.

Red: Zaharov Sergey, Kozlenkov Alex.

We are interested in establishing contact with other Dzog-chen Communities and would like to receive information and newsletters as well as Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's books, colour pictures of the Guardians and transcripts on different practices.

Now a few words about our activities: we continue with our meetings and group practices. We are translating some Dzog-chen practices which we received from Rinpoche into Russian. Our Community has started a library containing audio and videotapes of Rinpoche's teachings. We want to thank everybody for their letters to us.

We are writing this letter just before a Ganapuja on Guru Padmasambhava day. We feel a sense of unity with all the Community and would like to extend an invitation to practitioners to visit our Community here in Latvia.

## A Message from Austria

by Isabella Ernst

Since we are only a few people, the Austrian Gakyil consists of only three members: Stephan Peddi for the Blue, Peter Sochor for the Red and myself for the Yellow. I am also responsible for correspondence and my address is the contact address for the Austrian Dzog-chen Community now: Isabella Ernst, Brunnengasse 34/12, 1160 Wien, Austria, telephone 408-30-16.

Oliver Leick runs Edition Tseparang and together with his wife Gabriele has established a "bibliothek". Stephan and Peter are responsible for publishing the Austrian newsletter "A - Letter", which is produced four times a year.

Here in Vienna we meet once a week in a beautiful Tibetan shrine room to practice together. So finally our situation has relaxed a bit.

## First Half Year

by Mateusz Wisniewski

More than six months has passed from the time of the first visit of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to Poland. This visit was very important for us and a lot of people had been waiting for it for a long time. Many of Rinpoche's teachings had already been published in Polish by Jacek Sieradzian and people had had the opportunity to read the transcripts of the teachings and translations of some of Rinpoche's books.

About three hundred people participated in the May 1992 retreat in Lodz. During these three precious days, Rinpoche transmitted all the teachings we needed to start our practice. In six lectures, he gave explanations of many essential and important aspects of the teachings. We also received many transmissions of different practices. During the retreat a meeting was held with all those interested in participating in the Dzog-chen Community and the Community people who were travelling with Rinpoche answered our questions.

During the holidays we organized two retreats in which about thirty people participated. The first one week retreat took place in Przesieka. Each day we did four one hour practice sessions. During the second session one person would read

Rinpoche's explanations of practices such as rushan and shine. We learnt many ritual practices and between sessions people had free time to devote to either individual practice or a walk in the country. Everyone had to participate in preparing the meals under the guidance of the wife of one of the practitioners (the meals were perfect). This retreat was a great experience for all of us because the people taking part had a strong interest in practice.

During the retreat Giovanni Arca from the Merigar Community visited us. We talked about the Dzog-chen Community in Poland and Giovanni was a great help for us because he explained in a very professional and humorous way the history and the way of functioning of the Community.

About six weeks later we had a seven day retreat with Fabio Andrico which was devoted mainly to the practice of Yantra Yoga. Fabio taught in a very nice and humorous way. During the retreat we had a meeting devoted to organizing the Dzog-chen Community in Poland and to improve communication we decided to publish a newsletter for practitioners in Poland.

I don't know very well how practice is going in other places in Poland but I have heard that in many

towns there are small groups of practitioners that meet together. There are also bigger groups like in Krakow, where people meet regularly, in Katowice and in Stargard Szczecinski. In Lodz we meet practically each special day to practice together. There are about 14 people in Lodz who are interested in Dzog-chen practice and Yantra but not all of them have time to come regularly to the meetings or practice sessions because of commitments to family, work, etc. We know the main principle of the teaching is to be aware although it is not so easy to be really aware and present.

This Sunday there was a fourth meeting devoted to Yantra Yoga practice. We decided to meet regularly each Sunday at twelve and practice Yantra together and then after some break do practice together.

Recently we printed and sent our newsletter, entitled "A", to Dzog-chen practitioners in Poland. We have received a letter from Rinpoche with his answer to our letter about forming a Gakyil in Poland so we are going to choose the Gakyil members soon. We will do a short two day retreat in Lodz, February 21 - 22, practice together and choose the candidates.

## Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga for children

Maria Margherita Maglietti (8) asked Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche some questions about Yantra Yoga for children.

Every week-end at Merigar we practise Kumar Kumari, Yantra Yoga for children, with Cristiana De Falco, as we did last summer.

Kumar Kumari is made up of:

1) The nine purification breathings (*rlung ro gsal ba*); 2) Five *tshigs sbyong*; 3) Five *rlung gsang*; 4) One *rtsa 'dul*; 5) Three Yantras (*'phrul 'khor*): the cobra, the bow, the plough.

Kumar Kumari is made up of swift movements, some of which are also really good fun. When you breathe in, with some movements you pronounce OM, in others HAM and in some others HA. We practise Kumar Kumari for half an hour, and each lesson we learn a new exercise.

I asked Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche a few questions to find out some things I didn't know about Kumar Kumari.

**Maria Margherita:** Did you invent Kumar Kumari?

**Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche:** I didn't invent it, it has always existed. It is linked to the Yantra we practise in general. What I did was just to adjust it to children, because their condition is not the same as that of adults who can hold their breath and do longer breathings, things which children cannot do. So what I invented is how to get the same results doing some movements.

**MM:** What is the purpose of Kumar Kumari?

**Rinpoche:** It is for children to grow up and form their bodies in a better way, because children grow up every day, and if their bodies and above all their energies are co-ordinated, they grow up perfectly and are protected from illnesses and disturbances.

**MM:** What does Kumar Kumari mean?

**Rinpoche:** Kumar means boy, and Kumari means girl - children, male and female: Yantra for children.

**MM:** How often is it best to do it?

**Rinpoche:** It is best to do it every day, if possible - especially at night, before going to bed, or a little earlier, when you feel very tired, because of study, work or confusion. In this way you relax, feel better, sleep better and stay healthy. If you can't do it every day, it's quite good to do it at least every two or three days.

**MM:** Thank you, Rinpoche.



(photo Alex Siedlecki)

Cristiana De Falco interviewed the children after a session.

**Question:** How do you feel after a session of 'Kumar Kumari'?

**Mandarava (6):** Well.

**Jessie (6):** Like a butterfly.

**Dewa (7):** I feel like a rainbow.

**Viola (13):** I feel relaxed.

**Jessie:** A butterfly is relaxed.

**Dewa:** And a rainbow is relaxed, too.

**Maria Margherita (9):** Just after the session I feel a little tired and very relaxed.

**Lilli (7):** I feel stronger, I feel cheerful.

**Camilla (7):** I feel well because through the exercises I warm up.

**Namsel (6):** One feels good because one does Yantra Yoga, this is why.

**Question:** What's the purpose of 'Kumar Kumari' in your opinion?

**M. Margherita:** I think it is to make the body grow up well and purified, free of illness.

**Mandarava:** It is to grow up well, to purify and be calm.

**Lilli:** It is to breathe in a better way.

**Dewa:** It is to relax and not to harm oneself, to let go what you have in your mind...

**Camilla:** I think it is to warm up.  
**Namsel:** It is to become a 'yogi', this is it!

**Jessie:** It is to relax.

**Question:** What does it mean 'to relax'?

**M. Margherita:** Being calm and not getting nervous.

**Dewa:** Sleeping.

**Mandarava:** Being calm, not nervous and not too serious.

**Jessie:** Remaining happy and not fighting.

**Viola:** Not being uptight or nervous and being calm.

**Lilli:** To be relaxed, tranquil.

**Camilla:** Laying down and feeling well.

**Namsel:** It means feeling well.

**Question:** What do you do in your daily life when you realize that you are getting nervous?

**M. Margherita:** When I'm home I sometimes practise 'Kumar Kumari', then I lay down and rest and maybe I write something in my diary.

**Mandarava:** I go to Mum and tell her that I feel nervous and she helps me to calm down and does some 'Kumar Kumari' with me.

**Jessie:** I sit down on a sofa, watch some TV and breathe deeply.

**Viola:** If the weather is good I go outside and run fast, or I drink a glass of water, or I take my journal and read it.

**Lilli:** I listen to a beautiful song.



## Christmas retreat at Merigar



by Elio Guarisco

During the Christmas retreat an unusually freezing cold wind blew violently through the valley and around the Merigar hill, maybe to remind us, unfortunate beings, about our condition of suffering. Despite this, the retreat was governed by peaceful deities bestowing harmony, so that everything went on without any manifestation of negative energies.

Kunsang Dorje, a Nyingmapa Lama who lives in Bern, Switzerland, gave teachings from the 'Vase of Jewels', the text that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche wrote as the basic text for the members of the Dzog-chen Community to study and practise.

The 'Vase of Jewels' (whose synthesis, 'The Vase that Fulfills all Wishes' has just been translated into Italian by Adriano Clemente) has the unique mark of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's knowledge and realization and the merit of collecting in one teaching-text many of the essential points of the practice of Dzog-chen that are found here and there in the Kama, Terma and Tantra traditions. These points about practice are explained clearly and concisely without the complex disquisitions that make many philosophical treatises on Buddhism a little heavy to read.

Lama Kunsang Dorje taught the three principles that must accompany the beginning, the central and the concluding phases of every practice we do: 1) Refuge

and Bodhicitta; 2) consideration that everything is unreal (non-real); 3) dedication. He then went on to explain seven instructions for mind-training, such as reflecting on the impermanence of things (from 'The Stairway to Liberation', by Jigmed Lingpa).

Although these instructions are very simple, they are an indispensable foundation for us to go on well with our practice, they are like bamboo sticks that help the young olive trees to grow up well.

The first six instructions aim at awakening in ourselves the awareness of the samsaric condition in which we live and of the fact that it is best to apply the instruction of our Master as soon as possible, before our life-span gets exhausted in distraction.

The seventh instruction consists of training in the state beyond discursive thought and concepts through blissful feeling, clarity and the ultimate nature of things. Lama Kunsang Dorje then taught the meaning and the way of applying the practice of 'Korde Rushen', or 'separation of samsara and nirvana'. In this separation samsara represents the mind that creates thoughts and conditions us, whereas nirvana, or perfect peace, represents the state of rigpa. Separating these two states in relation to external circumstances, body, voice and mind ('external rushen'), has the function of liberating us from all fixed habits determined by unconscious traces and from the attachment to our 'three

existences' (i.e. body, voice and mind).

The 'internal rushen' instead consists of purifying the tendencies that lead us to the illusion of the six states of existence. One visualizes these tendencies as letters situated at different points of one's body and then eliminates them with light emanating from the three syllables - Om A Hum - that represent the real state of the 'three bodies' of enlightenment, present in the state of rigpa.

During some teaching sessions, Lama Kunsang explained the nature and classification of the negative actions that are obstacles on the way to liberation. He also explained the consideration for ourselves and others which is based on recognizing the causality that rules our experiences, as well as the correct relationship with the Master and other practitioners.

During the last days of the retreat Lama Kunsang taught the Chod, the nature of the 'four demons' and how to cut them off. He illustrated how to practise the Chod in an extensive, medium and very short form. Also Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche thinks - as he wrote in the text - that in these degenerated times it is particularly important to practise it being mindful of the meaning and without too many words.

Lama Kunsang showed a very deep knowledge and he only wandered from Rinpoche's text to explain patiently and precisely the details that are found in the text 'The Stairway to Liberation'.

The retreat was attended by some eighty people and ended with an explanation on Ganapuja and a Ganapuja. At the end he encouraged and reminded us that preserving the Teachings is the task of all of us, not only of the Master.

