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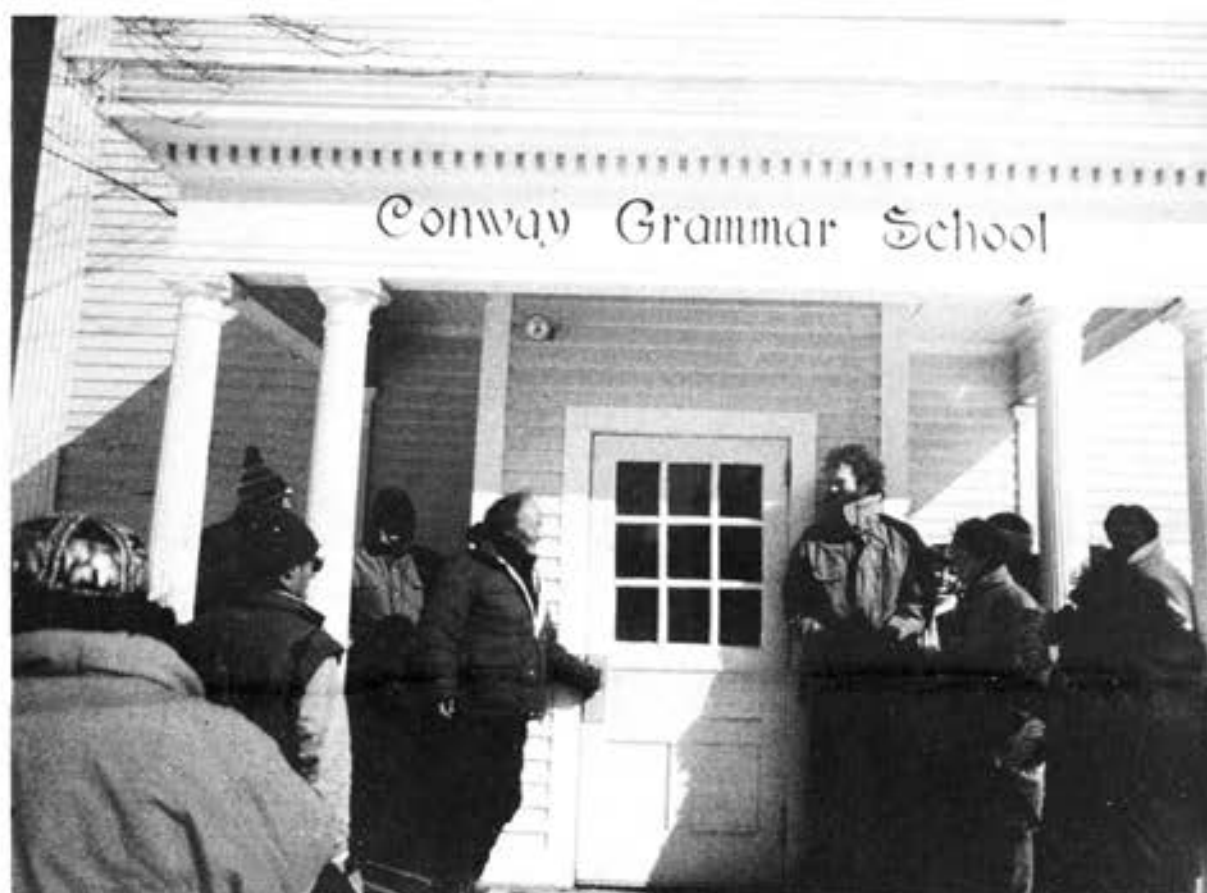
An Ocean of Possibilities

Tsegyalgar moves forward on school purchase

The deal is imminent. Tsegyalgar has signed a purchase and sale agreement with the Town of Conway to buy the old Conway Grammar School. It will be a home for Tsegyalgar's public activities. The contract is not finally sealed - but with the local authorities sympathetic to our proposed use, we are well on the way to a closing. We hope that the building will provide a private space for Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, a dormitory, a place for our offices, a library, a home for the Shang Shung Institute in America, room for a publishing venture, an indoor mandala, and a place for winter gatherings. Tsegyalgar has been an integral part of this rural township for over twenty years. For the town it is an ideal situation. The building, for which many of the town's citizens have a special affection, will remain in the possession of local residents who have long been a part of the Western Massachusetts community.

The school project is an undertaking that requires the commitment not only of locally resident Dzogchen practitioners, but community members world-wide, and especially those in the USA. A broad spectrum of possibilities opens before us. Membership of Tsegyalgar has been growing steadily this year. As if coalescing from this expression of responsibility toward the teachings, a living symbol of this has crystallised in the heart of the New England town of Conway.

Joe Zurylo, Gekö, takes up the story: finding a face to the world for Tsegyalgar did not start with the school project, but began rather painfully a few years ago when the Dzogchen Community in Conway realised that the large land in Buckland would not serve a very public purpose. For one thing the isolation makes setting up a modern communication network impossible without major expense. The lack of suitable soil conditions for a sewage system preclude building any large structure without major engineering, and having to obtain special permits from the Environmental Protection Agency. During the August 1992 retreat, Norbu Rinpoche stressed the importance of having a facility that could accommodate a large indoor gathering and provide some



accommodation for visitors to Tsegyalgar.

After the retreat we set up a long term planning committee. The purpose of this committee was to find the best way to achieve this goal. We had many meetings and hours of discussion. It became apparent that we had two options: either to buy a piece of land and build what was needed from scratch; or to buy an old farm and to renovate the existing buildings. We came to the painful realisation that vast sums of money would be necessary for either option. Following one of these meetings, Lauri Marder casually mentioned that the town was willing to sell the old Conway Grammar School. Many of us knew that the school was for sale but we dismissed the idea of buying it because we assumed that the price would be too high.

A few people went to look at the school in the following week out of curiosity.

The economy in New England at the moment is very depressed. Property values are lower than they have been for sometime. We decided that we should look into what the town would consider to be a reasonable offer. The only other possibility for the town to sell the school building would be if a commercial developer became

interested in buying it. None had shown any interest. This possibility was also viewed with some trepidation among the town population, worried that commercial development might have an adverse effect on the town.

The long range planning group reported to the Gakyil that they had found a property that might be suitable for our needs. The local Dzogchen Community members met to consider whether the building could be suitable for the whole Community. Although we thought that the school would not fulfil every desire that we had for a property, the

general consensus was that it would more than satisfy our needs.

