

# THE MIRROR

The International Newspaper of the Dzog-chen Community

Issue 20

## SPACE IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

by Des Barry

The long anticipated retreat of the beginning of Spring, with the crocuses blooming, the sap of the maple trees dripping gently into the gatherers' buckets, and the vajra songs of the students gathered with their Maestro, floating over the balmy air of the grounds of Stoneleigh Burnham School, turned out to be something rather different.

The Maestro and those travelling with him, arrived bundled in down vests, woollen scarves, and long underwear, to face an extremely persistent New England winter. The snow still lay deep in the fields; and the sides of the roads were piled high after many a storm's plowing. Still, we began on time, with community people from Japan, Russia, California, New Mexico, Colorado, Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina, all gathering with the East coast locals for a retreat of Long De. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche began immediately with a beautiful discourse on the lineage of Long De, interspersed with tales of his own experience, to inspire the creative imagination of the students towards a desire to practice; and to whet the appetite for the teachings to come.

Ominous portents, however, filled the airwaves, as the media warned of a gigantic storm, sweeping up from the south, which would reach us by noon of the next day. Prudence demanded that we prepare, but the next morning's teachings began, without losing any time, while the first snow wraiths swirled



against the windows of the room.

As Rinpoche laid the foundation of understanding, from the basis of sutra, tantra and Dzog-chen, to the warm and comfortable participants, the storm gained in intensity, and snow began to drift across the roadways of Stoneleigh Burnham School. News came that all roads were being closed, including the main Interstate Highway, so the retreat participants dispersed from our gathering to their respective hotels to wait out the storm.

The wind howled, and the ever persistent powder sifted down from the heavy clouds. The hills of

Conway, and surrounding, sank under a heavy blanket, as white as wonderbread, the houses wrapped in the growing drifts. Outside, and throughout the night, the ploughs shouldered aside the snow to keep the roads clear, and the morning dawned on our driveways, buried a foot, cars barely visible, and the promise of certain steady shovelling to make ourselves mobile again to reach the morning teaching.

The effort wasn't without its good result. Rinpoche explained the origin of certain transmissions of Torpa Nonzog Gyalpo, and how these tantrtras were connected with

the Dzog-chen Long De. Then, together we practised, in order to participate in the empowerment necessary for the transmission of Long De, from Master to Students.

In the afternoon, Rinpoche gave a detailed overview of the three series of teachings, and drew parallels between the four Naljyor of the Sem De series on the mind, and the Mahamudra system particular to Gampopa. He touched briefly on Long De, which he was to develop in the following days, and then explained the four Choja of the Marnag De.

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## On Emptiness and Compassion



A transcription of part of a panel discussion at the 1992 Conference of the European Buddhist Union in Berlin between well-known teachers from different Buddhist schools including the Ven. Sangharakshita, founder of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, the Ven. Rewata Dhamma, scholar and teacher of Theravada Buddhism, the Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen master and the Ven. Sogyal Rinpoche, a Dzog-chen master and founder of the Rigpa centres.

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## Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche TEACHING TOUR CONTINUES

Since the beginning of 1993, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has been travelling and teaching extensively through South America from the Argentinian gar, Tashigar through Peru and then Venezuela where he taught in Merida and Caracas.

In the United States Rinpoche gave teachings at Tsegyalgar in Massachusetts followed by seminars in New York City.

On his return to Europe he will hold a 10 day retreat at Merigar, Italy over the Easter period and after a brief pause, will travel on to teach in Austria and then for the first time in Israel and Thailand. Later in the summer, Rinpoche will give a 10 day retreat in Japan.

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# Dzog-chen: the Path of Self-Liberation

“When we discover our real nature, we discover everything”

*A transcription edited from the teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche given at the Pagoda, Bois de Vincennes in Paris, France on July 23rd, 1992.*

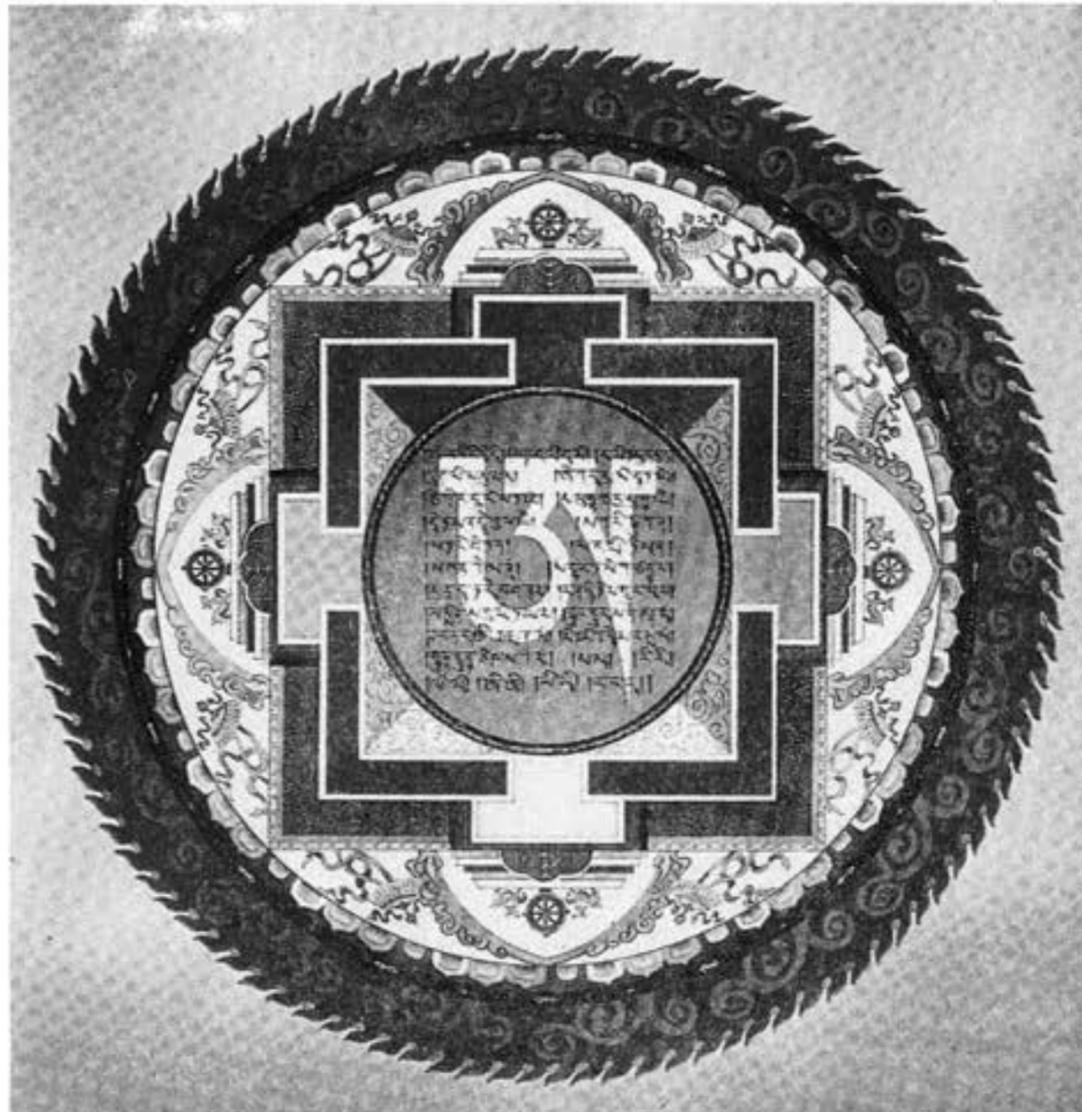
Now I want to explain what the characteristics of the Dzog-chen teaching are. You have learned a little about the sutra and tantra teachings whose characteristic methods are called the Path of Renunciation and the Path of Transformation. The characteristic method of the Dzog-chen teaching is the Path of Self-Liberation. But you must understand that Dzog-chen is not only the title of a teaching. It is very important that you notice that.

In general people always use different titles of teachings such as the “upadesa series”. You consider it something special but you don’t really discover what Dzog-chen is. To know or discover the real sense of the Dzog-chen teaching you don’t need the title of a book or teaching or some particular type of study because when you read or follow a book, you are constructing intellectual knowledge. You will never really discover your state of Dzog-chen that way. You can discover it if you listen well and try to understand the meaning of the teaching and then use methods. Method means you work concretely with your experience; that is the only way you can discover the real meaning of Dzog-chen. This does not belong to any kind of title or book. So you must not be conditioned by books and try to understand what is being communicated. That is the principle of your capacity.

If you don’t have the capacity to follow in that way in order to discover your state, then we say that person has no capacity to follow Dzog-chen teaching. But this doesn’t mean that a person cannot read or analyze books. Particularly for Westerners, there is no problem to read books and do analyses; everybody knows how to read and judge. Also people like to read books before they go to sleep. Usually next to where people sleep there are many interesting books. This is a way to enjoy books but you will never discover your real nature that way. That is why we must understand the real meaning of the teaching.

## Transformation

First of all you must understand what self-liberation means - what the difference is between the Path of Self-Liberation and the Path of Transformation. When we say transformation we already have our concept of pure and impure vision. You remember how our state and its aspects are presented: with the symbol of the vajra with the two aspects of pure and impure dimensions. If you do not have that



Rainbow Vajra Mandala

(© Marc Morrel)

concept then how can you transform and what do you transform? You are transforming impure vision in pure vision. You are transforming your five aggregations in five Dhyani Buddhas and your five elements in the five yum of the Buddhas, your five emotions in the five wisdoms. You have a precise concept of pure and impure vision. So you also have the consideration that impure has no value, that it has the aspect of samsara. That is why you are transforming it in pure vision. So this is the principle of transformation.

## Self-Liberation

When we speak about self-liberation we do not have this concept. Self-liberation doesn’t mean you are transforming something in something else. There is not even this concept of pure or impure. Of course this doesn’t mean that when you are doing Dzog-chen practice your impure vision disappears. But when you are in a state of contemplation there is no consideration of pure or impure; then you are in a state of self-liberation.

You can learn about the principle of self-liberation with the example of the mirror. In the Dzog-chen teaching we use the symbol of the mirror in order to have knowledge, understanding. How can we have knowledge and understanding

through the symbol of the mirror? First of all, with a mirror you must observe yourself, not only looking at objects, judging and thinking that this is good or bad, this is pure or impure. When you have this concept then you also have dualistic vision. How can you overcome this? You observe yourself instead of looking at objects. For example, if you are looking in a mirror, you can see your face, your existence. In this way you can discover, for example, what your face looks like. This means that you are observing yourself and you can discover your limitations, your condition and your existence.

But in general we don’t observe ourselves, particularly when we study in an intellectual way. When you have the concept that there is your point of view then there is also the point of view of others. If you are convinced of your own point of view then you must negate that of others. So this means judging everything. You are looking at an object and doing an analysis. This is very different from observing yourself.

## Tawa

All traditions of sutra and tantra speak about the point of view or *tawa* and every school or tradition has its *tawa*. If you are following a tradition such as Sakyapa, then you

will learn the point of view of the Sakyapa. If you are following the Kagyupa tradition then you will learn the Kagyupa point of view. Then you will defend the Kagyupa point of view and negate others. There are many arguments between schools and scholars. If you study the Madhyamika and Prajnaparamita texts then you must follow one of these methods. First you study and follow one school of thought then you study another and make a comparison. In any case there are many arguments. Why are there arguments and why has it developed this way? Because a point of view or *tawa* is developed looking at an object. You consider that this is good, that is bad, judging as though you were looking at an object. Your senses are pointed at an object and you do an analysis and form a judgment. In that way maybe you can develop some type of intellectual study. For example, if you want to give a university lecture then you must be able to do some type of analysis otherwise people will not consider you to be a scholar.

But that is not the solution for overcoming samsara or obtaining realization. Discovering your own real nature means that you must observe yourself rather than looking at objects. That is why in the Dzog-chen teaching we use the example of looking in the mirror.

Looking in the mirror is only an example because of course you cannot discover all your limitations and problems in the mirror. Observing your limitations, your existence, your attitude and your intention you can discover many of the sources of your problems. So this is one of the most important functions of the mirror. The mirror makes you understand that you must observe yourself instead of judging others.

## Potentiality

Another very important function of the mirror is for discovering what is meant by our potentiality. All sentient beings have infinite potentiality, not only human beings. But if we are human beings we can observe and discover that we have great potentiality. How can we discover this potentiality and its nature? First of all we must observe ourselves and then we know that we have this potentiality. Then through the example of the mirror we can understand what being in our real nature means. Knowing or being in our real nature means beyond judging and doing analyses. Then we learn with the example of the mirror.

For example, if there is a mirror in front of you, you look in the mirror and see different kinds of reflections. They may be nice or ugly things, big or small, different colours and shapes. When you look in the mirror you are attached to the object which is reflected there.

## Dualistic vision

In the sutra teaching of the Buddha it says that everything is based on interdependency. An object in front of the mirror and the mirror’s capacity to manifest reflections are interdependent. Through that interdependence the reflection manifests. That reflection is unreal but you have a very precise idea that the object is real. You still remain in dualistic vision and with your concept that you are here and that you see in the mirror. Reflections appear in the mirror. They are unreal but the object is real. You are looking in the mirror but that is not real knowledge. Even if you have at least an idea of “unreal”, it has no function. It is only intellectual knowledge. So this is how our normal condition is.

## Being the mirror

When we say that we have knowledge or we have discovered our real nature and we are in this nature, that means that we are “being” the mirror. You see, “being” the mirror or “looking” in the mirror are two completely different things. If we “are” the mirror then we have no concept of dualistic vision.

If a reflection manifests in the mirror why is it manifesting? There are two reasons. One is because the

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mirror has the capacity to manifest infinite reflections. This is its qualification.

The other reason is that when there is an object and the mirror has the capacity to manifest, that is normal, but the mirror has no idea of checking or accepting this object for reflecting. The mirror doesn't need any programme for that. This is what is called its qualification or infinite potentiality.

In the same way we have infinite potentiality but we are ignorant of that. When we are ignorant of our real nature then we always have the consideration that "I am here" and "the object is there", "I am looking and seeing an object", etc. We never discover that we are like a mirror. And if we never discover this then of course there is no way that we can become the mirror. But when we discover that, then there is a possibility that we will be the mirror.

When you are the mirror then you have no problems with reflections; they can be big, small, nice, ugly, any kind; the reflections are only a manifestation of your qualification. When you have no problems of reflections then that means self-liberation. You are not changing or transforming something, you are only being in your real nature.

You remember "the same flavour" in Mahamudra teaching and the Dzog-chen Semde. You can understand this if you are really being the mirror. Whether there is a nice or ugly reflection there is no difference for you. When you are in your real nature there is no change at all. That is the real meaning of self-liberation.