Collaboration among disciples can also consist only of humble and organizational work, which is as worthy as real contemplation practice, helps to preserve the Teachings for the future generations, keeps the commitment to the Master pure, purifies the unconscious traces that condition us and contributes to the development of our knowledge.

## MERIGAR CALENDAR

WATER BIRD YEAR 2120 SPRING 1993

The Dance of the Vajra is practised almost every afternoon

A continuous course of Yantra Yoga is held every

Monday and Thursday evening at 18.00

Chod Practice every Saturday at 21.00

Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga for children Saturday and Sunday 17.00

Times of practices may be changed according to circumstances

Mon. 22nd Feb.	LOSAR	NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS
	06.00	Mandharava Long-life practice
	11.00	Ganapuja with authentication of prayer-flags and Namkha
Thu. 25th Feb.	19.00	Mandharava Long-life practice
Mon. 1st March	19.00	Practice of Ekajati
Wed. 3rd March	18.30	Ganapuja
Sab. 6th March	18.30	Mandharava Long-life practice
Sun. 7th March	10.00	Mandharava Long-life practice
Mon. 8th March	03.30	Guruyoga with White A
	19.00	Ganapuja of Mandarava
<b>Meeting and practice for Kumar Kumari for adults who want to learn Yantra Yoga for children: 13th-14th March</b>		
Sat. 13th March		Karma Yoga
	18.30	Practice of Tara
Sun. 14th March	10.00	Practice of Tara
	18.30	Naggon
Wed. 17th March	18.30	Ganapuja
Sat. 20th March	10.00	Dance of the Vajra
	15.00	Dance of the Vajra
Sun. 21st March	10.00	Dance of the Vajra
	15.00	Dance of the Vajra
Mon. 22nd March	19.00	Practice of Naggon
Tue. 23rd March	18.30	Practice of Xitro
Sat. 27th March		Karma Yoga
	18.30	Practice of Vajrapani
Sun. 28th March	10.00	Practice of Vajrapani
		Karma Yoga
Fri. 2nd April	18.30	Ganapuja
Sun. 4th April	10.00	Guruyoga with White A
	18.30	Amitayus Long-life practice
Mon. 5th April	19.00	Amitayus Long-life practice
Tues. 6th April	18.30	Amitayus Long-life practice
Fri. 9th April	15.00	Retreat begins
<b>RETREAT OF TEACHINGS</b>		
<b>NAMKHA NORBU RINPOCHE</b>		
Sun. 18th April		Retreat ends

## COABIT Update

The COABIT building cooperative based at Merigar would like to inform those people who would like to join the cooperative or those who should make deposits in the account, that the only existing bank account is no. 4554/79 at the Arcidosso branch of the Monte dei Paschi di Siena.

During 1993, the COABIT cooperative will sign an agreement for discount buying with suppliers of materials and equipment for the house. Those people who are interested should send their names and a description of the materials that they wish to buy including the total presumed cost to COABIT's secretary, Pia Bramezza.

## CORRECTION

In the last issue of The Mirror, we apologize for a printing mistake on page 7 in the article "Community membership at Merigar". In the sentence which read, "For 1993, the fee for ordinary membership is at least 360.000 Italian lire, while those wanting to be sustaining members should pay at least 600.000 lire" should have read "sustaining members should pay at least 750.000 Italian lira". Sorry about that!

## 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.

## Publications on Teachings

The expansion of the Dzog-chen Community with the creation and growth of the Gakyils in many parts of the world has considerably increased the requests for publications by Shang-Shung Edizioni, both for translation work and for the libraries of the various centres of the Community.

In order to avoid two or three orders of the same publications and not to burden costs excessively, from now on orders for free publications will only be sent to developing countries or to countries where economic conditions do not permit buying goods from economically advanced countries. These orders should be stamped or signed by the director or a responsible member of the local Gakyil.

In this way, besides being a saving, we believe that it will bring about a decentralization, stimulating all the Gakyils to become responsible for the management of their libraries of publications of the teachings. It will also guarantee the carrying out of all the related services such as photocopying, translation, borrowing, etc., which concern the practitioners of that area. The catalogue of publications on the teaching and practices will be sent to every Gakyil.



# PRACTICES FOR SPE

## LOSAR - TIBETAN NEW YEAR WATER BIRD YEAR 2120

1st month, 1st day Mon. 22nd Feb. 1993  
You can practice the Riwo Sangchod if you know how to do it. Otherwise you can do any Long-life practice.

1st month, 4th day Thur. 25th Feb. 1993  
This is a special day for doing the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandharava. It is also a very special day for doing the practice of Ekajati. Therefore try to do the Long-life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra" in the morning and the long Tun in the evening. If you don't have this possibility, you can try to do the Long-life practice included in the medium or long Tun, with the rite of Ekajati and recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as much as possible.

1st month, 8th day Mon. 1st. March 1993  
This is an important day for doing the practice of Ekajati, so try to do the Long Tun either collectively or personally. If you don't have that possibility then try to do the Medium Tun and in either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

1st month, 10th day Wed. 3rd March 1993  
This is the day of Padmasambhava so you can do a Ganapuja with an intensive practice of the Long-life mantra connected with the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava. Usually it is best to do this together with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If it is not possible, you can do a medium or short Tun, reciting the Long-life mantra as much as possible.

1st month, 15th day Mon. 8th March 1993  
**FULL MOON.** The first full moon of the Tibetan New Year is the very important anniversary of the Great Dzog-chen Master Garab Dorje. It is also a special day of Buddha Shakyamuni, the day he performed many miracles, and it is the anniversary of the Master Marpa as well as that of Shenrab Miwoche, the founder of Bon. Therefore, on this day when it is 8 o'clock in Oddiyana, it is good for all Dzog-chen practitioners to practice at the same time, practicing the "A Kar Lamai Naljyor", Guruyoga with the White A. You can do this practice collectively or alone.

### SEE THE UNIVERSAL TIMETABLE

1st month, 25th day Wed. 17th March 1993  
This is the anniversary of the lady Master Ayu Kadro, so it is good to do "A Kar Lama Naljyor" and in general this is a Dakini day and a good day to reinforce our energy. Try to do a Ganapuja with the transformation into the Dakini Simhamuka.

1st month, 30th day Tues. 23rd March 1993  
**NEW MOON.** This is a good day to do "Namchos Shitroi Naljyor", the practice of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or personally.

2nd month, 10th day Fri. 2nd April 1993  
This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, so try to perform a Ganapuja collectively, but if that is not possible do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

2nd month, 12th day Sun. 4th April 1993  
This is the anniversary of Draga Gyaltsen (1147-1216), one of the first great Masters of the Sakyapa tradition, so try to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lamai Naljyor", the Guruyoga of the White A.

2nd Month, 15th day Tues. 6th April 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is one of the best days for Long-life practices and in particular the practice of "Union of Primordial Essences". The best time for this practice is from 7 to 8 o'clock in the morning.

2nd Month, 20th day Sun. 11th April 1993  
The anniversary of the great Dzog-chen Master Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), disciple of the first Do Drub Chan Rinpoche, who was a master of Nyagla Padma Duddul. It is therefore a good day to

do "A Kar Lamai Naljyor", the Guruyoga with the White A.

2nd Month, 25th day Friday 16th April 1993  
This is a Dakini day so try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters.

2nd Month, 30th day Wed. 21st April 1993  
**NEW MOON.** On this day, which is the birthday of the great Terton Loter Wangpo, try to do the "A Kar Lamai Naljyor", Guruyoga of the White A.

3rd Month, 10th day Sat. 1st May 1993  
This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava so try to do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union" early in the morning or at sunset. If you have the possibility it is beneficial to combine this with a practice of Ganapuja collectively.

3rd month, 15th day Thurs. 6th May 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is one of the best days for Long-life practices, and in particular for the practice of the "Union of Primordial Essences". It is best to do it early in the morning if you can. This is also the anniversary of the day when Buddha first gave the teaching of Kalachakra so it is good to do a Ganapuja or long Tun in the evening.

3rd Month, 25th day Sun. 16th May 1993  
This is a Dakini day as well as the anniversary of the fifth Dalai Lama, a great Terton and practitioner of Dzog-chen, so it is a good day to practise Agar Lamai Naljor, Guru Yoga with White A.

3rd Month, 30th day Fri. 21st May 1993  
**NEW MOON.** This is a particularly good day for practicing the Purification of the Six Lokas. As it is also the anniversary of the great Terton and Dzog-chen Master Sangyas Lingpa, try to do the "A Kar Lamai Naljyor".

4th Month, 9th day Sun. 30th May 1993  
As there is no 10th day this month we can celebrate the day of Guru Padmasambhava on the ninth day. If you can, try to do a Ganapuja, otherwise you can do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

4th Month, 15th day Fri. 4th June 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is the anniversary of the Parinirvana of Buddha Shakyamuni, as well as an important day for the Long-life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Therefore try to do this practice early in the morning, and in the afternoon or evening do a Ganapuja.

4th Month, 25th day Mon. 14th June 1993  
**Dakini day.** This is the anniversary of Ngor Chen (a great Master of the Shakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lamai Naljyor", collectively if possible or otherwise alone.

4th Month, 30th day Sun. 20th June 1992  
**NEW MOON.** This day is the anniversary of Nyagla Padma Duddul (1816-1872). He was one of the Masters of Chang-chub Dorje, the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma "Tsedrub Gongdus" which two of his disciples, Ayu Khadro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Norbu Rinpoche. Therefore you should try to do this Long-life practice, "Tsedrub Gongdus", "Union of Primordial Essences". The time to do it is the early morning. Later in the day or in the evening you can do the Guruyoga of the White A, "A Kar Lamai Naljyor".

5th Month, 1st day Mon. 21st June 1993  
This is the anniversary of mChog-gyur gLing-pa (1829-1870) a Nyingmapa Master of Dzogchen, one of the most important Rimed masters of the XIX Century. Try to do a practice of Akar Lamai Naljyor.

5th Month, 10th day Tue. 29th June 1993  
According to the Master Jigmed Lingpa this is the

anniversary of the birth of Padmasambhava. To celebrate this important anniversary we Dzog-chen practitioners all over the world communicate in the state of contemplation, practicing Guruyoga with the Tundrin, Tungsas or Ganapuja according to our possibilities. We do this practice when it is 8.00 in the morning in Oddiyana.

### SEE THE UNIVERSAL TIMETABLE

5th Month, 15th day Sun. 4th July 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is a special day for the Long-life practice of Amitayus, so you can do the Long-life practice "Union of Primordial Essences" early in the morning. If you cannot do it at that time, it is still good to do it later in the day.

5th Month, 25th day Wed. 14th July 1993  
This is a Dakini day and an important day for the practice of Ekajati. Therefore, according to your circumstances, try to do the long Tun collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or the medium Tun if you are practicing on your own. In either case, repeat the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as you can.

5th Month, 30th day Mon. 19th July 1993  
**NEW MOON.** This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the Purification of the Six Lokas either collectively or alone, preferably in the early morning. Otherwise you can do a medium or short Tun.