After this major breakthrough things began to move fast. We made preliminary investigations into zoning regulations and building codes, the nuts and bolts of property purchase. The major impetus to pursue the project came when Rinpoche looked at the photographs and rudimentary floor plans that were shown to him in Tashigar. His reaction was very favourable. When told that this building was in a public place, his response was that we need a public place for Tsegyalgar.

continued on page 5

A.S.I.A. MISSION

The recent A.S.I.A. mission to Tibet, guided by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, has proved to be a success despite the travelling and scheduling difficulties and, as a result, A.S.I.A. activities are now starting to become operational. Besides collecting technical information required for various projects, the trip enabled the Association to actually start work on some of the smaller privately funded projects: namely school construction in Khamdogar (Tibetan Autonomous Region), residence of Master Ringzin Chanchub Dorje and Galenteng (Szechuan). The authorities of the Tibetan Autonomous Region as well as those of Jarkando (a Prefecture of Chamdo), on whose approval several of the projects depend, gave the maximum assistance to the team. The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is expected to give its final approval in the near future to financing the major project of constructing a school and hospital in Chamdo.

page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

TEACHING

On Working with Newcomers

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

page 2

NEWS

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's world teaching schedule

page 3

First Buddhist teaching in Israel

page 4

Report on Thailand retreat

page 4

Seminar on Tibetan medicine at Merigar

page 6

Decorating Merigar Gonpa continues

page 7

FEATURES

Buying the Conway School

An interview with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

page 8

Tibetan medicine

Interviews with two Tibetan doctors

pages 10 & 11

Karma and rebirth

Dr. Pasang Yonten

page 12

Judaism, Zen, Dzog-chen and Me

Ji-Kwan Sunim

page 14

On Working with Newcomers

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

When those who have been following the teachings for a number of years practise together collectively and new people who have not received transmission participate, many of the old practitioners often get worried. I have received letters from several different places on this topic. When something like this happens, how should the practitioners who have been following for a longer period of time behave? What should they do?

There are two ways of responding to this situation because there are two different types of new people involved.

Interested people

Firstly, there are those who are seriously interested in the teaching but who may not yet have had the possibility of receiving transmission from the Master. In the case of this type of person, it is not particularly important that they have not yet received transmission, because their participation and interest are deep. A person with a profound interest of this kind, even though they have not received transmission today, will receive it tomorrow; they will always find a possibility of meeting the Master and receiving the transmission. Those who seek will find.

So one should certainly not reject this type of person who wants to participate and is genuinely interested, and whenever it is possible, when one practices together with them, one should help them to participate in such a way that they can learn something, giving them whatever advice may be necessary so that they can understand what is happening.

How to collaborate

I'm not suggesting that any type of person can suddenly become a Master and start to transmit the teaching. To transmit teaching one must have a precise knowledge and certain qualities. For example in order to be able to transmit a mantra it is not enough to have simply received the transmission of the mantra from someone, but one must have applied it, and the person who intends to transmit it must have a certain realisation of it. If a person does not have this, and only repeats the mantra, considering this to be adequate for the transmission, the transmission cannot work properly. If it does not work properly, it is useless to do it, because this means one is just fooling people. So it is not that one has to present oneself as a Master, or someone who is giving a transmission, but there is nevertheless a way to collaborate with other people in order to help them. So that is how things should be done in the case of this first type of person who is genuinely interested: there is nothing that needs to be limited.

Some advice on how those who have been following the teachings for a longer time should relate to people who are newly interested



(photo Igor Ustyuzhin)

Curious people

Then there is another type of person who is not sincerely interested in following the teaching, in doing practice, or in having realisation through this path. Rather what this type of person has is a kind of curiosity, perhaps just wanting to find out what is going on, and what this teaching consists of. If we conclude that a person only has this kind of curiosity, we are justified in asking that person not to participate. Why? For a very simple reason. If the person in question is a friend of a practitioner, the practitioner deserves his or her friend's respect. The practitioner can explain that the path, the teaching, and the practice are things that he or she considers important and serious, asking his or her friend in a nice way not to demean this seriousness by their curiosity, because to interfere in such a manner with something important is not appropriate.

A real friend, receiving a request made in this way will certainly respect it. If the person does not respect one's request, but insists, then he or she does not have any real regard for the practitioner and cannot be a true friend. It is very simple, and there is no need for one to get offended when confronted with such a situation.

Getting Information

Someone might, however, say, for example: "If you never let me know what it is that you are doing, how can I get interested?" Many people say things like this. But it would be better for such a person to read a book about the teaching or

something like that in order to get a general understanding of the teachings, instead of entering into participating in the path and the practice. Information and practice are two different things.

So if someone is genuinely interested, even if they have not received transmission, perhaps they can participate, and they can learn. In this way when they meet the Master one day, they will be ready to apply what they have learnt because they know how to do it.

Body, Voice, Mind

There are three aspects in the practice, related with our three existences: the Body, the Voice and the Mind. There are many aspects of the Body such as particular bodily positions and ways of sitting when we do the practice. Then as far as the Voice is concerned, there are considerations as to how we should breathe, how we should chant, how words should be pronounced, how to combine invocations with visualisations, how visualisations should be carried out, and so on. There are many things related to the Body which must be learnt and done including mudras and their meaning, the function of mudras to communicate in order to make samaya function, etc. All these things can be gradually learnt and one can help others to understand them.

Fundamentally, all these things are secondary in relationship to the teaching, to the method. They are not the principal thing but they are ways of applying the path. So if one has learnt all these things, it may be

easy to apply them.

Encouraging new comers

It sometimes happens that when a new person arrives and there are many other people who already know how to do mudra, and how to chant, etc., the new person feels at a disadvantage. They may be discouraged by others even if this is not the principle of the teaching. When one has just started (to follow the teaching), even such secondary things can seem to be very important and when a new person feels that he or she does not know how to do anything, they may become discouraged. If such a person is given even a minimal preparation, this is not bad, and may in fact be very useful.

Secret teaching

It is a very different matter with regard to reading books containing instructions for practices which should be regarded as secret. They should not be approached with curiosity or just with the intention of seeing what it is that others do. Before reading such material, it's much better that people wait to receive transmission from a Master, and then apply it, because sometimes when one reads a book of instruction one may feel one wants to do something right away, and if one does not know how to do what one reads about perfectly, one may make a mistake which can create problems. Moreover, in the teaching there is a saying that, "One should not take Secret Teaching by oneself" which means that one must receive it from a Master, because the Teaching is

related to a transmission. Transmission can only be received from a Master, because the Master has in turn received it from his Master in a lineage going right back to the origin, which continues unbroken up to the present day. This connection is what is meant by transmission, and this is the reason it is necessary to receive it.

Transmission

There are various types of transmission, such as initiation, empowerment, and oral instruction, as well as the necessity to receive at least a 'lung' of the transmission in the case of mantra. Such a 'lung' involves the power of the mantra which is found in its sound, and this sound must be heard from the Master, who is a person who has him or herself received the transmission and has applied it and produced its function. One must receive the transmission of the sound of the mantra in a perfect way from the master, and then finally if one applies this mantra, it can have a function because it is related to transmission. The function of the path, of the transmission, of method, is related to transmission not only to an intellectual understanding.