### Direct introduction

When a teacher gives a direct transmission it means that the teacher uses methods so that you can have an experience. With such experience you discover or have an introduction to your primordial state or we can say knowledge or understanding or state of *rigpa*. You can use different names but it does not change it at all.

When we are speaking about practice we say contemplation. Contemplation really means that you have that knowledge and that you are really being in that knowledge, like the mirror. Then we can say that we are in a state of contemplation. Until you have that experience of knowledge, until you discover that state, you can speak about contemplation but it is only a name. Contemplation is not only an idea but something we discover with experience. So that is the famous Dzog-chen - the state of *rigpa*. Until we discover that state, Dzog-chen is only a word.

### Direct experience

In the Dzog-chen teachings, a

teacher teaches you methods that you can apply for discovering that. When you say "I am practising or following Dzog-chen teachings" it doesn't mean that you are doing some type of prayers or reciting a mantra or doing some visualization. It means that following a teacher and using methods you discover that state. When you have discovered that state, then you still need many kinds of methods for realizing it. Discovering this state of your real nature and realizing it are completely different things.

Many people have the idea that when they have had some experience or discovery that they are already enlightened. But this doesn't mean enlightened.

The state of enlightenment means you have direct knowledge of what the state of *rigpa* is and not only learning through intellectual study.

When you follow teaching in an intellectual way first you have many ideas - thinking, judging and making analyses. You can accept and follow these ideas but if you have many



problems, it means it is not real knowledge but rather like following something blindly because you haven't had any direct experience.

So when we say direct introduction and experience for discovering our real nature, it means we have direct experience through our senses. And with these experiences then we discover.

For example, if I show you an object you look at it and you have knowledge of its form and colour. Now if I ask you to forget about it, you can't. If I ask you to change your idea, you can't. Why, because it is your direct experience. So discovering your real nature means something like that.

When you are studying in an intellectual way you are following someone or someone's ideas. For example you can believe someone's ideas today, but if you discover your state maybe it will not be true tomorrow. You can always change

your ideas.

This problem will continue until you have discovered your state. This is the weak point of intellectual study.

### Discovering

So when we say "discover", it means that you have a precise experience. Particularly when you are following Dzog-chen teaching you must discover your real nature directly with method. When you discover your nature you discover the value of transmission at the same time. In this case you also discover the principle and function of the teaching. Discovering the principle of the teaching does not mean that you accept or decide something.

In the same way you discover the value of the teacher through experience not by deciding that he must be your root master. In general many people choose a root master perhaps because he is very famous or people consider him to be very important. And then if you don't discover your real nature you always say, "Oh, this is my root master" and then you go to someone else to try to discover it. This is an intellectual way of deciding who your root master is.

### Nothing to decide

There is nothing to decide for path, for teaching, for master; you don't need to decide or accept anything at all. Particularly if you meet a serious Dzog-chen teacher - you never accept a teaching, or teacher or transmission. The teacher only asks you to discover, gives you methods, and working together with these methods you try to discover that. When you have discovered one, you have discovered all. This is the base of the Dzog-chen teaching. If you only open one eye you can see everything. You don't need to open your eyes one at a time in order to see. This is

an example we use in the Dzog-chen teaching. When we discover our real nature, we discover everything. For example, many Dzog-chen masters never studied or learned in an intellectual way. When they received a precise transmission they practised and used methods and then woke up and became learned and scholarly. That is an example. There really is that kind of function.

The principle is that we try to discover our real nature. To do this firstly we must open our eyes, look at our situation, condition and limitations, and learn in a precise way. You remember the Buddha's teaching on cause and effect. When you discover there is cause then you discover that there is also effect. If you open your eyes without limiting (yourself) then you can discover everything - particularly how you use teaching, transmission and methods.

## NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

### Teaching Programme

#### Austria

June 4 - 6 in Gutenstein

Contact Isabella Ernst, Brunnengasse 34/12, Vienna.  
Tel. 222 408 3016

#### Israel

June 23 - 26 in Jerusalem

at "Mishkenot Shananim", "Place of the very quiet people"  
Fisher Hall.

June 27

at the University of Tel Aviv:

Tibet Day lecture on the Culture and History of Tibet featuring  
Prof. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

For further information on the retreat and the conference  
and hotel bookings contact:

Noa Blass, Biltmore Street 15, 62194 Tel Aviv.  
Tel. 97 2 3457543.

#### Thailand

July 2 - 6

For information contact Pierre Wittmann, P. O. Box 37,  
Mua Hin, 77110, Thailand.

#### Japan

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  
Shimomeguro, Meguro-ku, Tokyo, Japan  
Tel. 03 371 67248

## Coordination of Seminars and Retreats with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Anyone wishing to invite Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to give teachings should first send a written invitation personally to him. In a country where there is a Gakyil, this should be done through the Blue Gakyil. If Rinpoche accepts the invitation, the organization of his journey and the retreat should be arranged and co-ordinated by those who are making the invitation in collaboration with the Blue Gakyil of Merigar, which has been appointed by Rinpoche himself for this task. As soon as the dates and place, name, address, fax and telephone number of the contact person in charge of organization and information about the event has been established, this information should be communicated immediately to the Merigar Blue Gakyil, who will pass on the information to "The Mirror".

## Teachings in Caracas



by Pablo Lau Rivera

On February 15, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche together with Fabio Andrico and Prima Mai arrived in Caracas after an air trip from Merida. Although the trip is short, about 45 minutes, it is always breath taking because while leaving and entering the Mérida airport, the plane skims over snowy peaks and the nearby houses of the city, maneuvering onto a narrow and tilted runway, which made Fabio exclaim: "It is the most anguishing airport in the world". Nevertheless, there have been no accidents there because of all the care taken due to this reason.

The retreat at Mérida was a momentous event with the beautiful sights and the quietness and surroundings at the Mérida National Park.

In Caracas it took us time to organize the following retreat. A few hours before the beginning of the retreat, a very upset manager of the location where the retreat was to take place called to inform us that the main pipe supplying water to all the area had cracked and that the technicians of the National Institute of Sanitary Works in charge to repair the damage had said that it would take them two or three months to fix it. It was impossible, under such conditions, to lodge 50 people plus a few others that would come sporadically. The search for and allocation of another place became very difficult and futile.

Then we decided to appeal to the Mayor's Office, the Central University, the Chairman's Office and the Army, who sent water trucks every day during the retreat, making the problem unnoticeable.

Everyday we assembled in the same room where Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave the teaching and practised Yantra Yoga under the merry, experienced guidance of Fabio. Following the morning teachings and after lunch Prima Mai guided us through the Om A Hum Dance, followed later by the Dance of the Vajra, which people had begun to learn in Mérida. The Dance on the Mandala continued in the night time for those who wanted to practise more.

The Mandala had been made a few days before the arrival of Prima Mai by a group of members of the Community using the plans that Prima Mai had sent from Argentina. We made it on sailcloth cut into five strips 8 meters long by 1.6 meters and joined by "Magic Zippers", thus making it very simple to carry. After the retreat, Prima taught us the Dance of the Six Lokas for four days.

During the retreat Adriana Dal Borgo instructed us on how to make a Namkha and more than 30 people began to construct them. But despite working until late hours, most people were not able to complete their Namkhas.

One night, Oly de Soto offered dinner to our Master and the retreat participants in her beautiful and strange house. The dinner ended in a drum feast Barlovento style (a Black area of the country famous for its drum celebrations) mixed with calypso and antillean rhythms.

As the retreat ended, Rinpoche went to visit some land which had been presented by Chuo Ortol. It was situated in a forested area, surrounded by a river and near the sea. It seemed very much to the taste of Rinpoche. On March 8, before leaving Venezuela, Rinpoche, Fabio and Prima Mai visited Cumana to take a few days off to rest. Cumana, a city on the coast, is where Paola Civile is organizing a group to receive the teaching of the Master.

When Rinpoche came back to Caracas to fly to New York, he announced the creation of a new Gar here in Venezuela near Caracas. It is the land he visited with Chuo Ortol and Rinpoche considered that it has everything: beautiful forest, a river, a mountain, and located near the sea.

Everyone was very surprised and quickly began to make different projects and develop plans.

The name of the Gar is Lundrupgar which means a place with everything. Now we have many things to do. And we are very glad because it means the Master is coming more frequently to Venezuela.

## Memoirs of a Gyalpo spirit

by Fabio Andrico

This is my home, my dimension, so different, varied and unpredictable: mountains second in might only to the Himalayas, with crystal glaciers, pointing down to the spires of the tropical rain forest with its immense resources of plants of great power, and its uncountable rare and precious life forms. The sea cold and grey, or warm and crystalline with pure shades of green and blue. Deserts and prairies, immense expanses of rock, great cities, prodigious rivers and the infinite beings of sea, sky and land.

This is my kingdom and that of the other members of my tribe - my people who have reigned over this land and the beings who have populated it since time immemorial: we are the Gyalpo, lords of this dimension which humans call South America.

It is our nature to provoke, and we love to fill the life of human beings with obstacles, challenges and insecurity. Living with us is not easy, nor is it easy to flatter and make friends with us: we don't like it. We are tense and moody in character. One day we give, but the next we ask, demanding a lot. And then if we don't get what we want, we become very, very nervous, just like the men and women who are under our influence, almost all of whom ignore our existence.

Almost all. Towards the end of December, for two and a half months a human being who knows how to recognise us, and is able to communicate with us, arrived and travelled around South America. So I got interested and decided to follow him on his trip round our land. He had already come here once before, but this time our contact was clearer and more direct. The first month was in Argentina, above all in a place called Tashigar where this Tibetan master meets with his disciples to give teachings and build a Community together with them.

My friends and I set to work as usual: lots of rain and wind, a touch of cold and nervousness. To tell the truth, we had begun our job beforehand, and we really did manage to put together one or two tasty little problems.

However, during the period of the retreat, try as we might, we weren't able to express ourselves to our best advantage, because these people know about us, and also know how to limit our range of action.

Thus, we only slightly disturbed the Vajra Dance with the rain. And again by means of rain and wind, we made the stay rather more interesting for those living in tents in the wood and for the hundred or more people who were following the teachings under the cover of

the new building made out of wood and straw.

This was pretty much the way things went during the retreat, up until the day of the outing to Los Terrores, an ancient place of power. There at last the rain let fly with all its might, taking by surprise the Master and some disciples without shelter. And while they were chanting, happy to be purifying themselves, I looked on as their clothes got soaked and their bones turned cold and numb.

In the meantime, some North Americans who had come to build the little dark retreat cabin, didn't want to pause at all, not even with the rain. We did, however, manage to slow their work down just a little.

After a few days there was the departure for Buenos Aires, and a minor masterpiece, an entrancing



The sa bdag rGyal po'i nor bsrung se byi (according to a drawing in the Vaidurya dkar po)

little blizzard over the airport which forced the aircraft to turn back towards Cordoba ...hee, hee ... and to risk ... ha, ha ... running out of fuel! All very entertaining, quite a success.

Then, after a public speech and more rain, there was the departure for Peru - one of my favourite lands, where the earthlings have managed to create a fantastic state of tension and terror for many years. Unfortunately, the Master decided to reduce the length of his stay, and so we had less time at our disposal. Just enough though to help one of the people travelling with him to get lost in the immense city of Lima, with the risk of not being able to return home, of missing the plane etc. etc.... all quite appetising consequences. Sad to say, home was found in the end. Tough luck!

This was the first time that the Master had visited this country, and so, while speaking to the sixty or seventy people at the seminar, he gave a nice little explanation about us, the Eight Classes of Beings, our history and characters.

We like a lot this dry place with its cold sea, where the people of the Andes eat the same sorts of food as the Tibetans: toasted flour and raw fish (like the Japanese).

Last leg of our journey: Venezuela. A land of jungles, beautiful seas and sculpted mountains, where in the past our work in this Community had given good results: fine tensions and much nervousness, now unfortunately, considerably reduced.

They have even given the Master a nice piece of land with coconut

palms, banana trees and beautiful flowers, a small river and a house. Our work is really becoming tough - if it weren't for the satisfaction to be had from the social tensions, with the urban riots (in Cumana for example) over the election of governors, we would be at rather a loose end.

At first we went to Merida: mountains and forests, where apart from one or two problems with the cars (which broke down with pleasing regularity) everything went well at the retreat for the eighty or so people there. Even the food was very good and healthy. The surroundings were beautiful with flowers of all colours and deliciously perfumed fruits. Just a little disturbance for the Dance on the part of the mosquitoes, but I'm afraid to say these were pretty calm days.

Then on to Caracas with more or less the same number of people and a similarly well organised place. What was worse, at one point, everyone started making Namkhas to harmonise their energies. Doing our job isn't at all easy - sometimes you really do have to work hard.

Finally, however, towards the end of the trip, we managed to get our share of personal satisfaction at

Cumana, where the Master went for a rest.

A few days relaxation by the sea, and then, just as everything seemed nice and calm ... sea urchin stings on the hands and feet of the Master, the foot of the teacher of the Dance, and on the back of the Yantra Yoga instructor. Three days in bed without hardly being able to walk.

Small satisfactions, but gratifying none the less ...

In Tibetan, "gyalpo" means "king". The "gyalpo" are a class of beings whose original name was "tsa ti". They are one of the eight principal classes of beings who can influence the condition of existence. There are different types of "gyalpo" of greater and lesser importance. Some of the most important are also considered guardians of the teaching or places such as Gyalpo Pehar, the Guardian of the ancient monastery of Samye.

In places where the "gyalpo" are dominant, they can create struggle and conflicts, nervousness, tensions, many problems, sickness and can strongly influence the mental state. It is not easy or advantageous to create contact with these beings because even if one receives temporary benefits, with the passage of time, they create a lot of negativity and sometimes one can go crazy or lose his reason.

One can control the "gyalpo" through the Protectors of the teaching who have given their strict promise to a Master such as Padma Sambhava. There is no purpose in trying to create a direct relationship with them.

## Second retreat in Mérida

by Mayda Hocevar

The second retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Mérida, Venezuela began the afternoon of February 6th, 1993. It took place in a National Park at an altitude of 2,000 metres, in the heart of the Venezuelan Andes, amidst tropical rain forests of pine. Attendance ranged between 60 and 40 people (on weekends and working days, respectively), during which, for the first time in Venezuela, there were quite a few Vajra brothers and sisters from the different Dzog-chen Communities around the world. We thank them for attending.

Rinpoche devoted the retreat to the explanation of the basis of Santi Maha Sangha, which he then explained in greater detail at the Caracas retreat. Once more, Rinpoche insisted on the importance of understanding the meaning of the Dzog-chen teaching and of our own potentiality. To this purpose, among other skillful means, the Master gave a Dzog-chen empowerment, opportunity to discover our own direct introduction. He explained once more the practice of rushen, which allows us to distinguish through our own experience mind (which judges, believes, fears, etc.) and the nature of mind (our own potentiality, the basis of both samsara and nirvana, which is discovered in the state of rigpa or instant presence).