6th Month, 4th day Fri. 23rd July 1993  
This is the anniversary of the Dharmachakra (the first turning of the Wheel of the Dharma): the first time that Buddha Shakyamuni gave the teaching of the Four Noble Truths to his disciples at Sarnath, after his illumination. To honour the Lord Buddha on this special day you can do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

6th Month, 10th day Wed. 28th July 1993  
This is a special day of Padmasambhava so if you have the possibility, it is beneficial to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters, if

*It is important to try to communicate with all practitioners, linked to the same transmission, through entering together with them into the state of contemplation. In this way we all develop the potentiality of the transmission we have received, and through that our understanding and ability to integrate practice into daily life.*

*Long Life to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche! The Merigar Community is doing Long Life practice dedicated to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche every month on the three days leading up to and including the day of the full moon. We will do the practice which is programmed in the "Practices for Special Days". For example, when the practice of Amitayus is programmed for the 15th day of the Tibetan month, we will also do it on the previous two days.*

*Intensive Practice of Naggon*  
Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has asked all practitioners of the Dzog-chen Community to organize intensive practices of Naggon on the 28th and 29th day of the month of the Tibetan calendar, practicing for as long as possible according to the circumstances, i.e.; 3, 4 ... 12 or 24 or 48 hours.

### Universal timetable

Anniversary of Garab Dorje 7th March 1993  
Anniversary of Padmasambhava 28th June 1993

16.30 Fairbanks, Hawaii  
17.30 Dawson  
18.30 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver  
19.30 Denver  
20.30 Chicago, Mexico City  
21.30 New York, Montreal, Lima  
22.00 Caracas  
22.30 Buenos Aires  
23.30 Rio de Janeiro

### Anniversary of Garab Dorje 8th March 1993 Anniversary of Padmasambhava 29th June 1993

01.30 Reykjavic, Capo Verde  
02.30 London  
03.30 Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Madrid  
04.30 Moscow, Nicosia, Helsinki, Athens  
06.00 Tehran  
08.00 ODDIYANA, Delhi, Kathmandu  
08.30 Rangoon  
10.00 Ulan Bator, Jakarta, Singapore  
10.30 Beijing, Lhasa, Manila, Hong Kong  
11.30 Tokyo, Seoul  
12.30 Sydney  
14.30 Wellington, Marshall



## Water Bird Year 2120



# CIAL DAYS 1993-1994

not you can practise Guruyoga with Padmasambhava and the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

6th Month, 14th day Sun. 1st August 1993  
This is the anniversary of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje. On this day it is good to do "A Kar Lamai Naljor", Guruyoga with the White A.

6th Month, 15th day Mon. 2nd August 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is the anniversary of Gampopa, the disciple of Milarepa. Therefore it is an excellent day to do "A Kar Lamai Naljor", Guruyoga with the White A. It is also a good day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences".

6th Month, 25th day Thu. 12th August 1993  
This is a **Dakini day**, so it is a positive day for reinforcing the function of our energy and creating a vital contact with the energy of the universe by doing a Ganapuja with our Vajrasisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby you can do a medium Tun on your own. In either case, when you transform into the Dakini Simhamuka, recite her heart mantra as many times as possible.

6th Month, 30th day Tues. 17th August 1993  
**NEW MOON.** This is a very important day to do purification practices, especially the "Purification of the Six Lokas". If you have the chance, you can also do a short, medium or long Tun.

7th Month, 10th day Thu. 26th August  
This is the anniversary of Jomo Menmo (1248-1283), a very famous woman Tertön, reincarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal. She was the consort of the great Tertön Guru Chowang. It is also a very special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Therefore it is an ideal day to do a Ganapuja and Long-life practice associated with Padmasambhava, "Universal Wisdom Union".

7th Month, 15th day Wed. 1st Sept. 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is the anniversary of Tsarchen

Losal Gyatso and Padma Karpo, a famous 17th century Drugpa Kargyupa Master. Therefore it is an excellent day to practise "A Kar Lamai Naljor", the Guruyoga with the White A early in the morning if possible, or later in the evening when you are free. It is also an excellent day for the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava.

7th Month, 25th day Sat. 11th Sept. 1992  
This is a **Dakini day** and also the anniversary of Pagmo Drugpa (1110-1170), the chief disciple of Gampopa. Try to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby, you can do a medium Tun on your own. In either case, when you transform yourself into the Dakini Simhamuka, recite her heart mantra as much as possible and then do an intensive practice of Ekajati.

7th Month, 30th day Thu. 16th Sept. 1993  
**NEW MOON.** This day is ideal for purification practices. Try to do either the "Purification of the Six Lokas" or the "Namchos Shitroi Naljor", the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or on your own.

8th Month, 10th day Sat. 25th Sept. 1993  
This is a very special day of Guru Padmasambhava, therefore do a Ganapuja with the Guruyoga and the Long-life practice of Guru Padmasambhava "Universal Wisdom Union" collectively. Otherwise you can do a medium Tun on your own.

8th Month, 15th day Thu. 30th Sept. 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is an important day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences". It is best to do it early in the morning, but if you cannot it is still good if you can do it later in the day or evening.

8th Month, 25th day Sun. 10th Oct. 1993  
This is a **Dakini day**, and also the anniversary of two great Dzog-chen masters, Rigzin Kumaraja, who transmitted the Dzog-chen teachings to Longchenpa and to the third Karmapa, and of Rigzin Tsewang Norbu (1698 - 1755), a great Dzog-chen master of the Nyingmapa school. It is therefore an excellent day to do "A Kar Lamai Naljor", the Guruyoga with the White A. If you can do it in the morning, that is best. Then, if you have the time, you can do a medium or long Tun later in the day, with an intense practice of Simhamuka.

8th Month, 30th day Fri. 15th Oct. 1993  
**NEW MOON.** This day is excellent for practising the "Purification of the Six Lokas". Otherwise you can do the medium or long Tun.

9th Month, 3rd day Mon. 18th October 1993  
This is the anniversary of Rigzin Jigmed Lingpa (1729-1798), a great Dzogchen master who was the author of many books, among which is the Longchen Nyingthig, which he wrote after having contact with Longchenpa through visions. Therefore, on this important day, you should try to do "A Kar Lamai Naljor", the Guruyoga with the White A.

9th Month, 10th day Sun. 24th Oct. 1993  
This is **Guru Padmasambhava day** and also the anniversary of Tertön Tsogyal, a previous reincarnation of Sogyal Rinpoche and discoverer of many Termas. It is therefore a good day to do the Long-life practice of Guru Padmasambhava "Universal Wisdom Union", which is included in the medium or long Tun. You can do this in the usual way or, if you have the possibility, you can do a Ganapuja.

9th Month, 15th day Sat. 30th Oct. 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is a good day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences", either collectively or personally

according to your possibilities, early in the morning or in the evening.

9th Month, 22nd day Sat. 6th Nov. 1993  
This day is the important celebration of Buddha Shakyamuni's descent to earth from the realms of the Divinities. It is called "Lha bab dus chen", the Great Time of the Descent of the Divinities. It is an ideal day to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If there are none nearby, you can do a short or medium Tun on your own.

9th Month, 25th day Tue. 9th Nov. 1993  
This is a **Dakini day** and the anniversary of the very important Dzogchen master Adzam Drugpa (1842-1924). He was a disciple of Jamyang Kyentse Wangpo and a master of some of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's masters, including Changchub Dorje and Ayu Kadro. He was also a previous incarnation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. It is therefore a very important day to practise "A Kar Lamai Naljor", the Guruyoga with the White A, according to your possibilities.

9th Month, 30th day Sat. 13th Nov. 1993  
**NEW MOON.** This is a good day to do "Namchos Shitroi Naljor", the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible. The best time for this practice is around eight o'clock in the evening.

10th Month, 10th day Tues. 23rd Nov. 1993  
This is an important day of Guru Padmasambhava, so try to do the Long-life practice associated with the "Universal Wisdom Union" which is included in the medium or long Tun, or if you have the possibility it is beneficial to perform a Ganapuja.

10th Month, 11th and 14th day  
Wed. 24th and Sat. 27th Nov. 1993  
These are very special days for doing practice of Ekajati. If you know how to perform the rite of Ekajati, then do it in the usual way, otherwise you can do it in a very simple way with the "Medium Tun", reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

10th Month, 15th day Sun. 28th Nov. 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This day is considered to be the day to honour the Lord Buddha in general, and it is one of the best days to do the Long-life Practice with the Dakini Mandarava particularly. Therefore try to do the Long-life Practice, "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Generally the best moment to do this kind of practice is at 7-8 o'clock in the morning. But if you don't have this possibility, then do it in the afternoon or later in the evening when you are free.

10th Month, 25th day Wed. 8th Dec. 1993  
This is a **Dakini day**, and the anniversary of Tsongkhapa (1357-1491), who made a synthesis of the previous schools and founded the Gelugpa school. Try to perform a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters or the Medium Tun personally. In either case recite the heart mantra of the Dakini Simhamuka as many times as possible.

10th Month, 30th day Mon. 13th Dec.  
**NEW MOON.** This is an excellent day to practise Purification of the Six Lokas.

11th Month, 8th day Tues. 21st Dec. 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.

11th Month, 10th day Thu. 23rd Dec. 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 Primordial Essences".

11th Month, 15th day Tues. 28th Dec. 1993  
**FULL MOON.** This is an important day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences".

11th Month, 25th day Fri. 7th Jan. 1994  
This is a **day of the Dakinis** in general, so if you have the opportunity practice a collective Ganapuja, with the transformation of the Dakini Simhamuka, and recite her heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do a Medium Tun either collectively or personally.

11th Month, 30th day Tues. 11th Jan. 1994  
**NEW MOON.** This is a special day for purification practices so try to do "Purification of the Six Lokas".

12th Month, 10th day Sat. 22nd Jan. 1994  
This day is the anniversary of **Guru Padmasambhava's** coronation as Prince of Orgyen at the invitation of King Idraholi. We can perform a Ganapuja collectively or do the Long-life practice, "Universal Wisdom Union" either collectively or personally, according to circumstances.

12th Month, 11th day Sun. 23rd Jan. 1994  
Today it is good to do a Medium or Long Tun with intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

12th Month, 15th day Thu. 27th Jan. 1994  
**FULL MOON.** This is in general a day for honouring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the Long-life practice of Guru Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences".

12th Month, 18th day Sun. 30th Jan. 1994  
This day is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen master Longchen Rabjam Longchenpa (1386-1363). On this very important day try to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lamai Naljor" Guruyoga with the White A, either collectively or personally.

12th Month, 25th day Sat. 5th Feb. 1994  
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.

12th Month, 30th day Thu. 10th Feb. 1994  
**NEW MOON.** This is a good day for purification practices. Therefore try to do "Purification of the Six Lokas".





## GLIMPSES OF TIBET

## My expedition to Eastern Kham and the surrounding areas of Lhasa

by Pema Khandro (Rena Kuhn)

I have just returned from a very strenuous and difficult expedition through Yunnan Province, Eastern Kham (Tibet), Lhasa and the surrounding areas - (Drigung) Til monastery, Samye monastery and

between camping and guest houses. The guest houses, not owned and operated by the Tibetans, were so filthy that many times we preferred to remain in our sleeping bags on the floor rather than dare put our sleeping

leopard skins and any other cat pelts.

Of course I had to get a Khampa hat from the head of one of those very daring Khampas. This was no easy task because they really did not want to part with their hats. I finally managed to talk one into selling his hat for a fairly high sum.

Surprisingly, I saw several monks participating with their horses in the race. The monks had also set up a big Tibetan tent at the festival and were selling many items from new Tibetan carpets to Tibetan boots. I observed some monks doing business in Kham, operating small stalls which offered various Dharma items. However, most of the stores especially in Kanze and Litang, seemed to be run by Chinese as were the restaurants and guest houses.