One might, for example, find a book in the library, and reading it one can understand well what is written in it. It might say, "This is a mantra, recite it a few hundred times and you can cure certain types of illnesses". One understands what is written there and recites the mantra. But even if one has intellectually understood in this way, and starts to apply this mantra reciting it as indicated in the book, it is very difficult to attain the realisation of it because this practice is without life. What is the life of the practice? It is transmission. That's what is missing in such a case. It is not a matter of quantity or of intellectual knowledge being lacking, what is lacking is the life, and life is transmission. So it's very important to understand and respect this.

Uninterrupted

If we want to turn on a lamp, what must we do? We must connect it to the electric current, and there is a plug to connect the lamp to the electrical current. When the lamp is finally connected to the current it can be turned on. In the same way transmission is like an electrical wire that is connected with the origin uninterruptedly up to the present day. It is for this reason we consider that transmission to be so important.

The principle, the power and the knowledge of the transmission is beyond our intellectual judgment, beyond our concepts, anything. We cannot invent any type of transmission of this kind. And even if one invented a transmission, some type of practice or some aspect of spiritual practice, perhaps, who

continued on page 3

A.S.I.A. mission to Tibet

by Andrea Sertoli

The scheduled A.S.I.A. mission to Tibet took place as planned in July and August under the guidance of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The team, whose members were Tsherintar, Phuntshok Wangmo, Andrea Dell'Angelo, Giovanni Boni and myself, had the task of collecting missing technical data in the different areas where implementation of development projects has to be started.

In addition, great emphasis was also given to the establishment of constructive relationships with local authorities.

The mission field trip started in Lhasa and moved eastwards through the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Szechuan ending in Chengdu, where the team finally split up.

Only three members continued the mission for the final part of the journey in Amdo where the construction of a school is currently planned.

Before departure, several days were spent in Lhasa for official meetings with local authorities at the regional and prefectural level. The object of these meetings regarded specifically the projected activities of A.S.I.A. in the field of

education and health and also the evaluation of possible forms of cooperation between the Shang Shung Institute and local Departments of Tibetology, Traditional Medicine, etc.

In those first days the basis of a good relationship with the T.D.F. (Tibetan Development Fund), the official A.S.I.A. counterpart, was laid and an experienced official of the T.D.F. travelled with the team throughout the Tibetan Autonomous Region as far as Dege which facilitated the work and made it more effective.

The most satisfactory results were reached with the authorities of the Tibetan Autonomous Region and particularly with the authorities of the Prefecture of Chamdo under whose jurisdiction two of the planned A.S.I.A. projects lie: the school construction in Khamdogar and the school and hospital project in Jarkando.

All the local authorities and especially the Departments of Education and Health were very concerned and aware of the opportunity offered by A.S.I.A. and fully agreed with its operative philosophy.

Khamdogar village was the

residence of the renowned Master Chanchub Dorje. Situated at the confluence of two rivers the village is inhabited by lay people and monks who keep alive the teachings of the Master. A.S.I.A. has already given funds to the village to start the construction of a building which will serve as a primary school. The village of Jarkando is situated about 30 km from the border with Szechuan and the village of Dzamthog.

One of the two villages will be selected for the realisation of the Italian government-funded project consisting of the construction of a school and hospital and on which the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is now expected to give its final agreement.

After crossing the Dza-chen River and entering Szechuan, a great change was felt in official relations with the local authorities who proved to be less open than those of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. The A.S.I.A. mission reached the area of Galenteng by horse where, as planned, funds for starting activities were delivered. Dr. Phuntshok Wangmo who is resident in Galenteng will coordinate the project there.

Tibetan Language and Culture Course



The Shang Shung Institute, based in Arcidosso, Italy, is planning to offer a four-year course on Tibetan language and culture at the university level.

The Institute is seeking native Tibetan speakers with a good knowledge of English to teach the course.

The courses, which will be intensive, probably will take place during the summer so that it will be easier for people to attend them. They will be held at the School of Tibetan Studies of the Shang Shung Institute which, it is hoped, will become a reference point at the international level for all those who wish to deepen their knowledge of the Tibetan language and culture. The School also intends to organise specialised courses and seminars on translation from the Tibetan.

All those who are interested in the course or who have ideas and suggestions, or who simply want to give their support to this project are kindly asked to contact the secretary of the Shang Shung Institute: via degli Olmi, 1, 58031 Arcidosso (GR), Italy. Tel. 564 966940. Fax 564 966846.

On working with newcomers

continued from page 2

knows, it might have some minimal kind of function. Some people say that they do this type of practice because it brings them benefit. Some such things may indeed have a minimal benefit, but this doesn't mean that they bring you to total realisation.

Lineage of transmission

One can never reach total realisation without knowing how to arrive beyond one's limits, beyond one's dualistic condition. Transmission is something for realisation in this way.

All teachings that are related to a precise transmission have their origin.

This origin comes from one who

has given this teaching and who became totally realised through it, after which this method is handed down and transmitted. Thus if we seriously follow a method such as this, we know that a teaching has its principle, its lineage and its transmission without interruption. This is what real teaching means. It is something really serious. When we speak of a teaching that we follow sincerely and seriously, it is this type of teaching, not just any path or type of his philosophy that someone has invented.

Certainly one can have fun, experimenting with anything in life. But if we are going to dedicate our lives, our precious time, to a teaching, it is much better to understand well what the origins of

that teaching are, what its value is and in what way can one have realisation through it, and so on. The basis of the teaching is transmission and if one understands this well, one protects the transmission, maintains the transmission, and those who are interested in receiving the transmission can prepare to do so. So one can work in this way.

We all know that it is very useful and important to collaborate, and that this is true for everyone. So I think that the practitioners of the Community who have been involved for a longer time should not get worried when confronted with new people, but they should help and collaborate with the new people in the way I have described above.

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

Teaching Programme 1993 - 1994

Tokyo, Japan

27 August - 5 September

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Nagasawa Tetsu, 7-17-14 Higashi Oizumi, Nerima-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

For English speakers contact: Richard Volkman Tel. 0081 03 3722 3768 (09.00 - 21.00 Japan time)

Katmandu, Nepal

24 December - 3 January 1994

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Ian Baker, S.I.T. Box 1373, Katmandu, Nepal, Tel. 01 413948

Australia

25 - 29 March

Course of either Yantra Yoga with Fabio Andrico or Dance of the Vajra with Prima Mai

1 - 10 April

Teaching Retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

13 - 17 April

Course of either Yantra Yoga with Fabio Andrico or Dance of the Vajra with Prima Mai

For information contact: Herbert Jelinek, 31/3 Plowman Street, Bondi, NSW Australia, Tel. 61 6 257 1177, Fax 61 2 6923868

Ulan Bator, Mongolia

6 - 8 May

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Batodalay Dugarov, Gusinozerskaya 9/3, Ulan Ude, Buryatia 670026 Russia

Ulan Ude, Buryatia

13 - 21 May

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Batodalay Dugarov, Gusinozerskaya 9/3-3, Ulan Ude, Buryatia 670026 Russia