Rinpoche also taught the importance of understanding the relationship between sutra, tantra and Dzog-chen, and how the practice of the first two can be integrated into that of the third. The Teacher explained that the different forms adopted by the teachings are responses to the different circumstances and conditions in which we limited people are trapped, as well as to our different capacities and propensities.

Rinpoche reminded us that it is most important to develop a pure intention to attain liberation from the delusion which causes us to ceaselessly repeat our dramas and fully realize the value of the teaching and the teacher, as well as of the opportunity, which is limited by time, which we have for practising the dharma and exhausting samsara.

Prima Mai had kindly come to Mérida a few weeks in advance in order to teach us the Vajra Dance, the practice for integrating movement with contemplation, which we kept practising under her guidance throughout the retreat. Then we all went to Caracas in order to attend the retreat there. Afterwards, Bodhi Krause returned with us to Mérida in order to teach the last steps of the Vajra Dance as well as the whole of the Dance of the Six Lokas. As a result, we are now regularly practising all three dances: the Vajra Dance, the Dance of the Six Lokas and the Dance of the Om A Hum.

We are infinitely grateful to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Fabio Andrico (who taught yantra yoga at the retreats), Prima Mai and Bodhi Krause for travelling so far and dedicating so much energy and time to teach us. Long live the Master, the Teachings and the Community!

## Future of French retreat house



"Le Chant du Coucou", the newsletter of the Dzog-chen Community in France, in a special number published in March 1993 reported that there are still many unsolved problems concerning the future of the yartig retreat house at Plouray. Plans to sell the house to the nearby Drukpa-Kagyupa centre fell through when Drukchen Rinpoche, during a trip to France, informed the French Community that he would not follow up plans to buy it.

At the moment the house poses a major commitment financially and in the terms of work power for the Community. Moreover the departure from Plouray of the "Bretons", Martine, Roger and Laurent, has left the house in isolation and lacking

the maintenance work required to keep it from deterioration.

During the past year, the retreat house has been heavily affected by damp which has contributed greatly to its present state of deterioration. Apart from the general maintenance, a number of projects need to be completed which include: servicing the electric system, installing heating in five of the seven rooms and urgently repairing and treating the external tiles for humidity. The immediate cost of these projects is calculated to be around 15.000.000 Italian Lire.

Several suggestions on resolving this problem have already been made by different people in the Community.

One of these investigates the

possibility of selling the retreat house to Merigar, in which case it would have to be dismantled and transported to Italy.

There is a proposal that the retreat house be managed by a society or association of Community members who would be responsible for the functioning of the house and retreats made there. Other suggestions consider either maintaining the house, transforming it or dismantling it and keeping in storage for a period of time.

The French Dzog-chen Community ask people to send their suggestions for resolving the question of the yartig retreat house to: Yann Leguen, 12D, Chemin Maisonneuve, CH 1219, Châtelaine, Switzerland. Tel. 41227973721.

## Space in the Eye of the Storm

continued from page 1

Over the next two days Rinpoche taught extensively from Vairocana's Secret Instructions on the Four Signs.

In the sumptuous surroundings of the Stoneleigh Burnham school, we were protected from the wildness of the raging elements, and gradually spread our activities throughout the buildings. A huge gymnasium housed two mandalas, which were in constant use, either for teaching or practising the Vajra Dances. There was morning meditation and Yantra Yoga; a discussion group for new people to understand the mechanics of the various Tun practices and the Ayu Sadhana of Mandarava.

A large Arts Centre held a gallery of tankas brought by members of the New York Gakyil.

Under the gaze of seven foot giraffe sculptures, and giant bikini clad papier mache women in multi colours, a workshop was set up for the manufacture of Long De sticks.

The kitchen staff did an excellent job in helping our practitioners to gain weight, by providing their irresistible food. The grounds staff



Garab Dorje (dGa' rab rDo rje)

snow ploughed the roads, and kept the walkways safe; and the business manager helped everything to run very smoothly, so that our people had every comfort in order to concentrate on the teachings.

Each retreat brings with it the promise for renewed energy in the future of the Community. Rinpoche once more stressed the importance of the Tsegyalgar land, in Buckland, as a place that has - and will continue to have - great historical significance for the Community. Being the place of origin of the Vajra Dance, Rinpoche emphasised that it is a place we will always keep while the Dzog-chen Community is in existence.

Last time Rinpoche was here, he suggested that we try to find additional facilities where the Community can hold gatherings in the winter months, when it is impossible to reach the Buckland land. For some months, the Tsegyalgar community has been looking for such a place, and a number of possibilities have presented themselves.

One of these possibilities is a

large building in Conway, which has the potential for satisfying at least some of our needs.

Many people from the retreat went to see this building, and the enthusiasm generated by seeing something concrete led many people to commit themselves to raising the resources necessary for the realisation of the project. At this place - or somewhere similar, if necessary - we hope to develop a place for winter retreats, a mandala for the Vajra dances, and offices for branches of the Shang Shung Institute and A.S.I.A.

Naturally, this will require a major commitment from all Dzog-chen Community practitioners. Many made a financial commitment immediately, and a group was formed to study how such a place could be funded and developed. This new project has infinite potential to benefit the conservation of the teachings; for the study of Santi Maha Sangha; for the preservation of Tibetan culture; and provides a clear focus for the Dzog-chen Community in America in how to move effectively into the future.

## New German Gakyil

The German Dzog-chen Community has received the official status of a non-profit making organization according to law in Berlin. Therefore its official registered seat remains there. The office for all German and international affairs is being transferred to Frankfurt at the following address: Freundeskreis Zur Forderung Der Dzog-Chen Lehre E. V., 6000 Frankfurt 70, Gartenstrasse 70. Tel. 069 618721.

At a meeting at the end of February in Frankfurt, the new Gakyil was elected.

**Yellow:** Stephanie Wagner (international contact address), Marie Krupp, Helmut Reile

**Red:** Rolf Portak, Jurgen Lindt, Helmut Smrcek (Vice-Director)

**Blue:** Wolfgang Krebs, Elke Glander, Gerd Manusch (Director)

**Mirror:** Marion Lindlar

## YANTRA YOGA COURSES WITH FABIO ANDRICO



**Augsburg, Germany:** May 21 - 24

Information from Elke Glander, Graf-Arbo-Str. 14,  
8082 Grafath, Germany, tel. 08144 1510

**Poland:** May 28 - June 1

Information from Aleksander Skwara,  
Grunwaldzka 40, 91 - 337 Lodz, tel. 48 42 516080.

## Longde transcription

Anyone involved in doing transcriptions of any of the teachings and retreats of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche should note that a transcription of the Longde teachings given by Rinpoche during the March '93 retreat at Tsegyalgar is being done by Gina Perini. This notice is to avoid that the transcription work is duplicated. Any queries can be made to the Tsegyalgar Dzog-chen Community, PO Box 277, Conway, MA 01341 USA, tel. 413 6259820, fax 413 6651142.

Transcription work on Longde teachings, if they are given, during the Easter '93 retreat at Merigar will also be undertaken by Gina.

## UK Community buys Welsh property

by Judy Allan

The main news in the U. K. is twofold - first our dark/light retreat cabin at Moylegrove in Wales has been completed; it had heating installed in February which was just as well as both Lol Kane and I did retreats then and it snowed several times, as well as there being hail!

All I can say is my week there was quite marvellous. It's a very simple two roomed cabin with a loo in between (for use in dark retreats). I didn't do dark retreat as the shutters still needed minor work done on them to make it completely dark. It reminded me a lot of being in retreat in India in that one went to the loo outside; water had to be carried from a nearby spring and as my stove didn't work (because the temperature was freezing) I had to cook outside. Struggling with matches when my fingers were too cold to even take matches out of the box, I realised that the resemblance to India ended with the weather! And of course the luxury was having heating, which was necessary as it was so cold.

The cabin was extremely quiet, being situated at the top of a field and hidden from the road. It looks out towards the sea and cliffs; a harbour which was used for

smuggling with great dark coves is only 10 minutes walk away. In the field behind the cabin live a badger set and often at night, I heard noisy movement.

A pair of robin redbreasts became extremely interested in the ritual spoons of rice and ganapuja left on a log outside and would make quite a noise if they thought that they had been forgotten.

The two horses in the field in front also showed great interest in any dropping off of food or candles and merrily chewed through eight oranges and pears Claire had sweetly left me!

It was a blissful time, in a simple and totally adequate wooden cabin. For this we have mainly to thank John Sharkey, who did most of the work with a local chap and William who has allowed us the use of the land.

Anyone wishing to do a retreat should contact Claire Sharkey on 023 986 610.

The other major piece of news which is even more significant on a long term basis, is that we have finally purchased a property which is also in Wales and also within sight of the sea. It is about half an hour from where the retreat cabin is, near the village of St. Nicholas, 5

miles from Fisguard railway station and 8 miles from St. Davids on the wonderful Pembrokeshire coast.

What we have bought is a set of farm buildings on 1.5 acres of land with tremendous potential, for the main building is an L shaped stone barn, with the main part 90 feet long and 20 wide, and the L section 22 feet long and 18 wide. This will readily convert into a teaching hall with kitchens, toilets and sleeping areas in the main part, and to retreat rooms in the L section. There are also two other barns on the site, one of which may well need to be demolished, but the other offering scope for further expansion in the future; of course all these plans are subject to planning consent but we are hard at work to move this project forward.

We bought the farm for £28,000, which required personal loans from members of nearly £10,000 to complete the deal. Our next stage is to repay those who so kindly helped out of their own pockets and to raise finance for developing the buildings.

Everyone who has seen the property feels very enthusiastic and positive about it and we believe it will provide a unifying focus for the community in this country, spread as far as Cornwall to Scotland.

## Working together: a message from Merigar

As has happened in the past and continues to happen, some people of the international Dzog-chen Community commit themselves, often with the best intention, to producing objects, images or artistic works of various kinds, with the intention to commercialize them above all during retreats at Merigar in order to give a part of profit to the Community. However, the present situation of the Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzog-chen with its seat at Merigar is such that at the moment it is not able to undertake commercial activities legally. However, the Merigar Gakyil is, at the moment, working on this matter and studying additional structures to this end. Only occasionally may objects strictly relating to the

practices of the teachings which have been given at the same time be distributed to members in return for reimbursement of expenses.

Regarding translations, publications and transcriptions of teachings, in order to avoid duplicating a work that is already underway or has already been done, one should communicate with Shang-Shung Edizioni to see what the situation is and to inform them of your intention. There are copyrights to respect and some publications have been revised and corrected so that translations of the unrevised version is no longer valid and cannot be published. There are many small details to find out about and to coordinate with a group which is already busily involved in this

work.

The situation at Merigar which corresponds not only with the activities of the "Associazione Culturale" but also with those of Shang-Shung Edizioni, the Shang-Shung Institute, A.S.I.A., Coabit and the tape library involve a large number of people and a considerable amount of organization in order to function. Where there is an organization there are, naturally, procedures and requirements that must be considered in order to have results.

It is important to remember that what is done as a Community should be done together, communicating and collaborating all the way. In this way the results will be positive and the path to arrive there will have been that of working together.

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## Shang-Shung Edizioni

### Three Poems Dedicated to Changchub Dorje's Disciples

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Shang Shung Editions, 1992, Italy.

Translation from Tibetan and notes by Adriano Clemente.

### A Short Biography of Adzam Drugpa

by Lhundrub Tso, Shang Shung Editions, 1992, Italy.

Translation and notes by Adriano Clemente.

Price for each book including packing and air mail postage \$10.  
Please send postal order or cheque to Shang-Shung Edizioni,  
58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

## Springtime at Merigar



The stupa at Merigar

(photo Liane Graf)

by Mario Maglietti

In the last few days, the sunny breezes seem to be bringing the early bloom of spring to these mountains and the people working here in Merigar find themselves as if in an everlasting spring that never fully matures in later seasons.

At the moment the Gakyil at Merigar and those who are working in close collaboration find themselves at a crucial point in their work. Last October, when Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche left the group with a clear responsibility to renew and clarify their functions which was the focal point of a more general renewal of the way in which the Community operates, the Gakyil found that it had to confront a series of problems.

First of all, the brevity of the term of office of the members of the Gakyil which will expire in April, and the combined need of renewing their system of working in a short time while maintaining the necessary continuity with the past, produced theoretical reflections and discussions at the beginning which slowed down entering directly into action.

The secretarial work has been the first to undergo reorganization to make it more precise and efficient even though it is still in the experimental stage. In this phase the Gakyil and the secretarial office have also dealt with the impact of the reorganization of the membership card system and of the new official position of Merigar as the principal Gar in Europe.

The new situation in East Europe with the formation of new centres of the Community in these countries after the long teaching trip of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche last spring and summer, has also

contributed to a considerable increase in the mass of organizational work and the establishment of new communication and collaboration links.

Often in the past Rinpoche has clarified that the position of Merigar as one of the principal gars along with Tsegylgar and Tashigar does not involve a position of control or power over local Gakyils or community groups. Its present function is that of activating and organizing in the best possible way a number of centralized activities and services also through related bodies such as Shang-Shung Edizioni and The Mirror, the Shang-Shung Institute, A.S.I.A., COABIT

A brand new central heating system has been installed and the electrical and plumbing systems have been renewed.

The "all-purpose" space which has, in the past, been used for small retreats, sessions of yantra yoga etc., has been transformed into office space and will house up-to-date computer equipment.

A very large high-tech "tent" with a steel structure has been bought to serve as a multi-purpose extra space for immediate use during the Easter retreat and for similar events in the future.

It can also house a portable mandala for the Vajra dance (such as that constructed in Como where they

Merigar has been taking place according to a project which will move the greater part of the working activities, mainly secretarial, to the ground floor and will reserve the upper floor for private space for the Gekos, guests and above all for the work and meetings, both private and official, of Rinpoche. There has been a complete renovation of the central kitchen and dining room, the bathrooms and the dormitory to bring them up to a higher level of hygiene and hospitality.

### MERIGAR CONNECTION

The office of Merigar is being improved and reorganised. From now on it will be open from Monday to Saturday 9.30 - 13.00 and 14.00 - 17.00 (Italian time). Please telephone during the office hours for any kind of information or contact with the Gakyil and Merigar.

Please note new fax number  
at Merigar 564 968110

The telephone number  
remains unchanged 564 966837

The fax number for THE MIRROR  
remains the same 564 966608

etc. to which end a Coordination Committee has been set up at Merigar.

For the last six weeks, the restructuring of the main house at

are also preparing a second one for the Rome community). Despite the icy winds and changing weather, the garden around the Gorpa has grown and much work has been done to plant hundreds of trees and bushes following a precise design.

All these works of improvement and the expenses involved are being undertaken mainly to improve the quality of the facilities of Merigar as host to international retreats, conferences and events such as the International Seminar on Tibetan Language last year.

And thus the springtime continues...