There was a lot of rebuilding going on. In the larger cities, the buildings would be in the modern Chinese style, looking like cement blocks. However, in the countryside, construction was modelled after the old Tibetan houses. We saw many very beautiful old villages. The countryside of Kham is probably the most beautiful I have ever seen. In some areas, we noticed people digging for gold in the rivers. Our Chinese guides told us that these were private enterprises. When asked why, they would reply that there wasn't enough gold to make it

Revolution. This celebrated 17th century monastery of the Nyingma school is situated at the base of a 21,000 ft glacier peak in the Kawa-Lunging Range. It is an ancient monastic medical college which is still in the process of reconstruction. The magnificent valley, which extends from the monastery to the base of the peak, is known as a source of many medicinal herbs which the Nyingma lamas of Dzog-chen gather to make medicines for their "pharmacy". These are still used extensively to cure the ills of people all over Tibet.

When we arrived in this hidden valley in the late afternoon, the head administrator of the medical college of Dzog-chen greeted us very enthusiastically and happily. Some of our group decided to camp down in the valley near the nomads' tents while the rest of us were offered a large room in the monastery, which we gratefully accepted because of the considerable chance of more rain. After we bunked down in a large old gonpa room, many monks came to visit and chat with us. The abbot of the monastery was out of town and was expected to return in a couple of days.

There are many power places of Guru Rinpoche located in and around the monastery of Dzog-chen. It is said that Guru Rinpoche spent a very long time meditating here in

Nevertheless, we enjoyed the little spectacle and took a lot of pictures. The following day, the abbot read a long text to us, then he blessed each of us individually and bid us farewell. He also gave each of us a wonderful little pin with Guru Rinpoche's image.

We had a lot of fun camping, especially around the area of Manigango. We would make a big fire at night and several Tibetans from the surrounding campsites would come and join us. We would have this strange mixture of Chinese, Tibetans and Americans huddled around the campfire singing songs from their native countries. The moon always seemed to be especially bright and the mosquitos poised to attack.

Many times we had a lot of rain during the night and sometimes I thought our little tents would just float away down into the river but somehow, we always woke up halfway dry. When our expedition members finally reached the comfortable Jinjiang Hotel in Chengdu, they were all immensely happy.

The remaining group (the survivors) went back to Hongkong, and I continued my journey to Lhasa, where I was met at the airport by my friend and guide from the previous year, Gyatso. I hired a jeep, a driver and a cook and the four of us went to Samye monastery. A friend of my guide Gyatso offered the roof of his house to us for camping, so we erected my tent on the roof facing the monastery. It was a wonderful feeling to wake up in the morning and the first thing one would feast one's eyes upon would be beautiful Samye. There were so many dogs in front of the monastery that sometimes I was afraid to walk among them. They constantly fought and attacked each other and the piercing howls of the injured dogs would fill the air.

Samye monastery looked like it was in very good shape. They had finally rebuilt the third floor. There were many beautiful murals painted on the new addition.

The next day I decided to camp at Chimpu. We loaded our gear and ourselves onto a small tractor. The driver took us all the way to the foot of the mountains. We set up our little camp next to an old woman's meditation hut - she was a relative of the driver. The following day, I made the strenuous climb up to Guru Rinpoche's main cave. As I climbed up the last part of the difficult path my heart was pounding loudly and I was huffing and puffing. However, finally, with the help of Gyatso and my cook, who literally pulled me up the last part of the path, we made it to Guru Rinpoche's main cave.

There was a structure built enclosing the cave totally. A monk was doing a retreat in the front room

*continued on page 11*



*The Litang horse festival*

Chimpu. I thought my Dharma friends and others might want to hear about the conditions of the monasteries and the lives of the people in Eastern Kham and surrounding areas of Lhasa, so I have compiled this report.

In Kham I visited many Sakya gonpas, some Nyingma gonpas, a few Karmapa monasteries, one Bonpo monastery and very few Gelugpa gonpas. Many of the gonpas that were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution have been rebuilt or are in the process of being rebuilt. I was told by some lamas that they receive a small amount of money each month from the Chinese government and that once in a while they receive donations from well-to-do Tibetan families of which I am sure there are few. Most of the lamas and monks that I saw in the Kham area looked well and healthy, even though I heard from some of the monks that they don't always get two meals a day. The poorest of the gonpas seemed to be the Nyingma gonpas. Most of the Sakya and Gelugpa monasteries seem to be doing well.

We attended two large festivals. One was the Horse Festival outside of Litang, where we camped with the nomads, and the other one was the Silver Autumn Festival near Kanze, at Rongbaca. It was quite an eye-pleasing experience for us to see the Tibetans dressed up in their native costumes and performing their native dances.

The countryside of Kham is magnificent and cultivated with wheat, barley and vegetables. There was evidence of erosion going on in parts of the countryside where a lot of trees had been cut down. One thing that saddened me very much was the fact that we didn't see any wildlife except for some birds and a few rabbits here and there.

We divided our stay in Kham

bags on the beds, which were covered with dust. I have travelled in very remote areas all of my life, but I have never seen such filth as this. Sometimes there was no water and the toilets were out in the back yard. There were no Dharma students other than myself, so lots of anxiety and anger developed among the members of the group. Several people chose to leave the expedition and go home.

I had a wonderful time with the Tibetans, especially with the children. Even though I didn't speak their language, we were always able to understand each other perfectly. I taught the children little games and some English. Being a guest in many nomads' tents, I noticed that they had so very little. However, they shared what they had with me. We laughed and joked and I taught them the Vajrasattva mantra or we would recite other mantras. They were always astonished that I could recite all of these mantras.

At the Horse Festival in Litang I was surprised to see a group of young girls in their Tibetan costumes dancing to disco tapes from the United States. I taught them some new disco steps and they taught me some traditional Tibetan dances.

Watching the Kham horsemen performing their wild stunts was one of the highlights of our trip. I don't think I have ever seen such daring performances on horses. Some of the riders were hanging upside down on the horses for long periods of time. I often thought they would not be able to straighten themselves up on their horses in time, but they always seemed to make it. One had to get out of the way quickly. These horses are very temperamental and sometimes don't respond to the command of their riders. The horsemen's costumes were always wild and outrageous, ranging from brocades and furs to



*Dzogchen Monastery*

worthwhile for the government to own these operations.

Although many people still travel by horse in the countryside, there are quite a lot of cars on the road, especially large Chinese trucks and we saw many accidents especially in Yunnan Province. The mountain roads were very treacherous because it hadn't rained this much in over a hundred years. This made our trip even more difficult because our vehicles would often get stuck in deep water or we had to remove large rocks, boulders and trees that obstructed our path.

One of the highlights of our trip was our visit to Dzog-chen Monastery which had been totally destroyed during the Cultural

this beautiful valley which houses Dzog-chen and one can really feel the energy radiating from the hills.

I took a great liking to the son and the wife of the Abbot. She is a very beautiful woman with a big smile. Every day she served us the best homemade yogurt I have ever tasted in my life.

We were all excited about the arrival of the abbot. I was surprised to see that he was quite young, maybe in his middle to late forties. He arranged for us to watch a monks' debate in the courtyard. It was not very good, but then I am spoiled having seen the monks' debates at Ganden Monastery in Mundgod, South India. I think those are the best I have ever witnessed.



# A conversation with Lama Kunsang Dorje Phurtag

**The Mirror:** Could you tell us about your early history and education?

**Lama Kunsang Dorje:** I was born in a region north of Lhasa called Nak chuka in a place called U thok. I come from a family of Ngagpa or tantric lay priests although my forefathers were Bonpo.

My father was a Dzog-chen practitioner of the *Longchen nying tig* and also a practitioner in the tradition of the Dagpo Kagyu. After receiving teaching from his masters on the Longchen nying tig, my father remained in solitary retreat from the age of 25 to 37 practising intensely.

After 13 years of retreat had passed, he started to teach and spent his life in various parts of Tibet such as central and west Tibet and areas close to Bhutan where he taught Dzog-chen. When my father was 37 he married a 16 year old girl from Drigung. I was their first son and at present I am 58 years old.

When I was 13 I started to receive teachings from my father. I received the teaching of the *Nying tig yab zhi*, the transmission and initiation of the Pure Visions of Jigme Lingpa and Patrul Rinpoche's *Kunsang lame shelung* which is considered to be a preliminary practice of the *Longchen nying tig*.

I also did classical studies in philosophy studying the Seven Works of Longchenpa of which two are on general Buddhist teaching while five of them are on Dzog-chen.

Later I studied with my father's master, Kun Khien Namsel Rinchen and with his son Tome Mawe Wangiuk. In particular I received teaching on the *Trig Don Dzo* of Longchenpa. I received the initiation and transmission of the *Kama*, the Nyingma teachings dating from the time of Buddha Shakyamuni. I also received terma teachings and oral instruction.

I studied with a Golok lama called

*During the period of Christmas and the new year, at Merigar, Lama Kunsang Dorje Phurtag gave a programme of teachings, kindly prepared by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche from his text, "The Vase of Jewels". Lama Kunsang is a Nyingma Lama presently living in Switzerland.*



(photo Liane Graf)

Long Sal Rinpoche. I received general Buddhist teaching from him such as the *Prajnaparamita*, *Madhyamika*, the explanation of Shantideva's *Bodhisattva-charyavatara* and explanations related to the practice of sutra.

Then from the elder son of my master Namsel Rinchen who was killed during the cultural revolution, Gyalse Lodro Gyaltzan, who was considered to be an emanation of Vairocana I received other teachings such as Gampopa's *Thar Gyen*, which is teaching on the gradual path, teachings on Mahamudra and on the Six Yogas of Naropa.

In 1959 I had to leave Tibet. I spent about a year with my father close to the Tibetan-Nepalese border until he died at the age of 63. We had remained in that area because the local people had asked my father to give initiations and transmissions of the *Longchen nying tig*.

When I arrived in India I went to Orissa where there was a community

of Tibetan refugees who were followers of Dudjom Rinpoche. I stayed there for nine years studying and practising the teaching that I had received. Life in Orissa was difficult because the community survived by cultivating the fields so I decided to go to Benares. There the Tibetan government in exile had established a school in Sarnath for the various traditions of Tibetan Buddhism and so I continued my studies.

After three years I attained the title of Acharya and later I received my doctorate with a thesis on the *Madhyamika* philosophy based on a text called *Madhyamika alankara* by Shantarakshita. The thesis is still used at the Nyingmapa college in Sarnath as a textbook.

I remained in Sarnath for another two years as an assistant teacher at the Nyingmapa college.

In 1980 I came to Switzerland. Before leaving for Switzerland, I was in Dharamsala where I met

Dilgo Khyentse who told me that there was a Nyingmapa group called Tse chu Tzogpa in Switzerland and that this group had asked him to send a lama there to collaborate with them. Dilgo Khyentse suggested that since I was already going to Switzerland I could work with this group.

When I arrived there I found that the situation was a little different and though I was nominally the lama of the association there was really no work for me.

Many Westerners came to visit me but it was difficult to communicate because I do not speak a European language. Sometimes I would find a translator but on the whole it wasn't very easy for me to teach. And so I went to work in a factory for two years. Then I had a period of bad health and we moved to Bern.

There I have remained apart from a few trips to India and Tibet to Russia, the monastery of my principal

master, where his three sons live. These three sons are very important lamas. I have printed and distributed four volumes of their teachings in various places in India and in the monasteries of Tibet. One of these volumes contains the teachings of my principal master and three of them contain the teachings of his son, Tome Mawe Wangiuk. Each one of these latter volumes is more than two hundred pages long and they were written in twenty-one days. Usually when a lama writes a book or commentary, he takes other texts and referring to them he writes his own. This lama, instead, had written these volumes without looking at any other text. These volumes are about Buddhist philosophy in general and on the various paths. The third volume is on tantra and principally on Dzog-chen.