Moscow, Russia

27 May - 5 June

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Vladimir Maikov, Sovietskaya Str. 14-17, Zheleznodorozhny, 143980 Moscow Region, Russia, Tel. (home) 007 095 5527052, Work: 2039196 Fax: 095 9382077

Merigar, Italy

Summer 1994

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Comunità Dzog-chen, Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso GR Italy. Tel. 0564 966837-966322, Fax: 968110

Impressions of Israel

Notes on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teaching in Jerusalem

by John Shane

Jerusalem: Tuesday, 29/06/93. Evening: the sun has just gone down and the muezzin's cry is ringing out over the walls of the old city of Jerusalem calling the Moslem faithful to prayer in the Dome of the Rock, the mosque built on the Temple Mount. I am standing in the old city, in the Jewish quarter, after visiting some ancient synagogues there with my friend Menachem Kallus, an American who has been living and studying in Jerusalem for eight years, and who is now completing a Ph.D. on aspects of Jewish mysticism. We first met in 1981 at the California retreat and subsequently at a retreat in the old group house on Parson's Road in Conway. I am sad; the retreat here is over. Rinpoche left today for Thailand where he will lead another retreat, and who wouldn't have wanted to have gone with him? (We're tired now: we were all up at 4.00 a.m. to meet at Rinpoche's apartment to practice a Tun together on the birthday of Guru Rinpoche in synchronicity with the universal timetable of the Dzogchen Community). A small crowd of Italian and Irish Catholic nuns headed towards a church on the hillside brushes past me on the steps down to the Western Wall, where



Some participants in the Jerusalem retreat

(photo Fabio Andrico)

rows of Jews in prayer shawls rock backward and forward with covered heads bowed towards the only wall remaining from the great Temple that stood here in ancient times. History has rolled over this rocky soil, and left its mark on these hills, holy men have blessed this land and holy wars have scarred it.

City of stone: Jerusalem, stone buildings, stone towers, stone turrets, stone minarets, and high castellated walls perched above hillsides of rocky soil, stony ground peopled with cypress trees and bleached

gravestones, witness to centuries of turbulent history played out under this intense sun. And now the waxing moon is rising in the cloudless sky scattered with stars, while Rinpoche is far from here, suspended somewhere high in the air, flying away around the world to benefit beings somewhere else, flying towards another land, a Buddhist land, a long way from this beautiful place where the traditions of three of the world's great religions come together with all the power and energy of massive tectonic plates of the earth's crust meeting in an

earthquake zone.

Rome: Monday, 21/06/93. Morning. At Fiumicino airport I am checking in for the flight to Jerusalem with our small group which includes Rinpoche, Fabio Andrico, Barrie and Nancy Simmons, Antonio di Giammarco and Liane Graf (who was the Gekö of Merigar for two years). Orit Bultrini, Raimondo's wife who is Israeli, had preceded us by several days, travelling with their baby son, Daniel. "Why are you going to Jerusalem?", the well-trained young woman security agent at the El Al counter asks me, at the beginning of a long (a very long) question and answer session before our baggage can be accepted. I can see Rinpoche being questioned at another table. I reply: "I am accompanying a Tibetan Lama who is a professor of Tibetan and Mongolian studies at a University in Italy. I have edited and translated some of his books in English. He will be teaching in Jerusalem for a week, and I will attend his seminar, to participate and to assist him in whatever way I can." "Who will be attending this seminar?" "Local people I expect, and some people from abroad; I don't know exactly who, but people interested in Tibetan culture and

spiritual traditions." "How were these people invited to attend this seminar, and why will they be interested in it? What will this professor teach?" However, El Al is the only major international airline which has never suffered a hijacking. Its security system relies on this carefully-designed questioning, rather than on physical search. As Rinpoche remarks, "Much better this delay than a disaster." The questioning continues, in great detail and with some considerable repetition of themes, until finally I am allowed on my way.

Jerusalem: Monday, 21/06/93. Afternoon. Arriving at Lod International airport, half way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, we are met by Noa Blass, the very generous and hospitable woman who invited Rinpoche to come to Israel after she read, 'The Crystal and the Way of Light', a French disciple called Frederic Cohen, and Menachem, who helped Noa in organising the seminar. He had invited Rinpoche to Israel two years ago, but the Gulf war interrupted that plan. Noa is a woman's name in Hebrew it transpires, while Noah is the male form, as in the name of the builder of the famous Ark.

continued on page 15

Dzogchen in Thailand

by Martin Perenchio

On a typically sultry rainy-season night in Bangkok, July 1, 1993, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche entered the open-air Dharma Center of Chulalongkorn University. After being greeted by various old students, new students and the curious well-wisher or two, Rinpoche took his seat on the slightly raised dais, accompanied by a reluctant but very able translator. Following a brief introduction by one of his older students, Rinpoche began to lay the foundation for an understanding of the Dzogchen teachings by discoursing primarily on the path of renunciation.

Thai Buddhism is Theravada and much of the audience's understanding of Buddhist teachings is conditioned by Theravada explanations. The translator's reluctance stemmed from the fact that many concepts of the Dzogchen teachings have as yet no adequate Thai rendering. But by speaking on the path of renunciation, of which the Theravada is one example, Rinpoche gave the audience of about 100 an understanding of a path which all present could understand.

Those who desired to know more were invited to attend what was entitled the "Dzogchen Seminar" in Hua Hin, a beach-side resort town on the east coast of peninsular Thailand, about 180 km south of Bangkok. For the next five days, in the conference room of the finely

appointed Sailom Hotel, where many of the participants stayed, Rinpoche gave teachings twice a day to a group of about 30 people. Fabio Andrico taught Yantra Yoga in the morning, before the first teaching session and Prima Mai taught the Dance of the Three Vajras in the early evening, after the afternoon teachings.

Various publications from different Dzogchen communities around the world were for sale. A number of people were first-time participants, so the publications provided a much needed context. Others, already a bit familiar with teachings, had a chance to augment their libraries. Between teaching sessions, small groups actively discussed various topics related to Dzogchen, with older students helping the newer ones with explanations or suggestions for reading from the many texts available. Beautiful weather, luxurious surroundings, a small group of mutually supportive participants and Rinpoche's benevolence made this "seminar" as ideal an introduction to the Dzogchen teachings as one could wish. Many of the participants who had attended previous large retreats were certainly appreciative of the small scale and the luxury of close and familiar contact with the teacher.

In addition to the frequent informal contact between Rinpoche and the participants, there was also

time for a more formal interview with two Thai journalists. With a Thai-English translator in attendance, Rinpoche answered questions about his own life, Tibetan traditions and the current political situation in Tibet. A small but growing part of the literate Thai public is beginning to show interest

Thubten Yeshe's Spanish incarnation. The text of the interview with Rinpoche will be published in October in "Chan" (The Moon).