### CORRECTION

In the last issue (No.19) of The Mirror, there was an omission in the article, "Christmas retreat at Tashigar, Argentina" on page 4. The paragraph "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 Dzog-chen symbols in parts of the film," should have continued, "Because of this, the next day, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave a teaching on how to protect the Dzog-chen teachings".

## 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

Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga for children Saturday and Sunday 17.00

Times of practices may be changed according to circumstances

Fri. 9th April	15.00	Retreat begins
<b>RETREAT OF TEACHINGS NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE</b>		
Sun. 18th April		Retreat ends
Tue. 20th April	18.30	Practice of Naggon
Wed. 21st April	18.30	Guruyoga with White A
Sat. 1st May	18.30	Long-life practice of Padmasambhava with Ganapuja
Tue. 4th May	18.30	Amitayus Long-life practice
Wed. 5th May	18.30	Amitayus Long-life practice
Thu. 6th May	19.00	Amitayus Long-life practice
<b>Yantra Yoga Course</b>		
Fri. 14th May	18.00	
Sat. 15th May	10.00 and 16.00	
Sun. 16th May	10.00 and 16.00	
Sun. 16th May	18.30	Practice of Ekajati
Thu. 20th May	19.00	Naggon
Fri. 21st May	18.30	Purification Six Lokas
Sat. 22nd May		Karma Yoga
	18.30	Practice of Tara
Sun. 23rd May	10.00	Practice of Tara
		Karma Yoga
Sat. 29th May	10.00	Dance of the Vajra
	15.00	Dance of the Vajra
	19.00	Long Tun with intensive practice of Ekajati.
Sun. 30th May	10.00	Dance of the Vajra
	15.00	Dance of the Vajra
	19.00	Ganapuja
Wed. 2nd June	19.00	Mandharava Long-life practice
Thu. 3rd June	19.00	Mandharava Long-life practice
Fri. 4th June	9.30	Mandharava Long-life practice
	18.30	Ganapuja of Mandharava
Sat. 12th June	19.00	Avalokitesvara
Sun. 13th June	10.00	Purification of the Six Lokas
Mon. 14th June	18.30	Guruyoga with White A
Sat. 19th June	18.30	Naggon

## The Merigar Library



The Shang-Shung Institute has started to catalogue the oriental library at Merigar. The library contains more than 4000 volumes including Tibetan manuscripts and wood engravings and texts in western languages on the culture, history, religion and medicine of Tibet and other oriental countries. Contact is being made with the principal oriental libraries of the world such as the Tibetan Department of the Library of Congress in Washington and the

Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala so that the library can be of use to a greater number of scholars and bring it in line with the international system of cataloguing. The job of cataloguing has been given to Mauro Nascari, an Orientalist, who will have the collaboration of other scholars.

The work of cataloguing the Tibetan texts will also be undertaken by Phuntsog Wangmo, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's niece and Tibetan doctor, who has recently arrived in Italy.

In order to carry forward the work, the Shang-Shung Institute is trying to finance two student grants for the above mentioned scholars. The amount required for 1993 amounts to Lit. 8.000.000.

Those interested in collaborating with this project can get in touch with the secretary of the Institute at:

Via degli Olmi 1, 58031 Arcidosso, GR, Italy, tel. 564 966940  
or send a bank draft to account no. 4122.96 at the Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Arcidosso branch, specifying the reason.

**Sangharakshita:** Many years ago ... it must be about fifty years ago, I encountered a book called *The Essence of Buddhism* by Dr. D.T. Suzuki. And in that book, he made a statement that impressed me very much. He said that wisdom or emptiness and compassion are the twin pillars of the Mahayana. I would go further than that to say that they are the twin pillars of Buddhism itself - of all forms and all schools of Buddhism. Admittedly, some schools may appear to emphasise wisdom a little more than compassion, and some to emphasise compassion a little more than wisdom: but all schools of Buddhism are founded on these two great pillars of wisdom and compassion.

What we usually understand by these terms is very, very different from the real thing. I remember another book ... a novel called *Beware of Pity* by Stefan Zweig. And this novel made very clear the distinction between compassion on the one hand and mere pity on the other. I have to be very brief, but we may say that pity is ego-based, compassion is not. Compassion is coordinate with wisdom, pity is coordinate with mere intellectual understanding. We have these two levels. So we may think we are experiencing compassion when we are only experiencing pity. And similarly, we may think we are experiencing wisdom when we are simply experiencing an intellectual understanding. So there are these two levels, not so much of wisdom and compassion themselves, but of the real wisdom and compassion and their imitations.

**Rewata Dhamma:** Emptiness and compassion are not very familiar in Theravada Buddhism because we speak of *anatta* (Sk. *anatman*), 'no-self', and *metta* (Sk. *maitri*), 'loving kindness'. According to the Theravada tradition, every child has to practise loving kindness, and therefore we have to train in this kind of practice while very young. Also, when we speak of loving kindness, this loving kindness cannot be practised properly if we hold a concept of self, ego - if I believe that this is 'I', this is 'me', then I cannot give proper love, or compassion to others. Therefore, in Theravada Buddhism, 'emptiness' means empty of the self, unlike in Mahayana Buddhism where the explanation of emptiness, *Shunyata*, is very vast. In Theravada Buddhism we try to understand in a very simple way. A lot of people think that Theravada Buddhists mainly practise awareness meditation, mindfulness meditation. But this is not the most common practice: the most common practice is *metta* meditation, because practising *metta* means pure love, boundless love, infinite love. So if our love is based on selfishness or attachment, then it is not *metta*. Therefore this is very

*Continuing to explore the theme of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's teaching on 'Understanding the difference between Sutra and Tantra' included in the last edition of 'The Mirror', we have pleasure in presenting here part of a transcript of a very stimulating panel discussion on emptiness and compassion that took place at the 1992 Conference of the European Buddhist Union between some of the teachers from different Buddhist schools who had given talks earlier in the Conference.*

*The panel members were (in the order that they speak here) the Ven. Sangharakshita, founder of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order and author of numerous books including 'A Survey of Buddhism', the Ven. Rewata Dhamma, a prominent scholar and teacher of Theravada Buddhism, the Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Zen master, now resident in France, author among many other titles of 'The Miracle of Mindfulness' and 'Being Peace', and the Ven. Sogyal Rinpoche, a Dzogchen master and founder of the Rigpa centres, author of 'The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying' and 'Dzogchen and Padmasambhava'.*

important in our life. We are also used to practising *metta* for our own families and friends, but this is not the real *metta*: It is just transferring our merits, our pure qualities to others, family and friends. If you practise the real *metta* meditation, you have to develop the aspiration that with your love all beings without any discrimination may be happy. So *metta* meditation is very popular in all Buddhist countries. In Theravada Buddhism, we don't usually speak of 'emptiness' but of *anatta*, 'no self'. It is because of this illusory sense of a substantial 'self' that we continually suffer. The first thing we have to do is to eliminate this concept of self in our own experience so that we can give our infinite love to all beings everywhere.

**Sogyal Rinpoche:** It is often said in the Tibetan teachings that the union of compassion and emptiness is the basis of the Buddha dharma in general, and particularly of the Mahayana. From my little understanding, I feel that pity is based on fear, whereas compassion is based on love. So what I want to say is that however good our compassion is, if we do not have the realisation of the vast vision of *Shunyata*, or emptiness, then our compassion is limited. As Thich Nhat Hanh mentioned yesterday when he spoke about the Buddha Avalokiteshvara - or Chenresig in Tibetan - the Buddha of compassion - his hand is the loving compassion, and the eye shown on his hand is the understanding. If there is no understanding, no wisdom, then the compassion is limited. That is why in Mahayana in particular, in order to realise true compassion, one must first realise absolute *Bodhicitta*, which is the realisation of *Shunyata*. So, for example, in my tradition it is said that the meditation in many ways is the union of wisdom and compassion. Out of the wisdom

comes a tremendous natural compassion, just as when the sky is clear of clouds - let's compare the sky to the nature of mind - then the compassion that is our inherent nature, *Bodhicitta*, begins to shine forth. So I feel really that for deeper compassion not based on duality, on this or that, in a sense all limitations are broken down once we realise the wisdom of *Shunyata* or emptiness. So that, I think, is one of the reasons why in the Tibetan teachings, compassion is spoken of as skillful means - *upaya* - and wisdom as emptiness.

**Thich Nhat Hanh:** I think that first of all, compassion is the capacity not to hate any other person, not to get angry at him or her. And only after that can you do anything to bring some joy or happiness to him or her or that group of people. But in order not to hate that "someone", you need to understand, and understanding is the agent of liberation that helps you not to hate someone. And the practice of *Shunyata* - emptiness - helps, because "empty" always means empty of something. (May I borrow your cup?) This cup is not empty of water. I pour out all the water - I borrow your cup. Now the cup is empty. But in order for the cup to be empty, the cup must be there. So "emptiness" does not mean the absence of the cup. This is something important. But the next question is equally important: empty of what? You cannot say that this cup is empty of air. It is full of air. It is only empty of water, empty of water but full of air. So the other person, who may be called Hitler, or Khmer Rouge, or Saddam Hussein, or Bush, the other person is empty of a separate self. Because as the Venerable Rewata Dhamma said, to be empty here means to be empty of self, of a separate existence. President Bush is made only of 'non-Bush' elements. And the same thing is true of President Saddam Hussein. And that

is what we should realise in order to really understand these two people. The Buddha said, "This is like this, that is why that is like that." He is like that because we are like this; we are responsible for the way he is. When the husband is not present, the wife is somehow responsible. Maybe the root of the unpleasantness in the husband is in the wife. So I myself am responsible for President Bush, I am responsible for President Saddam Hussein, I am responsible for the Khmer Rouge, I am responsible for the youngsters in Germany, gangsters in Germany who destroy the homes of refugees: I have to understand why they have come to be like that. I have to see the true nature of emptiness in them in order to understand them. And if I can look deeply into them and see the deep causes that have made them like that then I can understand, and the moment I understand I begin to stop hating them and blaming them. That is the practice of emptiness. And the moment I can stop hating him, hating them, I feel that I need to come to help him, help them to understand. If understanding is not in him, in them, then they will continue to do as they have done. That is why emptiness here is action, and compassion here is also action. Talking by itself does not help very much. Thank you.

**Chairperson:** Now we have heard how each of these four speakers see the relationship and the importance of the empty cup and the full cup, of emptiness and compassion. Would one of you like to ask one of your fellow speakers to elaborate on something, or to add?

**Sangharakshita:** I would like to add to what Ven. Rewata Dhamma has said. I would add it not as a Theravadin or as a Mahayanist but as one who has studied and tried to appreciate both. As far as I have understood, the Mahayana approach to the whole question of emptiness, it is more metaphysical; while as far as I have understood the Theravada approach to the whole question of emptiness, it is more psychological, which is why Ven. Rewata has explained, very great importance is attached in the Theravada to the emptiness of self. But we must not forget that a very large part of the Theravadin tradition is made up of the *Abhidharma*. I won't even say that the *Abhidharma* is one of the great neglected Buddhist traditions in the West. People like to study Zen - that's fine, they like to study Vajrayana, they might perhaps like to study the Dharma sutras, but who studies the *Abhidharma*? - Very few people. But I think the *Abhidharma* is a very necessary study for all serious Buddhists. So what is the *Abhidharma*? One of the things it

includes is an analysis of the so-called 'Self' and I'm sure the Venerable on my right has studied and may be able to tell you into how many elements the *Abhidharma* analyses the so-called self - it is roughly 180; and a lot of Theravada meditation consists in reviewing these elements to which the so-called self is reduced in the light of clear insight, and in this way reducing attachment to the self. This is just one aspect of the *Abhidharma*. So I think it's sometimes a mistake for the ordinary Buddhist in the West to plunge straight away into the metaphysics of the Mahayana and to Mahayanistic teaching about *Shunyata*. I think we would be on much safer ground if we did at least a little study of the *Abhidharma* first and then progressed to the Mahayana metaphysics because quite a number of the Mahayana teachings as Dr. Conze has pointed out, are only intelligible with reference to, and in the light of, the *Abhidharma* teachings.

So, yes, the Mahayana approaches emptiness and wisdom more metaphysically, and perhaps Theravada more, as it were, psychologically; and both approaches are necessary.



# ND COMPASSION



- or you can say even compassion. For example, when we practice meditation and realise that through the Shamatha practice we bring our mind to the state of peace, and through Vipassana we clear the mind of obscuration, thus bringing the insight. Then from out of this comes the experience of Shunyata. When you are in that state, a tremendous natural compassion arises. So you can see that the emptiness spoken of is not just emptiness in the sense of nothingness. The emptiness is very much the union or indivisibility of wisdom and compassion. I think that's what I wanted to say at the beginning and I think also the relationship I find from my own experience. It's interesting, if you really look into life and see that everything is impermanent. But then you ask, "But how do things appear?" It's because of a certain interdependency. Now when these two are put together, you come to realise that if everything is impermanent then everything is what we call 'empty', which means lacking in any lasting, stable or inherent existence, and all things when seen and understood in their true nature are not independent but interdependent with each other. So contemplation therefore on the dream-like quality of reality need not in any way make us cold or helpless or embittered. On the contrary it opens us up to a warm humour, a strong compassion we hardly knew we possessed, and so more and more generosity in all things and beings. The great Milarepa said "Seeing emptiness have compassion" and when through contemplation we have really seen the emptiness and the interdependence of all things in ourselves, the world is revealed in a brighter, fresher, more sparkling light, and infinitely reflected. So as one master said, "Always recognise the dream-like quality of life and reduce attachment and aversion. Practice good-heartedness towards all beings. Be loving and compassionate no matter what others do to you. What they will do will not matter so much when you see it as a dream." And the trick is to have positive intention during the dream, and this is the essential point, this I find is true spirituality. And along with this comes the awareness that if we are interdependent with everything and everyone else, even our smallest, least significant thought, word and action, has the most astonishing consequences throughout the universe. Throw a pebble into a pond and it will send shivers across the water. Ripples merge one with another and create new ones so everything is inextricably inter-related and we come to realise that we are responsible for everything we do, or say, or think. Responsible in fact for ourselves,

everyone and everything else.