**The Mirror:** What is a ngagpa?

**Lama Kunsang Dorje:** Ngagpa means a tantric lay practitioner. As there are sutras, mdo, and tantras, ngags, so ngagpa means a practitioner of tantra. It especially refers to tantric practitioners of the ancient Nyingmapa tradition which appeared during the reigns of the three great kings, Srong btsan sgampo, Khri srong lde btsan and Khri Ral pa can. During these periods the two main styles of practice developed, that of the ngagpa, who get married and mainly practice tantra, and that of the monks, who take vows of celibacy and mainly practice the sutras. The ngagpa gathered their hair up on the head in a knot and wore white robes while the monks wore yellow hats and robes.

The lifestyle of ngagpa originated based on the example of Padmasambhava, whereas that of monks on the example of Shantarakshita.

In all schools, the Reformed, continued on page 15

## Glimpses of Tibet

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that housed the cave. I thought, how lucky he was to have this place for a retreat. It was a very sacred experience to sit for a few minutes in this cave. However, my mind was too excited to do any kind of meditation. I was just happy to sit there and think of Guru Rinpoche.

I also visited the little gonpa near the cave. I spent a lot of time with the Anilas who were doing their retreats at Chimpu. Some had built little huts nestled against the mountains. Others had made their homes in the many caves. I was told that a total of approximately 103 monks and nuns were doing retreats there although I did not see that many people. The Anilas were very kind and sweet and I was invited to come back next year for a retreat. They even offered me one of their caves. It was a very precious



Rena Kuhn at Chimpu

experience to be in these power places of Guru Rinpoche.

The trip back to Lhasa was

uneventful except for the fact that our ferry boat got stuck on a sandbank in the middle of the river.

Lhasa was full of people, it was hot and dusty. I did not enjoy my visit to Lhasa this time - I think it is much prettier in the winter. Also there were very few nomads in the city, so I missed all the colourful traditional outfits. The people that had come to the city for the festival were mostly dressed in ordinary garb and did not look very colourful. The Norbulinka was covered with little food stands and T-shirt kiosks. There had been a couple of tents erected where Tibetan opera as well as Tibetan songs and dances were being performed.

The Chinese had opened the part of the Norbulinka with the two pavilions, that I had never seen. It is usually closed all year and is only open for special festivals. There was no water around the pavilions, but it was still pretty to look at. I knew this site only from old

documentaries and photographs. I often wondered during previous strolls through the Norbulinka, where this particular little lake could be. So I was surprised to be able to finally visit this unique place, although a lake no longer existed. I longed for a taste of my past experiences at the Norbulinka when I visited during the winter months - the long quiet strolls through the park, the crisp fresh air, the meeting and talking to the nomads and my afternoon meditation sessions. I made the decision right then and there, that my next visit to Lhasa would be again during the wintertime.

The second part of Pema Khandro's article on her recent travels in Tibet, "The Sky Burial", will be published in the next issue of *The Mirror*.



# Dzogchen in prison

by John La France

By the time I entered prison I had gone through four years of anguish. The losses had piled-up: career, reputation, financial security, marital relationship, separation from daughter and finally loss of freedom. Everything that I had thought was important was stripped away and I was left to wonder "what happened?" Then the dharma emerged, and I realized that prison was only in my mind. I was incarcerated yet free for the first time in my life.

I'd worked for the United States government for 22 years and became enmeshed in a power struggle. The reasons for the struggle are less relevant than the fact that, in retrospect, I had created the struggle out of my own ego-driven desires. What arose from the process was a long investigation culminating in my being charged with conspiracy to defraud the government.

In the 21 months between the start of the public investigation and the time I went to trial I was removed from my job, had no source of income, and used all my savings and much more to secure legal representation.

The stress of the events was immense. Despite losing the support of some people, I received strong encouragement and support from friends in a Unitarian Church. I also used the occasion to begin a process of self-examination through psychotherapy. I needed all the support and insights when, three weeks before going to trial, my wife informed me that she loved another. After a two week trial I was found guilty. Three months later I was sentenced to 10 months in prison, and four months after that I entered prison. I declined the option of remaining free pending a legal appeal. At that point I was in such misery I only wanted to "get it over with".

While waiting to go to prison a friend invited me to participate in an introductory weekend at a Zen monastery to learn zazen. The effect of sitting in silence with others was stunning. I heard my own complaining and fears replaying constantly. Counting ten consecutive breaths with concentration was impossible. I couldn't get through two breaths without thoughts running out of control. I tried again during a sesshin and had little success at stilling my mind. The turmoil in my life kept intruding. But I had a very strong attraction to the practice and the sangha and decided to try to continue zazen in prison.

When I arrived in prison I sent for a cushion from the monastery. Despite the crowded conditions, I was determined to continue sitting. Finding a quiet place inside the buildings was impossible. So I took the cushion into a field each day, away from the constant noise and sat. Many times I was stopped by

guards suspicious of my pillow and cushion. After examining it they would ask if it was for praying. When I said "something like that", they left me alone. The struggle with my noisy, complaining self continued, as did my depression. I persevered without any noticeable change in my condition until two months later when I met a fellow prisoner who was a dharma friend and Dzog-chen practitioner. Looking back, I believe that the sitting had, at least, awakened me enough to be open to my encounter with him.

In the course of many conversations my new friend slowly presented a foundation of beliefs and practices that I now recognize as the dharma. What impressed me about him was that despite his own struggles with illness and the constant barrage of insane behaviour around us, he was calm, even peaceful, and had many humorous observations of surrounding conditions.

Prison is like a laboratory for observing negativities. The atmosphere is constantly filled with anger, recrimination, blaming and condemnation.... constant complaining about the external forces that are creating unhappiness in peoples' lives. Virtually no one considers that the unhappiness might be generated from within. Rather than being angry, I was depressed from the losses and the sense of shame of failure. In a strange way my sadness made me feel somewhat

to mantras and suggested that I repeat them constantly. I now think that the mantras began to replace my habitual internal voice of worry with a more positive energy.

Being in prison is stressful, but so is being "in the world". However, in prison I directly experienced the practical ways that dharma practices



positively influenced my life.

One of the first awarenesses that came from the teachings had to do with "time".... what it is, how much is available and how to use it. My friend's views on reincarnation, karma, the preciousness of human life and the uncertainty of the time of death all impacted on my awareness of time.

When I fully grasped the reality of uncertainty and the continuing nature of things - uncreated, unborn, constantly arising - the feeling of not wanting to waste time arose very strongly. I realized that being in prison could be viewed as a blessing, a kind of sabbatical or

the activity itself, it was the way I acted and thought about it that mattered. The immediate effect of this awareness on my prison experience was that I began to see the amazing quality and energy of events. There was more presentness, lightness, more opportunity for joy.

Some time after my friend had introduced me to the word "Dzog-chen" if not its meaning, I received the book "Dzog-chen and Padmasambhava" by Sogyal Rinpoche. By that point in time I had resorted to simply memorizing various Buddhist teachings. Like a school child I created anagrams to help memorize the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts, and others. When I received Sogyal's book I immediately tried to memorize what I considered key points.

Among them was the "Dzog-chen View", "Meditation and Action". The one phrase, "View is the comprehension of the naked awareness, within which everything is contained", seemed to lodge within me.

What I attributed to this statement was that conceptualization and particularization, or making judgements and holding opinions, interferes with "naked awareness". In a way this was a difficult realization to accept because I had always thought that I had to make judgements about everything in order to survive. But here in Dzog-chen it seemed clearly to be saying, "Don't judge, don't hold opinions and the result will be clarity". This "felt" right and caused me to recognize that I was constantly making judgements and opinions and viewing them as real.

Breaking that habit wouldn't be easy. But slowly in prison, surrounded by judgements and opinions I began to observe my opinion-making and see them as unreal. Then, and now, when confronted by confounding things and not wanting to judge, I am left speechless.... not necessarily clear, but silent. I sensed that saying nothing and simply allowing things to be, was for me a necessary step in changing a lifelong habit of judging. One I still need to practice. With this increased attentiveness, the condition of imprisonment took on a different quality; there were even moments of real joyfulness and clarity.

One of those occasions I remember vividly. My friend had started a class to teach Buddhist psychology and meditation. A group of five or six of us would gather after the evening prisoner count and

sometimes on weekends we would sit in the field to talk. On this occasion my friend was trying to explain the meaning of "rigpa". He was always very careful with words, frequently qualifying things as "provisional" to let us know that these were just words pointing at meanings, not the meanings themselves. Among the words he used to introduce us to the meaning of rigpa, were "pure and total presence of things spontaneously arising" and "this is it".

It was a beautiful, clear, bright day, with sharp colours. Just as he said these things, the totality of the events struck me and I shouted out loudly AAAAAh..... the feeling of joy was overwhelming. I didn't think then of the significance of the sound, but now I see the connection between the joy of that moment, the clarity and the sound ..... spontaneously arising as one.

Another teaching that significantly changed the quality of the time in prison was that of karma. While I had heard the word before, I thought it simply referred to predestination. I gave it little attention. Learning the full meaning and implications of cause and effect changed things.

It was amazingly helpful to learn the importance of cyclical existence and of being conscious not to create negative karma. I felt relieved to know that negative effects, despite the pain that might be felt, could be viewed as the resolution of some previous negative action, in this lifetime or before.

I was able to put my own suffering into perspective and, more importantly, it provided an answer for the random events that seemed to cause innocent people to suffer.... an answer that doesn't involve blame.

Among the many other gifts that my friend gave me was the awareness of the importance of the guru. His devotion to his own teacher, Kalu, was complete. He said, "When you get out of prison you should go to see Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, no matter where he is located".

Now that I have met him at Conway in 1992, I know why he gave that advice. What a blessing to overcome the distrust that had been ingrained in me. To know that a teacher is not just "anyone".

Finally, six months after leaving prison, the higher courts ruled that I hadn't received a fair trial; the conviction was removed and all the charges against me were dropped, retroactively. It was like it never happened.... no conviction, no losses, no imprisonment.... a dream. Some people, when hearing that I went to prison unnecessarily, ask "aren't you angry?" I answer "No". And now that I have begun to learn from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche I can genuinely feel and say, "Everything is fine".

**"I realized that prison was only in my mind. I was incarcerated yet free for the first time in my life."**

removed from the negative prison energy, less caught-up in it.

One day, long before ever mentioning the word "Dzog-chen", my friend offered to help me with my worrying, sadness and depression. As I lay on the ground with my eyes closed, he read aloud from some of the few Buddhist texts he had. First from the Sutra of Hui-neng and second from "Primordial Experience". While I didn't understand much of what was being read to me, I felt at peace. Something about the words, the obvious 'caringness' of the reader and the circumstances seemed to break into a space within me that I'd been protecting. Once it was pierced I began to heal.

Subsequently he introduced me

retreat. Despite the constraints of a rigidly enforced routine, prison offered certain opportunities not readily apparent in the outside world.

In my life prior to prison there always seemed to be too much to do and too little time. This wasn't true in prison. Realizing that how I spent my time was a choice, I began to focus on studying, listening, reflecting and meditating instead of other more customary distractions. I had options to consider - is this activity something that's worthwhile in terms of my practice or is it merely a way to be distracted? More and more of my answers were the latter. I began to be aware that virtually every activity, from scrubbing toilets to conversations, contained opportunities for practice. It wasn't



# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE TIBETAN BOOK OF LIVING AND DYING

by Sogyal Rinpoche.