Much credit for the success of the seminar must go to Pierre Wittmann and Ariella de Montis, who are residents of Hua Hin, and Dick Drury, a resident of Chachoengsao,



Group portrait in Hua Hin

(photo M. Perenchio)

in the culture and religion of Tibet. A significant sign of this is the number of books about Tibet which have been translated from English into Thai in the past few years, notable among them the Dalai Lama's autobiography, "Freedom in Exile". The Thai magazine which sent the two journalists had itself previously serialised the translation of the book about Osel, Lama

near Bangkok. All three had attended previous teachings of Rinpoche in Europe, Asia and Australia and took it upon themselves, after Rinpoche accepted an invitation to come to Thailand, to make all the necessary arrangements for venue, accommodations, publicity, taping and the thousand unforeseeable details that inevitably accompany such an undertaking.

Near the end of the last teaching session on the afternoon of July 6, a friend from Kathmandu, Constance Wilkinson, pointed out to me through the glass doorway overlooking the Gulf of Thailand, the sudden brief appearance of a rainbow after a fleeting shower, the only rain in five days. Those familiar with traditional Tibetan literature have encountered descriptions of auspicious manifestations - flowers descending from the sky, rainbows, earthquakes and the like. And rainbows are certainly significant images in the Dzogchen teachings. This brief rainbow, so fragile and lovely in the late afternoon, made me aware of the miracle of gratitude: gratitude for the teachings, the opportunity to hear and practise them and Rinpoche's presence. The soil of gratitude is fertile for the growth of faith, and faith or confidence, if you will, is the basis of realisation of the teachings which Rinpoche so generously gave.

Those of us who live in Thailand are certainly grateful that Rinpoche chose to stop here for nine days prior to flying to Hong Kong on July 10th for a connecting flight to the People's Republic of China and thence to Tibet. As Rinpoche was departing from the gathering of students after the final teaching session, he said, "See you next year". Certainly words to make any of us present happy - a verbal rainbow to complement the visual.

An Ocean of Possibilities

continued from page 1

At the March 1993 retreat, we took Rinpoche to see the building. He was very enthusiastic when he recognised the enormous potential of the spaces. Many practitioners from the retreat went to visit the facility and enthusiasm ran high. At a fund raising meeting, money was pledged which would cover a down payment on the property, and be well on the way to a second payment. Through many people's generosity, we have the \$40,000 necessary for the first payment, but only \$5,000 above that to begin the renovation of the building. Our construction experts estimate that to make the first and second floors usable, we will need approximately \$150,000. Then we will also need to meet the second and third payments to the town of \$20,000 each.

Woody Paparazzo continues the story: Efreim Marder, Joe Zurylo and myself took on the responsibility of working with the Town of Conway to reach an agreement on the purchase of the school. After some informal communications we met with the Selectmen and formally presented the offer. There was a bit of "cat and mouse" as both sides attempted to get a sense of their bargaining positions. The Selectmen intimated that there were other buyers interested while we tried to gauge a fair and reasonable price without overshooting the mark. We needed to make an offer that was firm and serious while still allowing us to back out if there were major problems. In small New England towns, the Board of Selectmen is the governing body subject to the approval and authority of all town residents who vote on major decisions at annual town meetings.

We presented the basic terms of our offer. We would pay \$80,000 in total with half paid at the time of purchase and the balance over the next one and a half years. It was made contingent upon several matters which we needed to resolve before we could be committed to the purchase. Mainly we needed to ascertain whether we could use the

building as we intended and also that there were no structural problems or toxic materials present that could cause us concern. At the moment the planning group is in the process of resolving all these issues.

The parties played their roles and negotiated in a businesslike manner but in general the tone was quite friendly and informal. After three sessions with the Selectmen a complete formal agreement was signed. We explained to the Selectmen that although it might not be legally required we believed that an open public forum where we presented our plans and ideas could be useful and that residents of the Town of Conway could have their questions answered. The Selectmen agreed and we are planning that session for mid September. At this point we are preparing architectural drawings required for a building permit. Gene Kim from California and Ernie Renner communicate via fax and telephone. Much expert input has come also from Jim Smith. Gene will come to Conway in early September to fine tune our plans and prepare a formal architectural presentation at the Town Meeting.

Conway is a very small town. Everyone knows just about everyone else. We are no strangers to the Selectmen. Since 1974 we had been using the large house on Parsons Road in Conway for the activities of the Anderson Gurdjieff Group. Later the Dzogchen Community evolved and several retreats were held there with Norbu Rinpoche. The folks in Conway have come to accept us, and though they didn't understand much about what we did, they felt that we were a well established part of the town community. Many of our children attended the very school we were about to buy.

Ernie Renner adds: I remember that Woody, Jim Valby and I played music for my son Tilman's graduation. At one meeting of the design committee held at the school, we found among the drawings and papers scattered about the classrooms poems written by Darius Marder and Nina Paparazzo. Today,

Nina is a sophomore at Clarke University and Darius is preparing to teach English literature at a local private school.

When we met with Rinpoche in Tashigar to discuss buying the school the idea was warm distant and the edges were all smooth. I visualised a finished space with Rinpoche and people of the Community using and enjoying the centre. Prayer flags were flying in the wind atop the grey slate roof. No real thought about how this was to come about was present.

Now as a member of the school design/planning committee I see that the task of making this vision a reality is somewhat less smooth and warm. The hard realities of the enormous amount of renovation necessary, dealing with the town planning boards, building regulations, budget requirements etc., etc., make one aware that this is a project taking place in the relative world.

We are all confident that we can succeed in realising our vision with the co-operation of everyone interested.

The long-range planners asked for suggestions from the whole Community, and many valuable ideas were offered from, among others, Jim Casilio in New Mexico, Jacqueline Gens and Tsultrim Allione in New York, Jim Manganiello and Wanda Stevens from Boston, and many Dzogchen Community people from California and the rest of the USA who have participated through encouragement and financial commitments. The school project has seriously felt like a total community effort from its very inception. We need to keep up the momentum to make the Conway School a powerful base for the Dzogchen Community on the American continent, one that will be of benefit to us, to the town we live in, and for people who will look for benefit from the Dzogchen teachings in the future.

This article was written by Joe Zurylo, Woody Paparazzo, Des Barry, Jerry Steinberg, and Ernie Renner.

Yangtig Cabin in Wales

by the UK Gakyil

In 1991, we, in the UK Community, started collecting funds for building a dark retreat facility.

We were faced with many problems and it took us a while to get the project off the ground, but thanks to the good will and determination and team spirit from Community members the building work was completed earlier this year. We are now glad to announce that the retreat facility is fully operational.

The house is situated in Southern Wales in Moylegrove and is surrounded by beautiful and peaceful countryside, it is also a short drive

away from the sea. Some of the members of the UK Community have already done retreats in the house and reported that the place is charged with very good energy.

Unfortunately, as you might already be aware, the dark retreat facility in France is no longer in operation.

Although the retreat house in Wales is much humbler than the French one, nevertheless it remains the only currently operating dark retreat facility in northern Europe.