**Rewata Dhamma:** Rinpoche was speaking about ideas of this emptiness-wisdom but as I understand about Mahayana Buddhism and our traditional Sanskrit tradition, emptiness and wisdom are the same things, they are not different because when we practice meditation we can't understand through our experience the Shunyata - which is what they call wisdom, and wisdom is the emptiness, we cannot explain emptiness through mere words. It is beyond our language, beyond intellectual qualification. Anyone who has tried meditation, and who has experienced emptiness, that experience is called wisdom. Therefore some people say emptiness is the 'suchness' of reality; but this is not just nothingness, there is something further to it that we

practical and we should not indulge ourselves in metaphysical speculations, they would go against the Buddha's intention. We should make emptiness into our practice. The insight of emptiness will bring about compassion, tolerance and therefore to look deeply into one's self and to look deeply into the other person, into the cosmos and find out the nature of impermanence, the nature of non-self is to realise emptiness and when emptiness is there, you are free. You are free from fear, free from birth, free from death, free from discrimination. I think in the case of Germany I would like to say like this. The former East Germany is empty of self. If the thinking, the behaviour, the exasperation, the anger, of the people of the former East Germany are the way they are, it is because there are extensive roots for the situation to be that way; there are elements from

**Chairperson:** Would you like to add something on that?

**Sogyal Rinpoche:** I think Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh has done that beautifully, brought everything together in a very apt way and I think he has this wonderful skill of explaining. I think I just want to resonate with you in that I feel that when we dissolve our thoughts and our concepts we become limitless, non-dual. That is an experience of emptiness. From out of that comes a true understanding of things as they are. A kind of very appropriate compassion that comes. I think this is really the key. That's why I sometimes mention that someone in meditation, the highest meditation is the union of wisdom and compassion. We begin, as Ven. Rewata Dhamma mentioned, by examining ourselves first. In the Tibetan tradition we sometimes call it the compassion of non-harming. Because often if we do not work with ourselves first we cannot work with others. The problems we have with others are the problems we have also with ourselves. So that is why we begin with ourselves. It's very interesting in the Tibetan tradition that the Theravada tradition is known as the 'fundamental yana', the basis, because without that there is no Mahayana, and without that there is no Vajrayana - it's really the basis. So for that reason we first begin with the self, examining it, coming to realise that the ego has no independent existence but that on the contrary everything is interdependent, and then on this basis turning our attention outwards to deal with what we had previously mistakenly considered to be 'other' than our 'self'. So that is the full realisation of emptiness: experiencing the emptiness of 'self' and the emptiness of 'other'. And from out of these two one becomes free of what is known as duality - the grasping and the grasped. When these two are freed then one becomes free of concepts. The non-conceptual state of the true seeing is emptiness, which is itself the state of wisdom. Then it's like when the sky is clear, the sun naturally shines; we don't even need to think of compassion. Compassion is just naturally there in the same way as the sun naturally emits light, and this compassion is not limited, it is boundless. The pure natural state of the mind revealed through the realisation of emptiness has as its inherent nature qualities of equanimity, of compassion, of loving kindness, and of joy, that manifest spontaneously when the mind is freed from the negative emotions that limit us. That's why I think the realisation of emptiness is really the heart of compassion; without that compassion is rather limited.

(Tape transcribed by Albert Benson and edited by John Shane.)



Rewata Dhamma, Sangharakshita, Thich Nhat Hanh, Sogyal Rinpoche

(photo Alenka de Bonne)

cannot express in words. I am speaking here of the understanding of this in the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism.

**Thich Nhat Hanh:** I also think that the word emptiness suggests nothingness, that is why a number of people are reluctant to use it. Nagarjuna said something wonderful about emptiness, he said, "Thanks to emptiness everything is possible". I just say that when everything is empty of self, that means also that everything is full of everything else. Like a sheet of paper - a sheet of paper does not have its own separate existence but if you look deeply into the paper you see the whole cosmos. The sunshine, the forest, the air, and the rain and the earth. Everything is in the sheet of paper. So emptiness means the absence of separate existence but the presence of the whole cosmos within any individual phenomena, and to me emptiness is just another name for impermanence. Impermanence means exactly the same thing. Non-self means exactly the same thing and the word "inter-being" also means the same thing. I think the Buddhist teaching is very

beyond just that one place involved. If we look into it we can see all the elements as causes and when the people of the former West Germany look into it, they can find and see the true nature of emptiness in it. That kind of understanding will give them a lot of wisdom and compassion and will tell them how to handle their neighbouring friends in the best way. So that understanding, acceptance, will be there. And for the people of former East Germany the same practice should be adopted. They should look into their friends and see why they are like this today and looking deeply like that they discover the causes, the reasons, the elements, that have made the former West Germany, and a kind of insight will help them understand and will help them understand the anger and the discrimination. The hatred would disappear and then if understanding of this develops on both sides, the kind of brotherhood and real true unification will be realised. So we should understand the Buddhist concepts of emptiness and compassion right in the problems of our daily life. We should not take-off so high in the air, but keep our feet touching the earth.

**Sogyal Rinpoche:** I want to share something now to give you a little background first, then I will speak more specifically. I think emptiness is very difficult to understand, in fact I sometimes think emptiness is rather a bad word, particularly when you approach Christians and if you say first of all, you don't believe in God, secondly, you say we believe in emptiness. So that's why I feel in the Western language that word emptiness has rather a negative connotation: it implies being empty of something, emptiness in a sense of nothingness - and that is a complete misunderstanding of this term. In fact I feel more satisfied with the word 'openness', or perhaps 'limitlessness'. For example in the Tibetan tradition the term Shunyata is explained as the open aspect of the dimension of the nature of mind - just like the sky. However it is said that our nature of mind is like the sky but yet the nature of mind is not the sky, because mind has something that sky does not have, which is the cognisance of awareness. Now this awareness or cognisance, which is sometimes known as the Clear Light, is known as Shunyata. So the Shunyata is the indivisibility of emptiness or openness and clear light

## Notes on a small interaction between the Dzogchen Community at Merigar and the local community of the Monte Amiata region

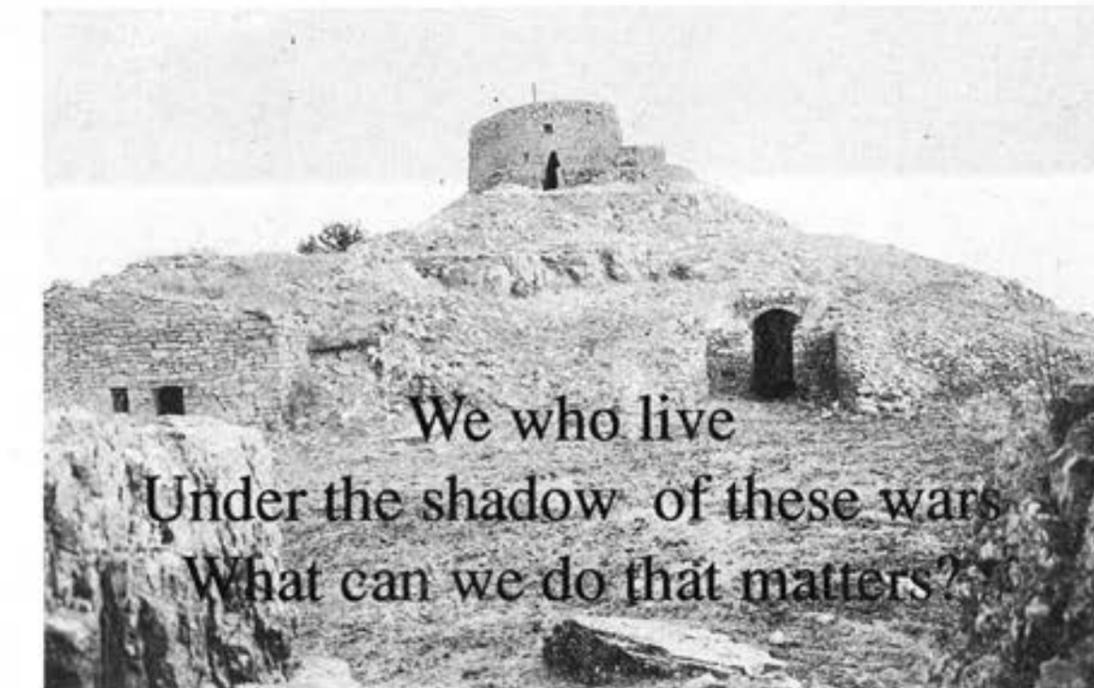
by John Shane

Just before Christmas I was asked by the Gakyil of Merigar to represent the Dzogchen Community at a conference on racial and religious tolerance that was to be held in the town hall of Castel del Piano, one of the small towns near Merigar, and to give a brief talk there on the subject of 'Knowledge of oneself and the acceptance of others in Buddhism'. The other speakers would be a Catholic Monsignor, a Protestant priest, the head of the Jewish community of Siena, and the granddaughter of Davide Lazzaretti, a local historical figure of some importance who at the turn of the century founded a breakaway Christian/socialist religious movement in the Amiata region, and who predicted that another spiritual teacher would later establish a community in the same area. The bulk of the audience at the conference was to be the teenage students from the local high school. There had been an alarming rise of racist incidents in Italy as in many other countries in Europe, and the most recent such event, the placing of stickers with yellow stars and antisemitic slogans on all the shops with Jewish owners in the center of Rome, had so shocked the school authorities that they felt they should do something: the nazi-skinhead movement seemed to be gaining adherents among young people in all the big cities, and they were concerned it might even spread in the provinces.

Despite my instinctive solidarity with the aims of the conference, I was at first unwilling to accept the responsibility of representing the Community at this meeting because, apart from questioning my own worthiness as an example of a Buddhist practitioner (do I really know myself, and can I really say that I am able to accept others?), I felt that someone whose native language was Italian would be more suitable. But eventually I was persuaded that I should accept.

On the morning of the conference, the beautiful hall with its stone vaulted ceiling was packed, and there was a good deal of excitement in the air, albeit a sober excitement: the seriousness of the subject was clear to everyone. I was introduced to the other speakers: the Monsignore was dressed in his black robe, a pleasant, stout, earnest man with glasses; the Protestant preacher was thin, also wore glasses, and was dressed in a grey suit and tie, while Davide Lazzaretti's granddaughter was a dignified older lady in a colourful dress. The leader of the Jewish Community of Siena had not yet arrived, as he had the furthest to travel and there was fog on the road. So Davide Lazzaretti's granddaughter spoke first, and what she had to say was a real surprise to everyone.

She picked the microphone up off the table, and holding it in her



The tower of Davide Lazzaretti on Monte Labro opposite Merigar

hand went to stand close up in front of the seated rows of students, saying she wanted to be as near as possible to what she called 'my youngsters'. She began by telling us that she had been brought up by her aunt who was the youngest daughter of Davide Lazzaretti and also the daughter closest to him. She said that she thus knew a great deal about what her grandfather and his followers believed although she personally was an ordinary Christian, and not formally a follower of her grandfather's teaching. She added that she didn't intend to make a speech but just wanted to tell a story from her own life, a story of something that had happened right there in the local area during the war, something of her own experience from which the 'youngsters' should decide whether there was anything to learn or not.

In a quiet but firm voice she began by explaining to us that during the war a group of Jewish prisoners had been brought to the Amiata area by the Austrian soldiers who were occupying the region; they had been shut up in a house that was covered in antisemitic posters depicting Jews as demonic semi-humans. She herself was quite young at the time and accompanied her aunt, Lazzaretti's daughter, to visit this house every day, because she insisted on bringing food and milk to the prisoners who were being very badly fed. Her aunt told her that they were human beings just like any others and should be treated as such, and while her aunt made friends with some of the older prisoners, she befriended some of the Jewish children. She lent them a few of her comic books, which one of the boys promised to bring back to her, fixing an appointment to do so in a few days time.

Her voice became charged with emotion as she then told us that when the boy did not appear to return the comics on the day that he had

promised she was very disappointed and angry. When he did finally arrive two days late, she opened the door to him, and seeing him standing there on the doorstep her anger got the better of her. "So you *are* one of those Jews after all!", she snapped at him, as if his lateness had somehow transformed the boy she had liked so much into one of the caricatured creatures she had seen in the propaganda posters that had subtly conditioned her mind despite her aunt's teaching and example.

Then, in her confusion and embarrassment at the words that had escaped from her mouth, she had taken the comics and slammed the door in the boy's face. Her aunt rushed to open the door again, but the boy had run away. She explained to her little niece that she must understand that the boy was not free to come and go as he pleased, and that he must have made a great effort to be allowed to get the comic books back to them, even if it was days later than he had promised. She insisted that that same afternoon they would go to the house where the prisoners were held, and that her niece must apologise to him. But when they arrived there later that day, they found that all the prisoners had been taken away to a concentration camp in Austria. She never had a chance to apologise or to say goodbye. They later learned, from the only one of them to escape that camp by hiding under a mass of dead bodies, that they had all been killed there.

As she finished her story, many members of the audience were in tears. It was clear that the remorse that she felt for this one small unthinking act, committed long ago, had remained with her throughout her life, and that she still felt great regret for it.

The courage with which she openly confessed her own albeit minor error in this way spoke far more eloquently than any pious but

formal condemnation of racism could ever do. With her honesty she showed the antidote to the poison of racism - self-knowledge and acceptance leading to tolerance, and with a simple story she brought home, to the students own doorsteps, what might have seemed an abstract and distant problem. She did not point her finger at others, but exposed the root of the problem as she had herself experienced it in her own life, and the direct way in which she had told the story led those who listened to confront the same situation in themselves.

As she finished speaking, the leader of the Jewish Community of Siena arrived, a dignified middle-aged man in a grey suit, the only unusual thing about him being that he put on the traditional small prayer hat before he spoke. He apologised for being late, and explained very briefly the history of his Community in Siena. He made no polemic in defense of his people; it was clear that in his position he wanted above all to be non-controversial. The local Carabinieri (one branch of the Italian police force) had in fact just a few minutes before arrived to complain to the organisers that they had not been notified that this gentleman would be present, as they felt it their duty to be there to protect him, which gives some indication of the prevailing atmosphere in Italy at that moment.

The Protestant preacher read a prepared speech explaining a little about Protestantism in Italy, very much a minority in this country, and quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, who was a Baptist minister, on the rights of minorities. And then the Catholic Monsignore spoke, also reading a prepared speech in which he quoted parts of the Italian State's Constitution that guarantee freedom of religion and racial equality, adding liberal comments from a number of biblical sources, pointing out that for a Christian it was not enough just

to conform to the letter of the law, but that in one's own heart and conscience one had to be free from evil such as harbouring ill will to others, which is what racism fundamentally involves.

Then it was finally my turn to speak.

I began by explaining a little about the Dzogchen Community and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Then I introduced myself: I told the audience that I had always been interested in poetry, and that when I was a teenager the same age of many of my listeners, I had stumbled upon and grown to love Japanese Zen poetry, and particularly Haiku, the short poems which in a very small number of words convey a powerfully immediate expression of just one moment in time, the present moment being all that we can ever really know, although we are continually distracted from it by thoughts of the future and the past. I explained that I had become interested in the philosophy behind the poems that so delighted me with their simplicity, and so I had started to study Buddhism from books, before meeting my first Tibetan Buddhist teacher a few years later, which eventually led me to meeting Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

"Buddha means awake," I said, "And a Buddha is an awakened one. Buddhism in essence is as much a science of the mind as it is a religion, a means to enable one to become fully conscious. I explained that we believe ourselves to be awake in this moment, but we are really so conditioned by external factors that our minds are not free at all, we are unconscious in much of what we do, and act out of compulsion and conditioning rather than out of truly conscious volition. When we are unconscious we are not aware, I continued, and then we tend to project onto others everything we cannot accept about ourselves. This is the basic attitude behind intolerance and racism. So we must begin by examining ourselves, and meditation is a way to get to know ourselves. On the basis of that knowledge of oneself one discovers the common ground between all individuals, and is then able to act responsibly in the world. 'If you want to discover your own unconscious side, observe carefully whoever it is in your school that you really can't stand, really can't put up with,'" I suggested, pointing out that it's easy enough to feel superior to intolerance in others without noticing one's own.