Rider, London, and Harper, Collins, New York.

425 pages, £16.99 (hardcover)



"Caring for the dying makes you poignantly aware not only of their mortality, but also of your own. So many veils and illusions separate us from the stark knowledge that we are dying; when we finally know that we are dying, and all other sentient beings are dying with us, we start to have a burning, almost heartbreaking sense of the fragility and preciousness of each moment of being, and from this can grow a deep, clear, limitless compassion for all beings" writes Sogyal Rinpoche in his wonderful new book, reminding us that dealing with death should bring us more fully to life.

Published at present only as a quality and relatively expensive (£16.99) hardback of some 425 pages, 'The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying' has proved a runaway success, selling out three printings in England alone with sales so far totaling more than 10,000 copies in the few months following its publication last year. This achievement would be unusual in the sales of a first novel by a new author; but in the case of a book containing authentic spiritual teachings by a Tibetan lama it is all the more remarkable. Sogyal Rinpoche's book, and the workshops and seminars on the teachings contained in it, have really touched upon a deep hunger in the public at large as well as in the caring professions for a more profound perspective on what death and dying mean to us, living as we do in an often alienated and materialistic society which is so heavily invested in the denial of illness, aging and death that it has in many ways ended up in the denial of life itself.

Sogyal Rinpoche, as most

members of the Dzogchen Community - many of whom have met and studied with him - will know, is a Dzogchen master who is a lineage holder of the Nyingmapa school and the founder of the Rigpa centres that he has established in many parts of the world. He was born, raised and educated in Tibet before coming to the West where he completed his education with studies of comparative religion at Cambridge University. The latter part of his education makes him quite comfortable with using western terminology to communicate to a western audience. Buddhists do not usually talk about God, but at a very interesting public talk Sogyal Rinpoche recently gave at the Commonwealth Institute on the subject of 'Ancient Wisdom for the Modern World' which I attended while on a visit to London, he elaborated on a teaching about allowing oneself space by laughingly commenting: "God does not find it hard to forgive us, but we find it hard to forgive ourselves." This willingness to go beyond cultural barriers has undoubtedly contributed to the quality and success of his book, which amplifies its basically Buddhist content with many short quotations from poets and mystics outside the Buddhist tradition, such as Rilke and Rumi, and even Mother Teresa. Parallel material is also provided from the recent research into near death experiences, and many insights from western hospice workers and therapists are included, but the principally Buddhist focus and inspiration of the book is never lost; every cross cultural inclusion has a genuine motive: that of cutting to the heart of the human experience beyond culture.

The underlying aim of 'The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying' is to present the teachings from what has generally been known as 'The Tibetan Book of the Dead' and its associated literature in a manner that will be accessible and practically useful to people in modern society. As Sogyal Rinpoche writes at the beginning of Chapter 13:

"I first came to the West at the beginning of the 1970's, and what disturbed me deeply, and has continued to disturb me, is the almost complete lack of spiritual help for the dying that exists in modern culture. In Tibet... everyone had some knowledge of the higher truths of Buddhism and some relationship with a master. No one died without being cared for, in both superficial and profound ways by the community. I have been told many stories of people dying alone and in great distress and disillusion in the West without any spiritual help, and one of my main motivations in writing this book is to extend the healing wisdom of the world I was brought up in to all men and women. Shouldn't one of the main rights of any civilised society, extended to everyone in that society be the right

to die surrounded by the best spiritual care?...Spiritual care is not a luxury for the few; it is the essential right of every human being, as essential as political liberty, medical assistance and equality of opportunity. ...Wherever I go in the West, I am struck by the great mental suffering that arises from the fear of dying, whether or not that fear is acknowledged. How reassuring it would be for people if they knew when they lay dying they would be cared for with loving insight!"

The provision of supportive background information and inspirational material and techniques for such care is the focus of Sogyal Rinpoche's workshops and seminars on this subject, and of the contents of his book, which besides presenting an overview of Tibetan Buddhism (with explanations of karma, rebirth, the nature of the mind and so on) to set its vision in a general spiritual perspective, offers brief but complete teachings on a wide range of Tibetan Buddhist spiritual practices, such as those for generating compassion and taking on the suffering of others (tonglen), the uses of visualisation, mantra, phowa, and so on. Instructions on the basic, or rather fundamental meditation techniques of watching the breath, using an object as a support, or reciting mantra are given, as well as an explanation of the Base, Path and Fruit of the Dzogchen teachings and the state of rigpa, the pure presence of the nature of the mind.

"Take the mind home, to its own pure essence, the state of rigpa," Sogyal Rinpoche advises, commenting that most people are not at home with themselves, not knowing that in its essence their own mind is fundamentally free, pure and limpid, empty like space itself. Caught in psychological knots and fears of our own creation, we continue vainly to seek peace and satisfaction through external means, not knowing how to find peace of mind. To help unwind those psychological knots, the predominantly Buddhist material is supplemented in certain sections connected specifically with helping the dying with techniques from western therapies for learning to let go and helping others to do so. There is, however, never any confusion of sources or strategies; the Buddhist teachings and the therapy are never mixed up.

While the main focus of the book is to provide a practical guide, personal stories from Sogyal Rinpoche's own experience during the early years of his life in Tibet in the time which he spent with the Dzogchen master who brought him up, Jyamyang Kyentse Chokyi Lodro Rinpoche, bring the book to life, illustrating, for example, the way in which faith in the teachings and the lama, and, more profoundly, the fruit of the practice of contemplation itself can radically

alter an individual's experience of the moment of death.

I had the good fortune to meet with Sogyal Rinpoche after his London talk as he very kindly autographed a copy of his book for me, and he asked after Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's health and whereabouts, expressing the wish to spend time with him again soon. I also met and talked there with one of the book's editors, Patrick Gafney, who is one of Sogyal Rinpoche's oldest and closest students.

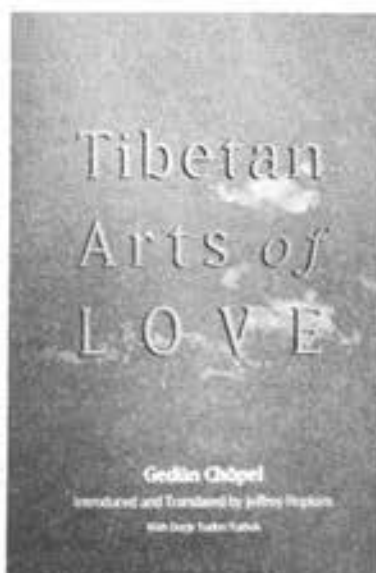
Patrick told me that the process of compiling and editing this book from Sogyal Rinpoche's talks took him several years, a fact that I can well understand from my own experience of four years work spent editing and compiling Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's book 'The Crystal and the Way of Light', which will, by the way, be reprinted and available in May of this year in a new Penguin Arkana edition after being out of print for over a year. The manuscript of Sogyal Rinpoche's book had already been through several versions before Andrew Harvey, the well known writer, author of 'A Journey in Ladakh', several novels, and the spiritual autobiography 'Hidden Journey' became involved as co-editor. The project was then brought to completion as a collaboration between the two editors and Sogyal Rinpoche himself. The book that has resulted from this long process of distillation is a very satisfying one, and one of which all those involved in its production can be truly proud.

John Shane

## TIBETAN ARTS OF LOVE

by Gédun Chöpel

Introduced and translated by Jeffrey Hopkins with Dorje Yudon Yuthok Snow Lion, New York, 1992  
282 pages, \$14.95 (paperback)



Beneath the somewhat overgeneric title lies a warm-hearted, guidebook for lovers, the 'Treatise on Passion' (Kama Shastra) by Gédun Chöpel

(1905-1951).

In his excellent introduction, Jeffrey Hopkins describes the author as a "provocative iconoclast".

Recognised at an early age as the reincarnate Lama from a monastery in Amdo, eastern Tibet, Gédun Chöpel never had an easy time with the official Tibetan monastic establishment. He suffered for his brilliant thinking, and especially for his being ahead of the times in his social ideas. His debating skills were legendary, but they sometimes got him into trouble: he was notorious for refuting his college textbooks, and on one occasion even had to change monastery; on another, he was beaten up for arguing that there is no such thing as 'Buddhahood' (he was also author of a major study of Nagarjuna). His political opinions too were unorthodox for his day, and sadly led to him being flogged and imprisoned during the 'interregnum' period following the death of the thirteenth Dalai Lama. The heresy this time was advocating parliamentary reform, and maybe even going against British interests by arguing that Tibet was actually a separate nation. In gaol, he lived for a couple of years with an illiterate nomad girl. But when he emerged from his cell, following the general amnesty proclaimed by the fifteen-year-old Dalai Lama on taking up government, he was a sadly broken man. One evening two years later, after listening to a text by Tsong Khapa and Mipham's 'Prayer wishes for the Base, Path and Fruit of Dzog-chen', he remarked, "Those were nice to hear. Mad Gédun Chöpel has seen all the intriguing sites of this world. Now, having heard that there is a famous land down below, I wonder what it would be like if I went to look." Whether or not he ended up exploring a hell, he died within a few hours.

Gédun Chöpel's *Kama Shastra* dates from 1938, during his thirteen-year research trip to India prior to imprisonment, during which time he was able to study all the ancient Indian guides to love-making. And in fact, the form of the book and much of its terminology echoes the *Kama Sutra*. Thus, amongst the "sixty-four arts of love" we find lively advice on techniques of kissing, biting, etc., and a particularly intriguing section on erotic noises. The techniques themselves, however, are often rather different. Also, by comparison with Vatsyana's classic, Gédun Chöpel's treatise is passionately argued: he is vigorous in his advocacy of an active and healthy sex life, and seems almost feminist in his attention to female sexual experience. Social etiquette claims little space, whereas the Buddhist virtues of kindness and attention to the welfare of others are very much to the forefront.

He has no inhibitions in letting us know that his advice is based on

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# Reflections Reflections Reflections

## Giving and Receiving

by Tsultrim Allione

The Buddha in a former life offered his body to a hungry mother



tigress so she could feed her cubs. Sometimes it seems that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is offering his body to the Dzog-chen Community so it can feed us.

In 1983 in England at the Norfolk retreat, Rinpoche was diagnosed by a medical doctor as being technically at the point of complete exhaustion, having been travelling around the world giving teachings, without even a day of rest when he arrived or before he left again.

Even after this diagnosis, he continued to teach and after teaching to talk to people and at meals continued to talk to people. He was always teaching, always giving himself.

When he went back to Italy he had to teach and deal with all the problems of the Community, his university job and family responsibilities. There was no time to rest. Finally his body began to react and his blood pressure went way up and he was literally dying for us. Then he slowed down, changed his diet, travelled more slowly and took a year off. This was not for his benefit, it was for ours, so he could remain in the world and teach us longer.

How much have we received, how many invaluable teachings and initiations, how much personal care and kindness, how many protections, amulets, blessings, medicines, personal requests and advice? How have our lives been blessed by his presence? How much have we gained from his writings, his conferences, his classes and teachings? How much of his hard earned salary has gone for our benefit in investment in buildings and the Community? How often has he returned all the donations from his teachings to the Community to help us create retreat cabins or practice

bases? How much better is the world because of his presence? How many terms have been revealed and Tibetan books written that will benefit the world in years to come?