We are inviting anybody who wishes to do a dark (or light) retreat to come and use this house.

It would be very rewarding to see

this retreat house, which took such a lot of hard work to realise, be used by more people.

There are Community members who live in the vicinity and so we have arrangements for providing food for anybody doing retreats.

There is a small charge of three pounds per day for using the house which covers the costs of general maintenance.

So if you are interested in doing a dark or light retreat in Wales please get in touch with Claire Sharkey at: Teg-Y-Pristyll, Glanrhyd, Cardigan, Dyfed, Wales.

Looking forward to having you with us.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Austria



(photo Gennaro Palladino)

by Isabella Ernst

On Thursday, June 3rd, people from the Vienna Dzogchen Community gathered at the Vienna train station to welcome Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who arrived by night train from Florence. We were excited and wondered how things would go over the next few days. In spite of an enormous time-table Rinpoche found the time to come and teach here for three days, which was his fifth visit to Austria since 1977. He and Gennaro Palladino, who accompanied him, were

then driven to "Tierra", near Gutenstein, a centre which had been offered to Rinpoche for the retreat. It had a gonpa which was suitable for about 250 people and situated in a lovely mountain region with lots of woods, an hour's drive from Vienna. The next day at 10 a.m. the teachings began with Rinpoche explaining the differences between Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. During the retreat he gave a Rigpa Zal Wong and lung for the main practices. Rinpoche also explained some key sentences from the Santi Maha Sangha.

Though the retreat lasted only for three days, thanks to our Master's intense way of teaching, we felt a very personal contact with him and the teachings. On Sunday afternoon the retreat ended with a ganapuja. As we expected about 100 people to attend, we were stunned to see twice as many arriving to hear Rinpoche's talks. Because people helped a great deal to meet the basic needs, such as preparing food, etc., everything went well in an organised way, due in part to the Polish Community who were of great assistance. The retreat had quite an international flavour with people coming from Italy, Poland, Slovenia, Serbia, France, Germany, Switzerland, America, Belgium and, of course, Austria.

New Austrian Gakyil

A new Austrian gakyil has been formed and is composed of the following people:

Blue: Stephan Peddi, Irmgard Pemwieser
Red: Peter Sochor, Isabella Ernst
Yellow: Sylvester Lohninger, Horst Geller

Lopon Tenzin Namdak in Oregon

by Robert Harrison

Lopon Tenzin Namdak, Dzogchen teacher and Master of Studies of the Bonpo Colleges at Dolanji, India and Kathmandu, Nepal, taught from July 31 to August 4 in the United States in Oregon. The Lopon was hosted by long-time students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Fred and Huisan Wingerd, at their home in Coos Bay. Gene Kim and Clyde and Judy Crawford assisted in the organizing.

Lopon taught from "Solid Gold" (*Bon khrid gser gyi yang snying gi khrid yig bchags pa ligs so*), a text from the *Shang Shung snyan rgyud*. This teaching was originally given by Shen-lha Od-kar to Padma Jungne (Padmasambhava), and was written and hidden by Yeshe Tsogyal and rediscovered as a Terma in about the 12th century by Tsewang Gyalpo.

As in his 1991 visit to the West Coast, the Lopon was accompanied by Nyima Wangyal, who has recently been installed as Abbot of Lopon's monastery in Nepal, Tritten Norbutse, located near Swayanbhu. Fifteen to twenty people attended the teachings, some local, some from the San Francisco Bay area, and others from as far as Los Angeles and New Mexico.

Following his stay in Oregon, Lopon also gave teachings at Tsegylgar from August 6 - 8. We were delighted to receive teaching again from the Lopon, and hope that he will visit us again soon.

Retreat of the Dance of the Vajra

Athens, Greece

September 17 - 26

with Adriana dal Borgo

Information from Panayotis Stambolis tel. 30 1 2779112
Liakos Evangelopoulos 30 1 8971752/8076667

The Naga Ritual



(photo Rita Bizzotto)

by Adriano Clemente

On June 12th, 1993, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu transmitted a ritual to stabilise contact with the Naga.

The Naga are one of the Eight Classes (*dégyad*) and are particularly linked to the water element where, it is believed, they dwell in rivers, lakes, springs and so on. When they are disturbed by the thoughtless actions of humans or by pollution they may cause sickness. In Tibetan medicine it is considered that they cause skin diseases.

The Naga are closely connected to the 'Sadag' (literally 'masters of the earth') to whom the ritual is also addressed.

Vajra Dance teachers

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has recently authorised Adriana dal Borgo and Stoffelina Verdonk to hold courses of the Dance of the Vajra in both European and Eastern European countries.

If any Dzog-chen groups in these areas are interested in organising courses, they should get in touch with these teachers through their Gakyil and the Blue Gakyil at Merigar.

Changes in the Vajra Dances

by Prima Mai

In June 1993 during his stay at Merigar in Italy, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave some of his precious time to work on some final corrections of the Vajra Dance.

During the translation of the book of the Dance of the Vajra some of the translators' questions needed to be clarified and as a result there have been some changes in the movements and basic steps in all three Dances: the Vajra Dance, the Six Loka Dance and the Three Vajra Dance.

All three Dances have been taught in their "old version" in many countries around the world. Because the Dance must be practised in a precise way in order to function and give benefit, and since Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has asked me to take the responsibility, I have tried to describe the changes in a very simple way so that practitioners will be able to correct themselves on their own. In order to dispel doubts I have also explained all the arm movements of the three Dances.

To understand the corrections and explanations, the practitioner already needs to have knowledge of the Dances. In the text I have indicated changes in the arm movements with one *, changes in the whole step with two **. I have also tried my best to explain the mudras. I really hope that this will be useful until the book is published.

I have sent copies of the corrections to all international Gakyils where the Dances have been taught, so individuals can ask for a copy through their local Gakyil. Otherwise, one could refer to one of the four Gars: Merigar, Tsegylgar, Tashigar and Lhundrubgar in Venezuela.

I very much hope that all practitioners have the possibility to continue the practice of the three Dances of the Vajra; may they benefit all sentient beings.

CORRECTION

In the last issue of The Mirror, the application form to Tashigar Comunidad Dzogchen on page eight should have read: You can send an International Money Order to the name of Ruben Garica or Ricardo Martinez.

Merigar practice retreat



Group photo in front of the Capannone

(photo Mario Maglietti)

by Tony Laurent

While the rest of Italy seemed to be occupied with summer vacation, about 40 of us gathered at Merigar for the August practice retreat.

From the yellow house, the surrounding countryside seemed blessed with sunlit hills, warm air, gentle breezes and the chatter of birds and insects, providing a relaxed and peaceful setting for what proved to be a very successful retreat. Apart from the members of the Italian Community, practitioners from England, France, Holland, Germany, Lithuania, Canada and Australia participated along with the group of painters from Buryatia who have been at Merigar for the last few weeks painting the Gonpa.