I told the audience that when I was young I had been active in campaigning against nuclear weapons, often participating in peace marches, and that I had been very moved by a poem that I read in the sixties which was written between the two world wars by the English poet Stephen Spender, and which began (as I remembered it):

*continued on page 15*

# A conversation with Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

by Paolo Brunatto

As mentioned in an article in the last issue of "The Mirror" on Bernardo Bertolucci's film "Little Buddha", Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche has been the spiritual consultant of the Italian film director during preparations for shooting the film. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, son of Trinley Norbu Rinpoche and grandson of Dudjom Rinpoche, is considered the reincarnation of the famous Rimé master, Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro.

**Brunatto:** In Italy in 1992, you told me that making a film like "Little Buddha" was more important than building 100 monasteries. Do you still hold the same opinion today?

**Dzongsar Khyentse:** Yes, I still have the same opinion. First of all, in Buddhism motivation is much more important than action. Of course every action depends on motivation but I cannot say that building a monastery is always based on a positive motivation. These days dharma is used for a living when instead one should live for the dharma. So, often building a monastery is not necessarily based on a good reason while making a film is not necessarily for a bad motivation like sex, violence or money. It doesn't have to be like that. If you make a film with positive compassionate motivation, I think in many ways it is much better than building 100 monasteries because a film reaches many different people and different levels of people throughout the world. While, unless you go (to Nepal) to see them, you will not have the experience of the monasteries.

**Brunatto:** What do you consider the future of the dharma to be in the west?

**Dzongsar Khyentse:** I think there are many good signs. The only trouble is that I find in general in the west and especially in America that Buddhism is used as a worldly therapy or healing method. When you go into a bookshop these days,



Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche

(photo Laura Salvinelli)

you find Buddhist books in the New Age section. This is a little sad because Buddhism is not only a method, it is not only a healing therapy, it is much more than that. It is a complete and sophisticated system that has been practised by kings, warriors, saints, scholars and poets for centuries. The philosophy of Buddhism is a system to balance your life, to look at your life. It is not just a simple method. That is my only worry. To prevent that kind of problem, I think an academic, total study of Buddhism is very important in the west, especially academic, because people are very attached to the emotional aspects of Buddhism, like meditation, blessings and things like that, which is good but it is more important if you have to use your

intelligence. And you have to have wisdom, then you have strength. You see, Buddhism has to be approached through wisdom. Buddhism is a philosophy that is wisdom oriented. It is not a religion that is emotionally oriented.

**Brunatto:** Do you think that westerners need simple basic Buddhist teachings or those more elevated and essential?

**Dzongsar Khyentse:** That is very difficult to answer because different beings need different medicines, different methods. People like myself, even though I am inspired by the method of Ati Yoga, Vajrayana, of the highest methods of Buddhism, looking at my attitude and my behaviour, I need Hinayana.

## Dzongsar Khyentse and the Khyentse Lineage

by Andy Lukianowicz

Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche was born in Bhutan in 1960. Grandson of Dudjom Rinpoche and son of Trinley Norbu Rinpoche, he has received teachings from many accomplished masters including H. H. the Dalai Lama, Dudjom Rinpoche, Sakya Trizin, the XVI Karmapa and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. He directs the Dzongsar Institute and monastery in Bir, Himachal Pradesh, India, as well as centres in Australia and South East Asia. He also has numerous disciples and followers in England, France and the USA. Dzongsar Khyentse has been recognised as the activity emanation of Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro (1896 - 1959), in his turn the activity reincarnation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820 - 1892) who, in the nineteenth century together with Jamgon Kongtrul and Chogyur Lingpa founded the eclectic non-sectarian 'Rimé' movement that, starting in the eastern province of Kham led to the spiritual and cultural renaissance of Buddhism in Tibet.

In his book, "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying", Sogyal Rinpoche recounts many anecdotes concerning Jamyang Khyentse who was his root master. For example, before leaving Dzongsar monastery on a pilgrimage to India he had promised his monks that he would return once before he died. Although he never returned physically, six months before his demise in Sikkim he appeared to his followers in a vision in the sky, and the temple caretaker saw him sitting in the lap of the Buddha Maitreya statue. Sogyal Rinpoche also recalls that after Khyentse's death in Sikkim, in order for his many devotees to come and pay their respects his disciples kept his corpse for six months through a hot Indian summer, yet it did not start to smell or show signs of decay.

Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro was the spiritual head of the famous Sakya Dzongsar monastery in Kham, and has been generally acknowledged as the most outstanding Tibetan master of this century. He was an emanation of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom, the incarnation of Padmalamitra and the thirteenth incarnation of the dharma king and disciple of Padmasambhava, Trisong Detsen. An authority on all traditions (the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives' publication of his booklet outlining the history of Buddhism in India and Tibet and the history and teachings of the different Tibetan Buddhist schools called "The Opening of the Dharma" is now in its third printing) and holder of all lineages, he gave teachings and initiations to masters and lineage-holders of all the schools who revered him as their root master. In fact he taught many of the Tibetan masters who have helped bring the dharma to the West, including Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Sogyal Rinpoche, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche and many others.

You know what you need. What you want is, maybe, different. I want to practise Vajrayana, but maybe I need Hinayana. Many westerners want Vajrayana because it sounds exciting, it sounds exotic, it sounds very mystical, it sounds very blissful. But maybe what they need is Hinayana - narrow and strict discipline. So it depends...

**Brunatto:** What is meditation?

**Dzongsar Khyentse:** Meditation is transcendental common sense. Meditation is actually doing nothing, doing really nothing, but doing nothing is very difficult, because we always finish by doing something...

Seattle, 12 February, 1993

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# A spiritual adventure in Outer Mongolia

by Rena Kuhn (Pema Khandro)

I was born into a not very religious German Protestant family. My school years in West Berlin passed without much excitement. For me, the interesting subjects in school were languages and history. Early on, I had a great fascination with the history of Asia and in particular the adventures of the Mongolian, Genghis Khan and his descendents. In 1976 Outer Mongolia opened its long-closed doors to tourism and the opportunity presented itself for me to join one of the first groups of foreigners allowed to enter the country in 1977. I was especially excited to be able to follow in the footsteps of Genghis Khan and to visit his Black Camp on the Orkhon River, which was the capital of the Mongol Empire before his son Kublai Khan moved the court to Peking. Alas, little remains of the great city, except for a solitary stone tortoise. It is said that the stones of Karakorum were taken to build the nearby lamaist monastery of Erdeni Dzu. My story will really begin at this monastery.

We arrive in the Gobi Desert in Outer Mongolia on a hair-raising flight from Ulan Bator, the capital. The pilot stops the plane directly in front of our yurts (Mongolian tents). I feel like I have been in a military bomber. The takeoff and landing were so fast that I could hardly blink and my feet were above my head during the ascent. As I exit the airplane, I go to congratulate the pilot upon this exhilarating flight experience and find, to my surprise, that a very overweight Russian woman climbs out of the pilot's seat. During our little chat, she mentions that most commercial airline pilots are trained in the Russian Air Force, so my feeling about being inside of a bomber is not so far off.

The Gobi Desert is an immense land of scrub, salt flats, and sand dunes. Like the Mongolians, we stay in the traditional round white tents which are called yurts. From here, we make many excursions. One of them is to Karakorum, the site of Genghis Khan's Black Camp.

On this trip to Outer Mongolia, I am chaperoned by a family friend named Henry. Henry is already 72 years old but he can outthike and outclimb me any time. This frustrates me terribly because the age of 72 seems really ancient to me. However, I am very fond of him, he is like the uncle of our family. Among other things, Henry is a very accomplished photographer, and some of his photos have been published in several well-known magazines. Because Henry spends a lot of time taking pictures, the two of us are always the last to get back to the waiting bus. So when we visited Erdeni Dzu monastery at Karakorum, as usual, we are the last ones to leave the place. As we are walking out, someone who seems to be a very old monk, comes running to catch up with us. When we stop,



the monk takes my hand and quickly puts a small heavy object into it. We figure that he wants some money, so Henry tries to slip money into the monk's hands. He refuses to accept the money, and I think that it is not enough. So we try to give a bigger donation. The monk keeps refusing the money, continuing to hold my hand. I feel like I really want to spend some time and talk with him but the people are calling us impatiently from the bus. Unfortunately, we have to leave in a hurry. In those days, I did not know the difference between a monk and a lama. I also did not know very much about Tibetan Buddhism. Thinking back to this very special moment, I believe the monk may have been a lama.

Now back on the bus, rambling through the hilly terrain, I finally examine the little object which has been given to me. It is a tiny religious statue made out of bronze, about one-and-a-half inches in height, and magnificently detailed. It looks antique. The fact that it is very old frightens me. Upon our entering Russia, we were instructed several times not to buy any antiques. Under no circumstances were we allowed to take anything more than 100 years old out of these countries. We were also told that the American Embassy would not be able to help us in the event we were imprisoned for not adhering to these strict regulations. I now tell Henry that I do not want to carry the miniature statue with me, but he says I shouldn't worry. With these words, he stuffs it into his pants pocket.

I had many more wonderful experiences in Outer Mongolia. I liked the country very much and was especially fond of the Mongolian people. But there is not enough time in this story to go into detail about the Mongolian people and their amazing resemblance to the Tibetans, which I discovered many years later.

By the time Henry and I arrive back at New York airport to part

ways (Henry lived in Montana), I have totally forgotten about my little figure till Henry puts something cold and heavy into my right hand when he is saying goodbye to me. While I am looking at the little statue in my hand, this unusual feeling of warmth spreads all over my body. It is a very new sensation that I have never experienced before and cannot really define at this time.

Upon my return to Los Angeles, I take the little religious figure to several Asian art dealers. Most of them confirm that it is hundreds of years old indeed, and that it is a religious statue. However, nobody can tell me exactly what kind of religious figure it represents. Because I love it so much, I have a gold prong made to hold the statue without damaging it and I wear it on a heavy chain around my neck.

Six years later in 1983, a girlfriend of mine invites me to go to a public celebration of the birthday of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama in the City Park of Santa Monica. I remember only vague sketchy details about his fleeing from the country of Tibet and the plight of the Tibetan people. However, I do have a faint knowledge of what the Dalai Lama represents.

Upon our arrival at the park, we are greeted by a large number of dharma students from the Tibetan Buddhist center Thubten Dhargye Ling in Los Angeles. One of the students immediately points to my little statue that I am wearing around my neck and says: "Where did you get this Tsongkapa?" I am so excited to finally hear a name put to my mystery talisman that I take this person aside and force him into telling me the whole history of Lama Tsongkapa, who of course is the much revered founder of the Gelugpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. The student then introduces me to the resident lama of Thubten Dhargye Ling, Ven. Geshe Gyeltsen. I take an immediate liking to Geshela (which the students affectionately call him) and

decide to attend some teachings at the center. Sadly, however, it takes me many more years to become a serious dharma practitioner.

I am lucky to have had the opportunity to study with many of the greatest lamas from all traditions. I am mainly a Dzog-chen practitioner now and non-sectarian.

Miraculously, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, became my root guru. Because of that and the Tsongkapa statue, which guided me onto the Buddhist path, I have a special connection with the Gelugpa tradition and its founder, Lama Tsongkapa. During my first trip to Tibet in 1990, I made a special point of visiting Ganden monastery near Lhasa and also the meditation caves of Lama Tsongkapa on the same mountain.

I often wear my little Buddha and remember fondly how he guided me into the wonderful life I have now. My only regret is that I did not discover the dharma teachings earlier. But maybe, just maybe, the dharma teachings chose to discover me when I was ready for them.

In 1552, the Mongolian prince and military leader, Altan Khan, had reunited most of Mongolia after the war with China. In his remaining 11 years of life, he raided Tibet extensively, but in turn was converted to Buddhism by the Tibetans.

In 1578, he conferred the Mongolian title "Dalai Lama" ("Great Ocean" Lama) on his teacher Sonam Gyatso, who subsequently became known as the Third Dalai Lama.

In 1586, the first lamaist monastery was established in Mongolia and Lamaism became the state religion. By the beginning of the 20th century, Outer Mongolia had 583 monasteries and temple complexes. Although officially independent, Outer Mongolia was from 1921 until last year a protectorate of Soviet Russia. During those seventy years the practice of Tibetan Buddhism was brutally suppressed. Under Stalin's orders as many as 100,000 monks were executed and all but two of the hundreds of monasteries destroyed. Yet in 1990, in the wave of anti-communism that swept across Russia and Eastern Europe, Mongolia started on its way to democracy and the people were once again free to practise Buddhism. Within one short year, about 120 monasteries have been opened and the number of monks has increased to about 2,000.

According to a recent dharma newspaper, two women's associations have also been created. One of them called Conney Tsogpa, has 21 women between the ages of 14 and 65 and is located near Ganden Monastery. The other association, Naro Knacho, with 17 young women between 5 and 21, is located some distance away. Both associations are advised by senior Mongolian teachers.

May the Dharma flourish in Outer Mongolia.

## "Monasteries in Tibet" Fund

We have received a letter from Rena Kuhn telling us about the commitment she has undertaken to help Tibetan people in Tibet after her recent trip there (see *The Mirror* issue 19, "Glimpses of Tibet" p.10). In particular she feels that much assistance is needed to improve the general condition of the monks and for the safe reconstruction of the monasteries in Tibet. Funds would also go to the projects of reconstruction in Tibet that have been organized by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

To help raise these funds which will be distributed among all schools of Tibetan Buddhism, Rena Kuhn has set up a charity raffle with many beautiful prizes some of which have been donated by important Tibetan spiritual masters. The tickets will be sold at \$50 US each and will be mailed as soon as payment is received. Tickets can also be bought on an installment plan basis or by a group. Donations from outside the US should be sent in the form of dollar travellers cheques sent by registered mail. Payment can be sent to:

Rena Kuhn (M.I. T. Fund), 256 S. Robertson Blvd., Suite 9379, Beverly Hills, CA 90211, U.S.A.