When the subject of the community membership cards comes up, sometimes people complain about how much it is going to cost and then ask what the benefits will be, what kind of discounts will be had, what will be free? We could ask not how little can I give and how much will I get, like some kind of business deal, but how much can I give, with what attitude can I give, and in how many ways?

Once when I was in India with Abo Rinpoche, who had both western and Tibetan disciples he remarked how sad it was that westerners had so much and gave so little and the Tibetans had so little and still gave so much.

He said that westerners were losing a precious opportunity to gain merit. Merit and wisdom are the two accumulations necessary to proceed on the path. He said that westerners were often only interested in accumulating wisdom and didn't understand the importance of accumulating merit. When the poor Tibetans offered so much at ganapujas, the much richer westerners were quite stingy, losing a valuable opportunity to accumulate merit.

Viewing the gift toward the Community as a price you pay for something you are buying is really wrong view and will lead to negative karma and dissolution of a positive connection with the teachings. Generosity or liberality is the first of the six paramitas because it is so important.

Miserliness creates poverty, birth in the world of spirits, inability to attract beings, and inability to reach enlightenment.

In the dBu.ma 'Jug.pa (Madhyamakavatara I, 10) it says: "Having seen that even wealth springs from generosity and desiring the happiness of all beings

so that nobody might be without happiness and wealth." The Buddha Sakyauni spoke first of generosity. He said that it is not difficult for the generous person to achieve enlightenment. The material wealth that we do not give has no intrinsic worth and does not lead to realization, whereas whatever

## An old man and our planet

by Elio Guarisco

At that time he was a frail old man with trembling hands, white hair, but a tremendous dignity and beauty. Apparently introverted, with no relationship with the external world, when he spoke however, his power to catch the attention of the audience was immense, no noise could be heard in the big tent housing about two thousand people. At the end of his speeches I was astonished, confused and full of doubt, a revitalizing doubt.

Just like the terminology used by Dzog-chen masters, words like "must", "reject", "attain" were not part of the vocabulary of the man. At times he spoke vehemently about religions and spiritual teachers. He was nonetheless able to capture the essence of the spiritual quest and to transmit it on the spot. Gurus speak about the truth, but the old man was the truth. His message was not a truth consisting in a set of beliefs, but rather pointed to the presence of awareness in the mist of the working of the mind. He used to question the audience as to whether to live in a world with measure without being conditioned by measures was possible or not.

At the end of his talks the old man, without ceremony, rose from the chair and left, undistinguishable from other people and disappeared among the trees.

The old man was an example of total harmony of man with his environment; the harmony we are searching for today in order to save our planet from destruction.

we give has a value because it accumulates merit. This means that all the wealth we store up has no intrinsic value, but as soon as we give it, letting go and feeling generosity, it becomes very valuable. It's interesting because this is the opposite of what we usually think. We usually think that what we have has value and is serving us and what we give away has no value for us any longer. But the view of the teachings is usually the opposite of the normal view, because the ordinary attitude is based on confusion and solidification of the ego, which leads to more pain and suffering.

On the southern side of the mandala of the five Buddha families is Ratnasambhava, 'Jewel Birth', the golden yellow Buddha who sits in the giving posture with the right palm facing out. The Ratna means the 'jewel' and represents the transformation of greed and pride that comes from feeling like you are not enough and will never have enough, into equanimity and enriching presence. This happens through recognition of the equal suffering and Buddha nature of all

beings. Harmony is not something to be newly created, but it is discovered only by observing. In "quiet" observation, without observer and observed, there is relationship with everything.

In the first two pages of his last Journal, of extreme beauty, he talks about a tree and expresses his entire teaching, life and testament:

"If you establish a relation with it (the tree) then you have relationship with mankind..."

But we never look deeply into the quality of a tree; we never really touch it, feel its solidity, its rough bark and hear the sound that is part of the tree....

You must be extraordinarily sensitive to hear that sound. That sound is not the noise of the world, not the noise of the chattering of the mind, not the vulgarity of human quarrels..."

Once in Bodh Gaya with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche we visited the place where the Buddha was supposed to have lived as an ascetic for six years. There is not much there nowadays, a few trees and some inscriptions on stones. Rinpoche started to feel a tree touching its rough bark. Moving from the front to the back of the tree as if to hear its sound, he reminded me of a non-conceptual relation with nature and things around us.

Unfortunately our self interest does not allow us to watch, to be aware and to establish a deep relation with everything that lives. As soon as we see something we judge unconsciously: "It is useful to me."

"It is not useful." If it is not we react by shutting it out of our consideration. If it is, we become over-involved in it.

"If we could establish a deep abiding relationship with nature we would never kill an animal for our appetite, we would never harm, vivisection a monkey, a dog, a guinea pig for our benefit. We would find other ways to heal our wounds, heal our body."

To deepen our relation with all that lives we need to understand the working of the mind, its fabrications and measuring, our self interest, our fear.

When our limitations are seen, observation, sensitivity and all that we call love unfold. We realize our commitment, not to a wife or husband, not to an external teacher, not to our religion or philosophy but to humanity and its environment.

"This is not a sentiment or romantic imagination but a reality of a relationship with everything that lives and moves on the earth."

Faced with the possible destruction of our planet, not caring for our children, we still kill other human beings, we still fight wars while endless discussions on how to save our planet are held.

The new consciousness we need in order to save the small earth we live in, does not come from education, has always existed side by side with human cruelty, selfishness and will to dominate; it needs to be discovered not in notions but within ourselves. Some, like the old man, discovered it and gave it as a gift to us all.

beings.

This is the Buddha connected to prosperity, and the transformation of self-centred feeling into compassion and openness. He is the transformation of feelings like, "I don't have enough to give, I can't afford it" into giving.

This giving is not only giving materially or the giving of the Dharma, but the act of letting go of control and allowing ourselves to experience the essential simple richness of being so beautifully symbolized by Ratnasambhava's palm which faces outward and touches the earth.

The female Buddha of the South is Mamaki, which means 'mineness' indicating she sees all beings as her children, identical to herself, coming from her experience of the oneness of all life, the wisdom of inner unity creating the peace of equanimity.

Gampopa says that there is proper and improper giving. Improper giving is giving to harm others, to gain fame or to rival others. The most base intention for giving is from fear of poverty in the next life or to get power and wealth in the future. It is improper to give weapons

or give food to gluttons or drink to alcoholics. We shouldn't give a gift if we don't rejoice in doing so, while angry or with scorn and unfriendliness.

Proper giving is the gift of the body, though unless you are a very high level of bodhisattva it is not advised to do this, and for a tantric practitioner the body is the mandala and should thus be treasured as such. The attitude should be to give something of value. The recipients are of four kinds: the most distinguished being a spiritual teacher and the Three Jewels, then someone who has been helpful to us like our parents, after that someone sick or orphaned, and lastly someone who has been harmful to us.

There is also the gift of fearlessness which means harboring someone in fear. For example giving refuge to a woman who has been beaten by her husband, or giving relief from fear to someone afraid of robbers or someone frightened by animals, floods, etc.

The greatest gift is the gift of the Dharma. The Dharma should only be given to those who want it.

*continued on page 15*



## Lama Kunsang Dorje

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Sarma and the Ancient one, Nyingma, when one practises tantra there must be three main considerations: first of all that everything is pure vision, so both women and men are seen as deities. All one hears is the voice of the deities, their mantra, the non-dual sound and emptiness. Likewise all one thinks is the mind of the deity, the Dharmakaya. These three principles must be applied by tantric practitioners of all sects, since tantra uses the objects of desire, transforming them rather than rejecting them.

In Tibet, Yeshe Tsogyel, the wife of the king, became the consort of Padmasambhava when the king, after receiving teaching from Padmasambhava, gave his wife to him as an offering. Yeshe Tsogyel became a disciple of Padmasambhava and obtained realization and went to the pure land of Padmasambhava. Among the lineage of disciples who followed Padmasambhava, there were many who had a consort especially those masters who were discoverers of hidden teachings contained in the *Rin chen ter dzod*. The majority of them were lay people.

If one has a wife it does not mean that he is not part of the sangha because the real community is composed of daka and dakini who have obtained realization and thus women also form a part of the community as do the men. Men and women help one another on the path of the teaching and especially in the practice of tantra, one needs a consort and vice versa in order to reach the state of great bliss. So it is easy to understand how a man and a woman can help each other on a spiritual path.

In Buddhist teaching all beings are pervaded with Buddha nature so when the conditions are present to awaken the Buddha nature through meeting a master and the teaching, whether the person is a man or a woman, their Buddha nature can be awakened and they can obtain illumination.

**The Mirror:** How and when did you meet Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche?

**Lama Kunsang Dorje:** I had heard of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in India and had seen his books which had been published in Dharamsala and through this contact I wanted to meet him. I was very happy to know that there was such a teacher writing these books and giving teachings not only in India but also in the West.

About five or six years ago I heard that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche would be in Switzerland and so I went to meet him. I also met him this year in Switzerland and although he usually teaches in a western language he taught for an afternoon in Tibetan and so I received teachings from him. I greatly appreciate the work that he is doing in the West.

All the Dzog-chen teachings in general have been transmitted in Tibet principally by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra and Vairocana. Guru Rinpoche said that there would be various emanations of himself who would be incarnated in human form. I am convinced that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is one of these emanations. In the biography of Padmasambhava it is said that in the difficult era in which we now find ourselves, that in each country a mahasiddha, an emanation of Guru Rinpoche, a discoverer of hidden treasures would manifest.

**The Mirror:** Do you have any particular advice to give to western practitioners?

**Lama Kunsang Dorje:** I don't have any particular advice apart from that which is contained in the teachings. The essence of the Buddha's teaching consists of three principles: practising virtue, avoiding that which is harmful for himself and others and controlling the mind. This is the essence of the teaching. For a practitioner of tantra and Dzog-chen the most important commitment is the relationship with the master. This relationship must be maintained. Even though the Buddha is the teacher who transmitted the teaching, our actual contact with the teaching is through

our master and so it is important to maintain a genuine relationship with him. We must recognize the importance of the master and have great consideration for him because if we do not, the teaching that we receive from him will have a limited effect. For example, if we receive teaching from a master whom we consider to be a Bodhisattva, the teaching will become nectar for us whereas if we consider the master just as an ordinary person, the teaching we receive from him will be just like ordinary food.

In sutra, tantra and in Dzog-chen it is very important to have a good relationship with the master and put your trust in him. Especially in the Dzog-chen teaching, it is not enough just to study and reflect in order to understand the meaning of the teaching. If we wish to realize the state of rigpa, the primordial state and understand the real nature of things as they are, it is important to have a good relationship with the master. The state of rigpa is realized through the interdependence of the blessing of the master and the faith that we have in him. Thus we should not have a mistaken view of him because this is like dying.

Another important point is the collaboration between disciples. When we are disciples of the same master it is like being part of the master's mandala and we must collaborate with each other. This is what is called Vajra Brothers and Sisters, regarding each other as dakas and dakinis and manifestations of the energy of the master himself. When jealousy or bad feelings arise between disciples, this is like breaking a commitment. If we maintain this relationship with the master and disciples then through our practice of the teaching we can obtain realization.

*Translator - Elio Guarisco*

## Giving and receiving

*continued from page 14*

The attitude in giving should be free of all material gain and considerations of fame or other worldly gain. This is the way Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche always

gives the teachings. He gives them out of compassion. Sometimes we act like we are doing him a favor by supporting the Community or coming to the teachings. This is turned around backwards. He is doing us a big favor by teaching and what we give back is not doing him a favor, it is doing ourselves and the world a favor. Through our development of the transmissions we have received and our support of his initiatives we give him a reason to remain.