In the absence of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche we were left to organise ourselves and carry out the programme written by Rinpoche on the different aspects of mind training in the Santi Maha Sangha teachings.

The initial practice session on the afternoon of Friday, August 6th, was in the Capannone where we gathered around the Vajra Dance mandala for the Amitayus long life practice. About ten of the group

(mainly women) had been at Merigar a week before, learning and perfecting the Dance of the Vajra and their presence and energy seemed to pervade the entire retreat. There was hardly a practice session that did not start or finish with a complete mandala of Dancers.

During the Saturday and Sunday practice sessions the Santi Maha Sanga study programme continued concentrating on training in morality, having a sense of shame and cultivating faith.

Each practice session of the retreat was structured around a Tun and after a period of remaining in contemplation, we read and discussed the mind trainings. After discussion and relating our own experiences, the Tun was concluded. In this way, the discussions became a part of what we usually understand our practice to be. Different members of the experienced group of practitioners led the sessions and those who had experience contributed to discussion. Many questions were asked and there was a real sense of participation from all levels of involvement with the Community.

The morning sessions

commenced at 8.30 with Yantra Yoga classes conducted by Laura Evangelisti and Cristiana Del Falco and we quickly established a morning practice that concentrated on the development of breathing. This continued throughout the week and formed a basis for working on the mind training practices.

During the week, we all had the chance to see the progress of the painting of the Gonpa. From the yellow house, the Gonpa has already taken on a new aspect with the red and yellow balustrade and the turquoise colours of the roof beams that now display tigles and mantras, ornamenting the teachings.

On Thursday evening during the week which was a Day of the Dakini we did a Ganapuja. Many practitioners who live around Merigar arrived and one could sense the working of Merigar as a Community centre. During the week, the celestial activity of falling stars or meteors known as the "tears of San Lorenzo" kept many of us seated in front of the yellow house to see the falling lights against a cool clear evening sky.

The final teaching session on Saturday was on the semzin of the Song of the Vajra and culminated a week of intensive study and practise in developing contemplation. With every place of the Dance mandala occupied after this very intense practice session, the real beauty of Rinpoche's teachings seemed to bloom amongst us all.

Sunday morning was set aside for a Ganapuja for which more than 100 people gathered to participate in that special practice that unites the Community and completes a retreat. We all experienced that a retreat even without the personal presence of Rinpoche can lead us deeply into the experience of the teachings. Above all, the contributions from members from all levels of experience manifested the real meaning of the Sangha.

Tibetan Medicine Course

by Luigi Vitiello

The first seminar of a five-year course on Tibetan Medicine organised by the Shang Shung Institute was held at Merigar from June 24th to July 4th.

The course was led by Doctor Phuntshok Wangmo, a teacher from the Medical University of Lhasa and by Doctor Pasang Yorten, Chief Pharmacist and former Director of the Tibetan Medical Institute at Dharamsala.

During the eight day course Doctor Pasang taught about the basis of the Tibetan medical system.

In a competent and instructive way he outlined the supporting structure on which knowledge of this method is based and demonstrated the close relationship between the elements of the

microcosm represented by the human body and the macrocosm of which we are a part.

He explained the deep connection that develops between the spirit, the psyche and matter and which is expressed in the complex system of the three humours and the five elements that constitute the essence of our being in this dimension.

Doctor Phuntshok talked about pediatrics and laid the basis for studying diagnosis by examining the pulse. She spoke in quiet tones and was always ready to be of assistance and, in spite of the complexity of the subject and the difficulties of translation of the Tibetan medical terms, managed to go beyond all these difficulties.

The programme was rounded off by a course in Tibetan language

held by the incomparable Prof. Adriano Clemente who was still able to amuse both himself and us while teaching the Tibetan alphabet for the umpteenth time.

Finally a note of merit should be given to the indispensable translators, Elisa Copello and Jacobella Gaetani.

At the end of this first seminar my impression was that with its eight hours of lessons each day it was a hard test for the twenty participants but that it had given us something more than just the usual medical knowledge.

Knowledge of the Tibetan medical system is closely connected with tantric teachings and is a great help in understanding the dimension of our energy.

This understanding is useful in developing our spiritual practice.

Decorating the Merigar Gonpa



Zorick Dugarov putting some final touches

(photo Mario Maglietti)

by Isabel Wagner and the Gonpa painters

Painting of the Gonpa at Merigar started on May 4th when the existing varnish, having been stripped off, a first undercoat of paint was given. However the base which we applied to the outer walls was discovered to be unsuitable because the components were not resistant and so it had to be removed and the work done again. Now this phase of the work has been completed.

In the first week of June, at the personal invitation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Chögyal Rinpoche arrived from Tashi Jong.

During his ten day stay he completed the first portraits of the Dzogchen lineage masters. Located inside the Gonpa, the portraits are painted directly on the wide fillet of wood which encircles the temple between ceiling and the glass walls. Chögyal Rinpoche has also made studies for further portraits in this series.

Rinpoche has a very refined style which is a combination of his profound knowledge of traditional Tibetan painting and his personal aesthetic sensibility. During his time at the Gonpa, he worked with the painting crew to prepare the paints. Some of them were prepared with the mortar and pestle using precious stones such as lapis lazuli for the

The office at Merigar is open Monday to Saturday from 10.00 to 13.00 and from 14.30 to 17.30 (Italian time). Anyone wishing to receive information about activities, courses, etc. at Merigar, should phone during office hours.
Telephone 564 966837-966322
Fax 564 968110

blue colour which he had brought with him from Tibet.

Chögyal Rinpoche will return in September to continue the painting of the lineage masters.

The day after Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche left for teachings in Israel, the Buryatian thanka painter, Batodalay Dugarov, and his son, Zorick, arrived. Batodalay is in charge of the external decoration of the Gonpa and has decided to use oil colours which have been used for centuries in Buryatia. He is an expert in this technique and is sure that it will give good results.

In the last few days there has been a crew at work painting the domed ceiling of the Gonpa which has already had an undercoat of oil. They have painted the smaller beams red and have just finished outlining the letters in the "square" or phagna script which will cover the dome. The letters will be in three colours - white/silver, light blue and light red.

Working outside the Gonpa is an international team of painters from Germany, Russia, Holland and Buryatia who have completed a good part of the external decoration. Over each of the eight sides of the building and over the entrances the mantra of Avalokitesvara has been painted in gold letters on a red background.

The principal entrances which face east and north have the same mantra on a turquoise base flanked by seven tiges each containing one of the Six Syllables coloured according to the Six Lokas and with a Golden Letter in the central tige.

The ornaments surrounding the mantras and syllables are being done in traditional Buryatian style such as that used in decorating Buryatian and Mongolian temples. The ceiling areas overlooking the mantras will be painted in light blue like the "dawn sky" and adorned with silver stars and golden letters.