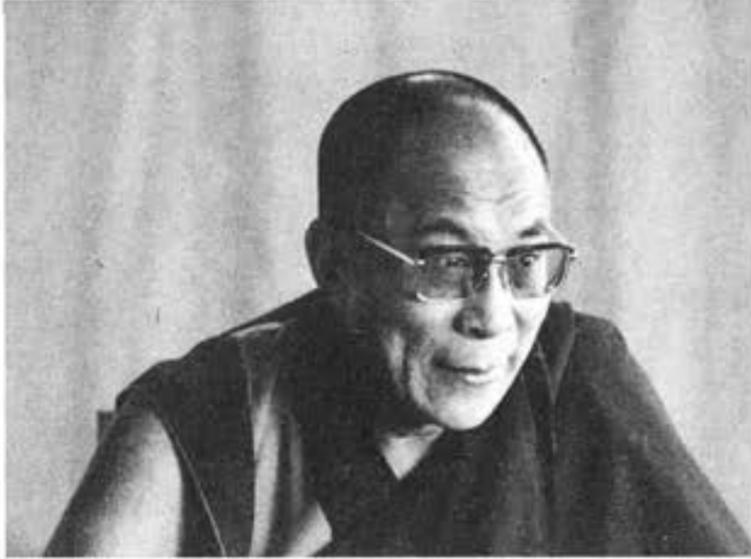
"We must all help to preserve the original power places of Tibet. Your donation will accumulate much merit for yourself."

# BOOK REVIEW

## WORLDS IN HARMONY Dialogues on Compassionate Action.

H.H. The Dalai Lama  
with Daniel Goleman, Stephen Levine, Jean Shinoda Bolen,  
Daniel Brown, Jack Engler, Margaret Brenman-Gibson, and  
Joanna Macy.

Parallax Press, Berkeley, California  
139 pages, \$12.99.



The range of activities and interests of His Holiness the Dalai Lama are a continuing source of wonder and inspiration.

In October 1989 in Newport Beach, California, a three day conference was held in response to the previously expressed wish of His Holiness that an encounter be organised to enable him to participate in discussions that would permit him to learn more about the Western mind and the relationship between Buddhism and Western psychology. The book 'Worlds in Harmony' contains a written record of some of the dialogues between His Holiness and the panel of distinguished psychotherapists and helping professionals listed above as co-authors of the book. Their meeting and conversations took place in front of an audience which met in small groups with experienced facilitators throughout the conference to discuss the topics on the panelists' agenda, and the members of the audience were also able to put questions to the panel. In this way all those attending the conference were active participants in the proceedings, and the conference itself had a transformative function at a personal level for those attending it.

The book opens with an introduction by The Dalai Lama entitled 'Cultivating Altruism', which begins with him reminding us that "compassion, love, and altruism are not just religious qualities. As human beings, and even as animals, we need compassion and affection to develop, sustain ourselves, and survive." This, as those who have had the privilege of hearing the Dalai Lama speak in public will know, is His Holiness' suggested remedy for the critical political and ecological situation that

the psychologist and journalist Daniel Goleman outlined in his foreword, in which he comments that "the generation now alive is the first in human history to glimpse the possibility of the end of nature, the end of the world. We live in a planet that can die."

The book continues to explore the theme of the interrelation of the ecology of the psyche with that of the planet and the societies on it in six chapters containing transcripts of His Holiness' discussions with the panel, on 'The Nature of Suffering', 'Working with Those Who Suffer', 'Dealing with Anger', 'Love and Compassion', 'Buddhism in the West', and 'Making a Difference through Compassionate Action'.

The panelists all have experience of the Buddhist teachings as well as their particular Western discipline and the way they interacted with the Dalai Lama produced valuable insights on many topics of great importance to the future of our planet in an environmental sense as well as a spiritual and psychological one. His Holiness' respectful interest in the Western methods used to deal with mental illness, the problems of US veterans of the Vietnam war, environmental issues and so on, was matched by the profound answers he gave to questions directed to him.

Joanna Macy, noted environmentalist and Buddhist scholar remarks that when people face up to the problems confronting the world, it can be depressing for them. His Holiness comments: "In Buddhism we do not deny or avoid suffering. Instead we concentrate on it, using a kind of analytical meditation. Analysing the situation in this way is called 'penetrating it'. If you want to deny or avoid something and have a kind of picnic

or vacation instead; you may feel some short term relief, but the problem will remain. So instead of doing that, if you penetrate into the suffering or the tragedy and see its nature with some perspective, your mental attitude will improve, and you will have a real chance of resolving the problem."

The book is so full of gems that it is difficult to select just a few topics for the purposes of a brief review without being left with the feeling of not having done justice to it. One particular quality of the encounters it records was the frankness and honesty of all participants. This means that controversial issues were not avoided for the sake of protecting or projecting an image, and a number of 'hot potato' topics were confronted directly.

In the chapter on 'Buddhism in the West', for example, the problems revolving around the 'shadow' aspect of the teacher-student relationship that have arisen in many spiritual groups of all denominations were freely discussed. It is of course doubly sad when spiritual communities go wrong: the very means by which individuals have tried to resolve their own problems and those of society have then become problematic. These problems have been given much prominence in the last few years in publications such as the innovative American quarterly 'Tricycle: The Buddhist Review', the US magazine 'Common Boundary' that concentrates on the area between spirituality and psychology (the May/June issue of 1990 contains two articles of this kind: 'Encountering the Shadow in Buddhist America', and 'Why Spiritual Groups Go Awry'), and particularly in the American newspaper 'Dharma Gate' that has practically made the topic an ongoing 'cause celebre', as well as in a number of books, and it was very interesting to read the Dalai Lama's clear guidance on certain aspects of the subject.

The panel concludes that difficult topics need to be brought into the collective awareness of any group, which is not easy because of the heavy level of psychological investment many members have made in committing themselves to a particular teaching environment, which they cannot bear to acknowledge as anything less than perfect, while still feeling acute discomfort themselves at some of the aspects of the situation they are participating in and are thus helping to create. Unable to face, let alone integrate their shadow side, many groups develop negative patterns of complete denial of the inconsistencies they have come to include in the bones of their structure. But the problems are not resolved by being ignored. All the good qualities we bring to the teachings such as devotion, and commitment can so easily be polluted by attachment,

as the ego appropriates to itself all the means intended to undermine our self-centredness. Then again, these problems must also be kept in perspective: an obsessive concentration on them is obviously counterproductive to generating positive mental states, and an atmosphere of optimism and trust is a fragile and precious element of any association of individuals.

In 'Worlds in Harmony' Jack Engler, training therapist at Harvard Medical School, recounts that "in Boston, where I practice, almost every month the newspaper has headlines of another therapist who has been accused of misusing his or her power by abusing his or her clients, usually men abusing women. We have also heard many examples in the Buddhist sanghas of teachers who have abused positions of power and trust." He comments that training is provided to help therapists avoid these pitfalls, but that when the problem does occur there are professional disciplinary bodies to take the matter in hand. He asks if such a system exists with regard to Buddhist teachers, and His Holiness, concedes that an official body to regulate the appointment (and possible dismissal) of Buddhist teachers would be a beneficial innovation.

His Holiness comments: "In cultivating a relationship with a spiritual teacher it is important not to be too quick to consider that person to be your spiritual teacher, because it is a very powerful relationship. For however long it may take - two years, five years, ten years, or longer, you simply regard this other person as a spiritual friend, and in the meantime you observe closely that person's behaviour, attitudes and way of life, until you are very confident of his or her integrity.

"I normally recommend to Buddhist practitioners not to see every action of their spiritual teacher as divine and noble. In all of the Buddhist teachings, there are specific, very demanding qualities that are required of a spiritual mentor. If one has a teacher who is engaging in unsuitable behaviour, it is appropriate for the students to criticise that behaviour. It says very explicitly in the Sutras, in the Buddha's own teachings, that in those aspects where the teacher's behaviour is wholesome, you should follow in that teacher's footsteps, but where it is unwholesome, you should not. So when it is incompatible with the wholesome, with the Buddhist teachings, then you don't follow in the guru's footsteps. You don't simply say, "It is good behaviour because it is the guru's."

In the chapter on 'Making a Difference', the Jungian analyst Jean Shinoda Bolen noting that women have consistently been oppressed in many parts of the world, asks His Holiness whether men are considered superior to women in

Tibetan Buddhism, and receives a detailed reply concluding that fundamentally, from the point of view of the teachings, men and women are equal. "The most important thing is no discrimination. The ultimate aim is the same for men and women. In the capacity to achieve Nirvana or Buddhahood there are no differences. ... There is a true feminist movement in Buddhism that relates to the goddess Tara. Following her cultivation of bodhicitta, the Bodhisattva's motivation, she looked upon the situation of those striving towards full awakening and she felt that there were too few people who had attained Buddhahood as a woman. So she vowed, "I have developed bodhicitta as a woman. For all my lifetimes along the path I vow to be born as a woman, and in my final lifetime when I attain Buddhahood, then too, I will be a woman." This is true feminism." His Holiness was asked if he remembered any past lives as a woman, and said that he sometimes had difficulty remembering what he had done the same day, never mind in past lives, but that he was certain he had previously been born as a woman. Asked if he could imagine being reincarnated as a woman Dalai Lama, he replied that of course it was possible, and that there were many female reincarnated lamas.

The chapter on 'Dealing with Anger' contains a very stimulating discussion of the difference between Buddhist and psychotherapeutic approaches to working with negative emotions, with a thorough inquiry by His Holiness into the way therapists view the problems that are created by the repression of these emotions. Stephen Levine, a meditation teacher renowned for his work with the dying, comments that "a lot of us are trying to discover a middle way between the expression of anger and non-injury. We know that we cannot let go of anything that we don't accept, so we need to make room in our heart for even anger and those states of mind that are so hidden that not much awareness reaches them. ... We are trying to discover how to allow this quality of anger not to be suppressed or repressed, but to come fully into our awareness so that it can be met and investigated, and seen as empty and changing. It seems that if we don't allow it to come up, we cannot investigate it."

"But as it comes into the mind, should it also come out of the mouth?", His Holiness inquires, to which Stephen Levine replies: "If it comes into the mind wholeheartedly there is no compulsion to act on it," and Daniel Brown, Director of a Boston area clinic for the treatment of people traumatised by political oppression and torture, Assistant Professor of Psychology at Harvard Medical School and a translator of texts from Tibetan and Sanskrit,

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# Reflections Reflections Reflections

## A Dzogchenpa in Sri Lanka

A rather unlikely place to practise Dzogchen? Certainly one will not find too many fellow practitioners on this island. 'Practice' among Buddhists here has rather a different meaning. This is a country to judge from the physical manifestations, where religion is highly valued. There are Buddhist monasteries, churches, mosques and Hindu temples in abundance. The area in which I am staying is strongly Buddhist for Kandy was the last stronghold of the Kings of Sri Lanka who were the guardians of the famous Tooth-relic, the left eye tooth of Shakyamuni, now enshrined magnificently in its temple complex.

My impermanent abode is about two miles from this temple, an area still rather rural and fairly quiet. I am fortunate in that I have room and board in a place destined to become a small meditation centre. The people who are in charge of this place know that last time I stayed in Sri Lanka (1975 - 1976) I was in robes and many of them have read the books written by me, most of them published in this country. There is a good deal of puzzlement as to why I am no longer a monk and why I have taken up with 'a Tibetan form of Buddhism'. (The word 'Dzogchen' is mostly unknown here). Generally I try to avoid any discussion in which sectarian feelings and ideas could be generated, at the same time making an effort to explain some of the factors that induced me to change my lifestyle.

Traditional Buddhism is composed of many of the same elements in all Buddhist countries though of course it may appear very different superficially. For example, the Tibetan and Sri Lankan forms of Buddhism apparently do not resemble each other.

But the basic ingredients of festivals, ceremonies - for protection, for making merit, at the time of death, etc. - building monasteries and supporting the monks in them, as well as the construction of Buddha-images and stupas, are actually very similar. Those who are more interested go on to learn the Dharma and practise it. In this country learning is highly regarded and being able to quote freely from the Suttas (Sutras) in Pali, much esteemed. Scholars of Dharma can be found amongst both monks and lay people though it is said that our present fast-moving times do not produce them in the quality found in the past.

Practice of Dharma here suffered grievously from the pressures of the three Colonial powers who for 400 years ruled parts or all of Sri Lanka: the Portuguese, Dutch and British. During the upheavals induced by Colonial occupation, knowledge of Buddhist practice - especially meditative practice - dropped to almost nothing. Though it has been revived by contact with other Buddhist countries, notably Burma, it does not appear that any great masters of practice and realization now reside here, a contrast with both Thailand and Burma.

Of course, there are quite a lot of monks but they are often caught up in the traditional round of ceremonies, with only a few scholars among them, and fewer still who lead an austere meditative life in the forest. Among the laity there are quite a number of people who try to practise meditation but how hard it must be when the lineage has been broken to arrive at realization. Meditation centres certainly proliferate but who will teach in them.

People here generally practise a great deal of generosity and many try to keep the five basic precepts. On Full and New Moon days many go to the temples and stay there for the day undertaking the eight precepts. But along with these manifestations of Buddhist piety there are also intermittent outbreaks of violence. Economic problems and emotional frustration are connected with this, so it seems proper to ask the question: how can Dharma influence people's social behaviour? Theoretically, if everyone practised Dharma, tendencies to violence should be transformed. But, then transformation of negative energies is only experienced by the more enthusiastic Dharma practitioners, then what happens to a society which has too few of them?

On the whole Buddhist teachings here are markedly dualistic with sharp lines being drawn between monks/laity, *arhats* (realized saints)/ordinary people, and *nirvana/samsara*.

This (narrow street choked with traffic, people and pollution) is *samsara* so what can one expect apart from lots of trouble - *dukkha* is a rather neglected topic. As our experience is stressed as basically *dukkha*, and this is all *samsara*, so *nirvana* is pictured as an ideal state associated with the realization of such exalted saints as *arhats*. In other words it is some other time, other place, other persons. There are even Sri Lankan legends that deny the possibility of full realization in the present time - the age of *arhats* has passed - it is said. Those who teach meditation here are unlikely to agree with such views.

Perhaps these few lines penned in Sri Lanka may be of some interest to other readers of 'The Mirror'. Good wishes to you from 'this bit of paradise' (as the advertisements say ignoring the darker side) and good practice wherever you are.

Laurence Mills

## The Misery of Philosophy

This is not an article explaining Marx's arguments against Proudhon's ideas, but a Dharma article denouncing two different errors: the error of using philosophy for building up one's own ego; and the error of denying that intellectual understanding and philosophy are necessary tools at a certain stage on the path to realization and thus despising and disparaging the intellect and its functioning.