To give by transcending awareness (Prajna) means to give knowing that the donor, the gift and the recipient are all empty. This is what it says in the Chod practice just before the offering of the gift of the Dzog-chen teachings: "In the end everything, the offering, the offerer and the recipients of the offerings, abide in the Dzogpa Chenpo AH...".

If we give a small thing with this attitude the merit accrued will be greater than a large gift that is tainted by expecting rewards. So, too, a great gift that is given with the recognition of compassion and emptiness can benefit many both materially and spiritually. The motivation for the gift is to establish all sentient beings on the path toward realization. There should be neither attachment nor expectation of reward for the gift.

So generosity governed by sunyata and compassion does not give rise to samsara, but is pure in itself and leads to liberation. The effect, whether we want it or not, will be enjoyment, ability to attract others and thus help them toward enlightenment, strength, good complexion, happiness and fearlessness. Through the gift of the Dharma we quickly meet the Buddhas. Because we live in a world of consumerism and commerce and must evaluate things on this basis every day, it is easy to think in these terms toward the Community. But this is really wrong view. We could instead think of what we could offer to the community. We might not have any excess money, but we can offer energy and energy is the gold of Ratnasambhava. We can practise, paint, type, make calls, translate,

organize, build, support and open our hearts and hands in many many ways - all this is generosity. The key is the view, the attitude with which we do things. Following our teacher's example we can offer body, speech and mind, which will lead toward lessening of suffering and increased happiness.

The teachings are in a precarious moment, the forces of materialism are increasing and the establishment of the lineage is uncertain. Thus our teacher works day and night. There is a line from Trungpa Rinpoche's "The Sadhana of All the Siddhas" which might apply here: "The only offering I can make is to follow your example".

## Tibetan Arts

*continued from page 13*

personal experience and not on mere scholarly study, as he ironically says was the case in Lama Mipham's briefer work written a century earlier. Jeffrey Hopkins has little doubt that many of the variations were the fruit of his own creativity.

The book is, however, more than just a lively sex manual.

"May you be protected by the self-arisen Great Seal (Mahamudra) Rolling into one all stable and moving things

With the lightning lasso of immutable adamantine pleasure"

says the author in the opening lines. And Jeffrey Hopkins's chapter on "sexual pleasure and spiritual insight" is certainly the highpoint of his generously long introduction. Although not a 'secret' text, the view of *Kama Shashtra* is clearly that of the inner tantras, and it is this that makes it of particular interest: "Melt the moon of the self-arisen basic constituent into milk. Give young ladies the great spacious bliss,

Clear and non-conceptual." Enough said!

Mrs Dorje Yudon Yuthok, who suggested and helped with the translation, and Jeffrey Hopkins are to be thanked for making this delightful work available to a non-Tibetan speaking public.

*Robin Cooke*

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# A 'Little Buddha' Travelogue

by Paolo Brunatto

## Sabandia. 6th June, 1992

On the veranda of Bernardo Bertolucci's villa overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea, Lama Dongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, tutor to the Royal Family of Bhutan, Rudy Wurlitzer, the American script-writer, disciple of Dudjom Rinpoche, together with Bertolucci himself are putting the finishing touches to the screen-play of 'Little Buddha'. There are just three months to go until the shooting of the film. I ask Dongsar Khyentse Rinpoche what he thinks of Bertolucci's film: "I think making a film like this is more important than building a hundred monasteries" is his reply.

Bertolucci has asked the advice of many Lamas before embarking on the adventure of a film on Buddhism. He has met H. H. the Dalai Lama, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Sogyal Rinpoche, Ayang Rinpoche and many others.

## Flashback to 21st August, 1991

Bertolucci is meeting Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who is in retreat in his hut in the wood beneath the Gorpa at Merigar. The Italian film director has just had the idea of portraying the story of a Western tulku, and he would like to know from Rinpoche how a child psychologically lives the condition of tulku. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche (who was recognised as a child as being the tulku of Adzam Drugpa) says that when one is venerated and placed on a throne when still very little, one is made to feel responsible and to take on that role.

One behaves like a realised child while keeping the characteristics of a "normal" child. And he recalls: "I had a mischievous side to me. One day, when I was the guest of the King of Dégé, at Dégé Gonchen monastery, from a window overlooking a courtyard where the King was sitting motionless on his prize horse during a military parade, I had lots of fun blinding him by flashing a little mirror at him in order to distract from the solemnity of the occasion".

## Rome. 7th March, 1992

Cinecittà. Vittorio Storaro, cinematographer, winner of three Oscars, who is trying out new equipment and technology for 'Little Buddha', months before the start of shooting, is telling me about the new expressive need he has been having: "to visualise photographically the equilibrium of the elements."

I've rediscovered the enthusiasm I felt as a child when I was in search for everything for myself. And the word "enlighten-ment" seems to take on a double meaning in this experience: the technico-creative sense, and the deeper, spiritual one. The past, present and future are the "time" I'm trying to enlighten in order to become enlightened".

## London. 17th June, 1992

I ask Ayang Rinpoche - on a brief visit to London - what he thinks of Bertolucci. The Tibetan Lama tells me that even though Bertolucci is using only his intellectual comprehension of Buddhism, he manages to understand very elevated teachings, and, he adds, he is gifted with an innate and spontaneous compassion.

## Bhutan. 16th October, 1992

I have just arrived in this sublime country, where everything seems pure, rarefied, essential. The dark image of the roof of a Gonpa, a crescent moon, the enhancement of a time is silhouetted against the back lighting of the deep and cold blue sky; in the distance mingled with the thunder of a torrent the sounds of trumpets, drums, cymbals, shells and the imminent crescendo of the mantra of a puja. Tomorrow I will be on the set of 'Little Buddha' at the majestic Dzong (fortress-monastery) of Paro, which I can see, a white profile, illuminated by the moon, at the bottom of the valley.

## Paro Dzong. 18th October, 1992

In the courtyard of the immense monastery, a scene of 'Little Buddha' is being shot with dozens of monks of all ages, Lamas and dignitaries. It's the arrival of the three Tulkus that have been brought to Bhutan by Lama Norbu - this is the name of the protagonist in Bertolucci's film - for the tests of recognition and to receive the judgement of the Oracle. The part of Lama Norbu is interpreted by Ying Ruo Chen, the Chinese actor who played the role of the Governor in 'The Last Emperor'.

Ying Ruo Chen was also Vice Minister for Culture in the People's Republic of China in the mid-eighties.

In a pause between takes of 'Little Buddha', Dongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, the Lama who is also the spiritual assistant of Bertolucci and Ying Ruo Chen take a stroll along the big wooden bridge that leads to the great Dzong on the hill. They're talking about the meaning of Buddhism. It seems like a dream - an ex-Communist politician and a Tibetan Lama agreeing on some principles of Dharma, especially on the practice of compassion. They are walking in the wind that blows the prayer flags that adorn the bridge like two old friends.

In the afternoon, after crossing Paro Valley, I reach Samsam Chorten, where the Great Stupa, which will hold the ashes of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, is being built (the cremation eventually took place on November 4th in the presence of 45,000 people). On the mountain opposite, integrated into the overhanging rocks, there is the legendary Taksan - The Tigers' Nest - where Padmasambhava meditated, and behind the little monastery there's a cave where Machig Labdrön practised.

## Bhutan. 19 October, 1992

Bertolucci is shooting the spectacular scene of the enthronement of the three Tulkus in Paro Dzong Gonpa. Sitting on the throne is a Lama with extraordinarily intense eyes and a face that emanates serenity. It is Khyongla Rato, who plays the part of the Abbot of the monastery in 'Little Buddha'. He is a Lama who normally lives in New York. He is also Richard Gere's master.

## 20 October, 1992

On the hill above Thimpu the capital of Bhutan, I am visiting a small monastery of nuns of the Nyingma tradition and Dzog-chen practitioners. Some of them wear long hair under special authorization of their master. I speak to one of them who strikes me with her modesty and humility, while working in the kitchen, and I ask her, "What is meditation for you?" She replies without hesitation as a true practitioner, "Knowing one's own condition".

## Paro Dzong. 21 October, 1992

I overhear a conversation between a Tibetan Lama and Keanu Reeves, who after playing a part in Coppola's 'Dracula', is now interpreting Buddha Shakyamuni in Bertolucci's film. The Buddhist master asks him, "If somebody said to you: 'you, Keanu Reeves, are actually a silkworm, you aren't really Keanu - up to now your relations, society, etc., have been fooling you - you have never been what you think you are, you're something else'.... How would you feel?" "Fear", Keanu replies, and the Lama, "And what would be left of Keanu? Maybe the mind that's trying to understand what you really are.... what your true nature is."

## Kathmandu, end of October, 1992

On my way back from Nepal where the takes of 'Little Buddha' are continuing, I stop off to find Chatrul Rinpoche in his monastery at Parpin to hand over to him a letter Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche had entrusted to me. Chatrul Rinpoche is one of the greatest living masters of Dzog-chen. He is famous for his rigour and wisdom. His charisma is highly apparent, and his face is an unforgettable one. I also visit Naki Gonpa, the hermitage-monastery of Ugyen Tulku - a sort of earthly paradise. Then I go to find Sala Karma Samten. For him, too, I have a letter from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Great practitioner that he is, he's in retreat. But he receives me all the same. He asks me, "What can I do for you?" Distracted, I reply, "Nothing". Whereas, before starting out on my trip, Chogyal Namkhai Norbu had told me: "When you see Sala Karma Samten, ask him for a Garuda initiation."

I also meet Lopen Tenzin Namdak at his monastery near Swayambunath.

## 30 October, 1992

The evocative scenes of Siddhartha's enlightenment are being shot at Gokarna Park, a magical forest in the Kathmandu Valley. Under the centuries-old tree there is a sacred feel to the air, as if time had stopped. Even the monkeys look on enchanted at the spectacle of Siddhartha's "re-awakening". All the technicians are highly concentrated. For Keanu Reeves, the actor, the undertaking is a truly difficult one. He has to act, to "mime" - if one can call it that - the expression of someone living the inner process of enlightenment. As well as studying Buddhist texts and receiving teachings from Lamas, to prepare himself for this role, Keanu has had to practise meditation, along with physical yoga so as to assume

the lotus position.

But let's go back to 7 March, 1992. In the little room of David Cristensen, a practitioner who has done a three year retreat and who is also a disciple of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, seated beside a window from which one can see the great Stupa of Baudhanath, I ask Bertolucci why he has decided to make a film on Buddhism. "It was a calling", he replies. "There is a real need for me to see modern day reality in the light of Buddhist thought, the spirituality of Buddhism. What attracts me in Siddhartha is his determination to search within himself for truth.... or rather for reality. Why have I chosen to make a film on Buddhism? Well maybe I'll understand once I've finished the film".

## Dudjom Rinpoche Reincarnation



The reincarnation of the late Khyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, supreme head of the Nyingmapa school, was officially recognised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama on July 1st, 1992.

The reincarnation, three year old Shonu Senge, is the son of Kalsang Dradul and Sonam Chokyi, born on the 9th of October 1990, the 21st of the 8th Tibetan month in the Iron Horse Year. His enthronement will take place on the 15th day of the 8th Tibetan month of the Water Bird Year, Thursday, 30th September 1993, at Orgyen Do Ngak Choling Monastery in Baudhanath, Kathmandu, Nepal.

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