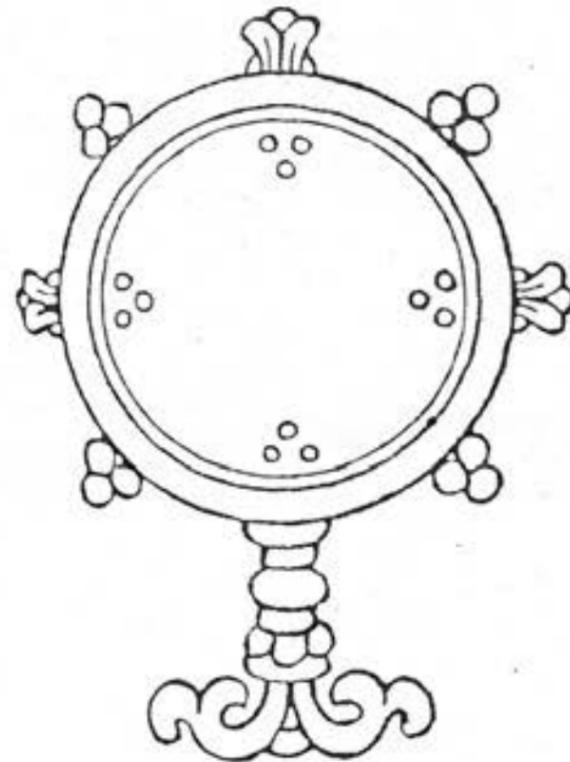
All Tibetan Buddhist Schools have their own "tawa" (*Ita-ba*) or "point of view": the philosophical understanding of reality that, according to each particular school, is the necessary basis for the practice of Dharma. Although the Dzogchen Teachings have been transmitted mainly within the Nyingmapa (*rNying-ma-pa*) or "Ancient" tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, these Teachings themselves are not a School of Tibetan Buddhism. Similarly, what the Dzogchen Teachings call "tawa" is not a particular philosophical interpretation of reality, but the state of non-dualistic, non-conceptual "Knowledge" (of) the true nature of both reality in general and the individual in particular. In fact, the "tawa" of Dzogchen corresponds to the direct, non-conceptual, non-dual realization of the Base of both *samsara* and *nirvana*. Then, "gompa" (*sgom-pa*) or "Contemplation" consists in "remaining in the tawa", and "chopa" (*spyod-pa*) - "Action" or "Conduct" - consists in maintaining the Contemplation in daily life and in everyday actions.

Moreover, while most Tibetan Schools insist that one has to have a good grasp of the intellectual "tawa" of one's own School before engaging in the practice of any of the traditional methods that lead to spiritual realization, the Dzogchen Teachings insist that the true "tawa" is to be obtained through self-observation rather than through intellectual study and the memorization of arguments.

The above has led many people to conclude that conceptual understanding and "philosophy" are ills that must be shunned by all true practitioners of Dzogchen. However, those who claim that conceptual understanding and "philosophy" must be shunned do

so as a result of the conceptual working of their own intellects rather than as a result of realization (evidently, no realized individual would commit such error). Therefore, their statement that philosophy and conceptual understanding must be shunned implies that this very statement, being a product of intellectual, conceptual understanding, has no value whatsoever.

Claiming that conceptual understanding and "philosophy" are ills that must be shunned by all true



practitioners of Dzogchen is a crass error. The Dzogchen Teachings do not give the name "tawa" to an intellectual "point of view" because they assume that anyone approaching the practice of Dzogchen must already have a good grasp of the dynamics of *samsara* and *nirvana* as well as of the nature of reality.

Nonetheless, the Teachings in question dedicate many pages to the explanation of the way in which *samsara* and *nirvana* arise from the Base or "zhi" (*gzhi*), the explanation of the fact that all that we perceive is in truth the Base, and the explanation of the differences between *samsara* and *nirvana*. As a matter of fact, according to the Dzogchen Teachings, a practitioner of Dzogchen must supplement the "tawas" of the Sutras and the Tantras with the more sophisticated explanation of the nature of reality that corresponds to the Dzogchen Teachings and practice.

According to these Teachings, the individual of "superior capacities" attains realization by

distinguishing between "mind" or "sem" (*sems*), which is the core of *samsara*, and "Knowledge" or "rigpa" (*rig-pa*), which corresponds to the Enlightened state. In spite of the fact that this "distinguishing" must be the result of direct experimentation in practices such as the *rushen* and the *semdzin*, the Teachings put great emphasis on the many explanations that contrast the state of mind or "sem" with the state of Knowledge or "rigpa". Moreover, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's repeated explanation of the difference between "the state of the Mirror" and "the state of the one reflected in the Mirror" is a means for making people understand the intellectual point of view of the Dzogchen Teachings and, in particular, to comprehend intellectually the distinction between the state of mind or "sem" and the state of Knowledge or "rigpa".

When students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche disparage intellectual comprehension, conceiving it as "the misery of the Dharma", they fail to pay due respect to the activities of our Teacher as well as to those of the Dzogchen Masters of all times and places.

If intellectual understanding had no value whatsoever, would so many Masters of different times and places have written so many pages about the intellectual point of view of Dzogchen? And would Rinpoche dedicate so many hours to the explanation of the point of view in question in the many retreats that he constantly leads around the world?

Is Rinpoche wrong when he does not limit himself to the description of the practices but, instead, dedicates many hours to the explanation of the point of view of Dzogchen as well as of the Sutras and the Tantras?

Philosophy in itself is not misery. Yet there is a misery of philosophy, which consists of dedicating oneself completely to dry and useless speculations and discussions about the nature of reality, without making the necessary efforts to attain to the State of Knowledge and to maintain this state in everyday life.

Most of us, students or teachers of philosophy, take our ideas to be the true nature of reality, becoming deadly serious about our intellectual games - which we are unable to

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## We who live...

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'We who live under the shadow of these wars what can we do that matters?'

The poem expresses the frustration that many young people feel when confronted by situations in the world that they feel powerless to change. This frustration can lead to cynicism or despair: the wars and famines and ecological disasters that we see every day on the television can somehow seem to rob our lives of meaning. How can you plan on a future for your children when the world may be blown up tomorrow, or be so polluted that it is uninhabitable? "What can we do that matters?", when we are young and have no power in the world? I suggested that we could try to become more fully human, more fully awake, and while working on that process of developing self-knowledge we could begin to engage with society in work for the benefit of others with some wisdom.

After my talk there were many interesting questions from the audience, including one from a bright girl in leather jacket who noted that although various religious groups were represented, there was no Nazi-skinhead present to put their point of view. To be really open to all the discussion should include them, she said. One of the school teachers replied that another time this might be possible. An older man commented that the secular or humanist point of view had not been represented either, as all the principal speakers represented various religions. He then made a case for secularism, as a means of overcoming the problems of intolerance he saw as implicit in strong religious belief, which for him inevitably leads to divisions between groups of people, and ultimately to fanaticism and persecution. I agreed with him that much of the history of Europe was a history of religious intolerance and wars but suggested he consider the ancient Roman saying "Invited or not, the gods will come," that the psychologist C.G. Jung had carved in Latin over the door to his house to remind himself that whether or not one is willing to accept it, the human psyche is peopled in its unconscious aspect by powerful forces that express themselves as mythical and divine images, which do not go away just because they are denied or ignored. Rather they tend to manifest with more destructive consequences if not brought to consciousness. Spiritual, as opposed to superficially religious, practice, though often very difficult and demanding, should involve an increase in consciousness, and the development of greater awareness.

A good lunch with the other speakers in one of the local restaurants sparked further exchanges of views, and concluded a rewarding morning's work. At the end I felt that my participation in the conference had really made a contribution to the local

community's understanding of the Dzogchen Community's presence in their area, and that further interaction of this kind would be beneficial. In the weeks following the conference I several times met students in the streets of the local towns who had been present and had heard me speak. Many of them asked me to suggest books on Buddhism that they might read.

## Worlds in Harmony

*continued from page 13*

comments a little later that "many of the Buddhist writings on the practice of patience seem to assume that the practitioner is aware of his anger and can then find a way of practising with it. In Western psychotherapy, many of the writings make a very different assumption - that the people who come for treatment are not aware of their anger. In fact (many people) have psychological defenses to keep it out of their awareness." The Dalai Lama notes that "this is something we Buddhists need to learn about .. this subconscious anger," and later in response to a question from the audience he explains the Buddhist method of transforming the energy of anger, adds a brief explanation of counting one's breath to diminish anger before one acts or speaks, but notes in conclusion that he agrees that as a last resort it is "better to express (the anger) than to hide it inside. A very negative, hateful feeling may remain there for years. That is the worst. Compared to that it is better to say a few nasty words." It is very easy to make the mistake of wanting to present oneself as a good, calm and spiritual person by simply repressing oneself and denying that one has any problems, but that is clearly an obstacle to real spiritual development.

Repressed anger was identified by the panel members as the root problem identified in many mental illnesses, but also in individuals who on the surface appear to be very well balanced and capable, but who nevertheless engage in work that is completely negative and destructive such as the military, the armaments industry and other industries that produce terrible pollution. Peace of mind and peace on earth shown to be inextricably linked in this valuable book, which ends with an afterword by the Dalai Lama on "Genuine Compassion", in which he reminds us once again that genuine compassion can be extended even towards one's enemies, "because the very basis for generating compassion is seeing the suffering of other living creatures, and that includes your enemies", whereas "usual compassion and love give rise to a very close feeling, but it is essentially attachment."

The publisher, Parallax Press, specialises in books on Buddhism and social responsibility, and their list includes many titles by the Vietnamese Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh.

John Shane

## The Misery...

*continued from page 14*

recognize as mere games - and using our understanding as a support for our egos.

This deviation may cause us to think: "I am the supreme thinker of the age"; "I am the best teacher at my University"; "My view is right while the views of others are wrong"; "I am the supreme intellectual athlete"; "I am the most famous of philosophers" - and thus feel superior to everyone else and confirm our sensation of being the centre of the universe.

This kind of attitude is so ingrained in the nature of the ego that, when we begin to study the Dharma, we cannot avoid transferring it into our new field of interests and activities. There have been numberless "Dharma" debates and controversies in which each side is only interested in proving its own intellectual viewpoint to be supreme and absolutely true, and the viewpoint of the other part to be inferior and mistaken. By so doing, we expect to prove beyond any doubt our assumed superiority. But what we actually prove is that we are using the Dharma as a way to build our egos, rather than a means to go beyond them.

In general, all of us "Dharma people" who write books and articles, who do translations and/or who teach the Dharma, use our activities to enhance our self-image, build a more powerful ego and become as famous and respected as possible.

I do not mean all of us are wholly unaware of our own self-deceit; I am only saying that all of us have the tendency to use our intellectual and other activities in order to build our ego. This does *not* mean that we should give up our intellectual activities, and in general whatever may enhance our ego. Rather, it means that whoever engages in intellectual Dharma activities, teaches the Dharma, and the like, must keep up a constant awareness of all that arises in her or his own heart: we must constantly use the mirror of relative awareness to watch ourselves and discover our own attempts to build our egos with the feedback received from others, so that the corresponding overvalued mental forms may spontaneously liberate themselves in the Mirror of Absolute Awareness.

Philosophy is valuable only when it is used as a means to go beyond the intellectual plane into the sphere of Absolute Truth, and to lead others in the same direction. As the Buddhist sage Ashvagosha put it, we must use language in order to go beyond language.

If we do so, philosophy may help us go beyond the miseries of samsara. But if we use philosophy to reinforce our own intellectual viewpoints and to build our egos, the most respectable discipline of the intellect will have become the misery that sustains and reinforces the miseries of samsara.

Elias Capriles

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# H. H. Dalai Lama in Europe

## Great Britain

Under the auspices of the Office of Tibet, and the Tibet Foundation Getza Ltd., H. H. the 14th Dalai Lama will be visiting the United Kingdom in May 1993. During a four day event which will take place at Wembley Conference Centre in London from May 8th to 11th, His Holiness will deliver a comprehensive programme of lectures, a public talk and an inter-faith address. At the same time there will be exhibits of religious paintings and traditional costumes as well as a performance of Tibetan music and song and the creation of a sacred sand mandala.

In addition, on May 3rd, His Holiness will give a lecture at the Gandhi Peace Foundation in London, on May 4th he will address a European conference of parliamentarians at the Palace of Westminster while on Wednesday May 5th he will give a public talk at Union Society, Cambridge. He will speak on "Compassion and Universal Responsibility" on the 6th in Cardiff. For further information contact: Tibet Foundation, 43 New Oxford St., London WC1A 1BH. Tel. 071 379 0634, fax 071 379 0465 or The Office of Tibet, Linburn House, 342 Kilburn High Road, London NW6 2QJ. Tel. 071 328 8422, fax 071 372 5449.



## Germany

His Holiness will be participating in the German Protestant Church Day to be held in Munich, Germany on June 11th. In the afternoon, the Dalai Lama will give a lecture during an event on the theme "Justice, Peace and the Preservation of World Religions". In the evening he will open a festival of culture entitled "World Solidarity against Violence and Racism". Information from Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag, Postfach 480, 6400 Fulda, Germany, tel. 06 61/601091.

## France

The spring issue of the newsletter of the Institut Vajra Yogini in Marzens, France reports that the Dalai Lama has accepted the invitation of the Tibetan Buddhist Federation in France to visit and teach in different French cities in November 1993.

The dates are: October 29-30 Paris; October 31 Chambéry; November 1-2 Grenoble, November 5 Bordeaux, November 7 Toulouse, November 9-14 Institut Vajra Yogini.

At the moment no further details are available but we hope to publish further information on the tour of His Holiness in the next issue.

## PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL DAYS

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 practising 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 Changchub Dorje, the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma "Tsedrub Gongdus" which two of his disciples, Ayu Khadro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to 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, practising Guruyoga with the Tundrin, Tungyas or Ganapuja according to our possibilities. We do this practice when it is 8.00 in the morning in Oddiyana.

SEE THE UNIVERSAL TIMETABLE (issue 19)

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 try to do the long Tun collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or the medium Tun if you are practising 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 not you can practise Guruyoga with Padmasambhava and the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

## Every picture tells a story

Here at The Mirror we are trying to improve our photo archive.

To this end we invite readers to collaborate by sending us copies of photographs of significant moments for the Dzog-chen community such as retreats, meetings, activities, etc. It is particularly important that photos of recent activities are sent to The Mirror as soon as possible for publication in the current issue.

The Mirror, Merigar 58031 Arcidosso (GR)

## THE MIRROR

The International Newspaper of the Dzog-chen Community founded by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Published by the Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzog-chen.  
The Mirror, Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.  
Tel. and fax 0564-966608.

Direttore responsabile: Raimondo Bultrini  
Editorial advisors: Anna Eid, Giovanni Arca  
Editorial collaboration: Liz Granger, Robin Cooke, John Shane, Nina Robinson, Cristiana De Falco, Albert Benson  
Graphic assistance: Renata Nani  
Layout: Shang-Shung Edizioni  
Printer: Tipografia 2A, Arcidosso  
Issue 20, April 1993  
© 1993 Ass. Cult. Comunità Dzog-chen.  
Registrato presso il Tribunale di Grosseto al n. 5/1990 del 26 Aprile 1990