MERIGAR CALENDAR

Thu 23 Sept	8/8	08.00	Tun with Practice for the Nagas
Sat 25 Sept	10/8	10.00	Karma Yoga
		15.00	Karma Yoga
		18.30	Ganapuja and Long Life Practice of Guru Padmasambhava
Sun 26 Sept	11/8	10.00	Karma Yoga
		15.00	Karma Yoga
		18.00	Long Tun and Chod
Tues 28 Sept	13/8	19.00	Long Life Practice of Amitayus
Wed 29 Sept	14/8	19.00	Long Life Practice of Amitayus
Thur 30 Sept	15/8	19.00	Long Life Practice of Amitayus
Sat 2 Oct	17/8	16.00	Santi Maha Sangha study group
Sun 3 Oct	18/8	08.00	Tun with Practice for the Nagas
		10.00	Santi Maha Sangha study group
Sat 9 Oct	24/8	10.00	Course of Dance of the Vajra
		15.00	Karma Yoga
		19.00	Course of Dance of the Vajra
Sun 10 Oct	25/8	08.00	Practice of Avalokitesvara
		10.00	Guru Yoga of the White A
		15.00	Course of Dance of the Vajra
		18.30	Karma Yoga
			Course of Dance of the Vajra
			Karma Yoga
			Ganapuja with intensive practice of Simhamukha
Thur 14 Oct	29/8	18.30	Naggon
Fri 15 Oct	30/8	18.30	Purification of the Six Lokas
Sat 16 Oct	1/9	16.00	Santi Maha Sangha study group
Sun 17 Oct	2/9	10.00	Santi Maha Sangha study group
Mon 18 Oct	3/9	18.30	Guru Yoga of the White A
Thu 21 Oct	7/9	08.00	Tun with Practice for the Nagas
Sat 23 Oct	9/9	10.00	Karma Yoga
		16.00	Karma Yoga
		18.30	Practice of Tara
Sun 24 Oct	10/9	10.00	Ganapuja with Long Life Practice of Guru Padmasambhava
		15.00	Karma Yoga
Thur 28 Oct	13/9	18.30	Long Life Practice of Amitayus
Fri 29 Oct	14/9	18.30	Long Life Practice of Amitayus
Sat 30 Oct	15/9	9.00	In depth Yantra Yoga Course
		16.00	Santi Maha Sangha study group
		19.00	Long Life Practice of Amitayus
Sun 31 Oct	16/9	10.00	Santi Maha Sangha study group
		16.00	In depth Yantra Yoga Course
Mon 1 Nov		9.00	In depth Yantra Yoga Course
Sat 6 Nov	22/9	10.00	Karma Yoga
		15.00	Karma Yoga
		18.00	Ganapuja

Christmas Practice Retreat

from 27 December 1993 to 4 January 1994

Santi Maha Sangha Study Group

The Gakyil of Merigar has organised a Santi Maha Sangha study group which meets on alternate weekends at Merigar. The course is based on the study of two texts by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, "The Precious Vase: Instructions on the basis of Santi Maha Sangha" and "The Wish Fulfilling Vase", an abridged version of the first book. Those who follow it are preparing themselves for the examination that will determine who will be eligible to enter the first level of Santi Maha Sangha training which Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche plans to teach next year.

Each session of the course starts with a Tun (Guru Yoga and the Song of the Vajra) followed by the reading of the part of the text which is under consideration that day and closes with the dedication of merit.

During each meeting the examination questions answered by the material being studied are reviewed.

Where necessary, reference will be made to other texts including "L'Insegnamento Esoterico di Padmasambhava: la Collana delle Visioni" translated by Giuseppe Barozzo and published by Shang Shung Edizioni, Gampopa's "The Jewel Ornament of Liberation", "The Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life by Shantideva (Bodhisattvacharyavatara), etc.

The practices explained in the text will be practised during the study sessions.

Further sessions will be devoted to the explanation and practice of Yantra Yoga according to the chapter on Yantra Yoga in the texts.

Each weekend session will be coordinated by a different member of the study group and Adriano Clemente will be present to explain the more complex parts of the text.

Merigar retreat cabins

This summer Merigar is very happy to welcome back Laurent Soen of the French Gakyil who devoted so much time and energy last year in constructing Rinpoche's yangtig house in the wood.

Laurent returned to coordinate the construction of a second dark house, for Community use, which has by now practically been completed following several weeks of activity and collaboration on the part of an international work crew.

Although original plans were to construct the house to accommodate three people, this was changed to single person accommodation for the reason that in the multi-person yangtig houses in Plouray and at Tsegylgar, it was found that multiple occupancy can be disturbing. Another factor in the choice of the smaller construction was that it allows available finances to cover the costs of another cabin for other types of retreat, a project which will be started in the autumn.

The yangtig house is a bio-construction. Insulated with wood



Construction of the yangtig cabin

(photo Rita Bizzotto)

shavings, straw and limestone, its shape is octagonal similar to Rinpoche's dark cabin.

A network of trenches was dug to bring electricity and water to the area for use in the house under construction and for others planned in the future.

In September construction should

start on a "regular" retreat house which will also be a bio-construction built in "bois cordé", a Canadian technique which, while it is fairly economical, will require much work.

Anyone able to come to Merigar in September to help in constructing this house will be very welcome.

"This building at Conway will be a base for the Shang-S

The Mirror: We have heard that the Dzogchen Community at Tsegvalgar has bought a school. Is this true and for what is the school intended?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: It's not quite like that. The school has been bought not just by the Dzogchen Community at Tsegvalgar but by a group of people of the Dzogchen Communities both in Europe and the United States who have a common interest. The school is located at Conway in Massachusetts where the Tsegvalgar Dzogchen Community is based and where the people of the Community live. So clearly they are the principal people involved in the project, and will be in the future.

But we shouldn't think that only these people are responsible or committed (to the school). All the people of the Community in any part of the world should be interested and committed because it is something which is of common interest.

What is the story behind this school? It used to belong to the town of Conway, and when the town built a new school they decided to sell the old one. And so we had the idea to buy it. It is a very large building in good condition, though, of course, there has to be a certain amount of renovation such as redoing the internal walls and re-painting. When there is a building, there is always lots to do. But basically it's in good condition. It has three floors and is quite large. After the entry hall, there are two very large rooms and then on the upper floor there are two more very large rooms which could be divided up according to the use we want to make of them. Then, in the attic under the roof there is enough space to build a type of dormitory. Of course all these things need to be studied to see how they can be done legally but we have already been informed that this will not be a problem.

Then, moreover, the school will remain a public place. There is a basement under the ground floor with several showers and toilets and with a room which could be used for musical or artistic activities. Next to the building is an annex in which there are four enormous rooms which were used as classrooms when the school was open. So if two of these rooms were united, this would make a large space sufficient to hold a retreat. And then there are the other two which can be used in various ways.

During the last retreat at Tsegvalgar, we asked the people there what they thought about the idea of buying the school. Everyone was very enthusiastic and wanted to participate. So we started a fund and many people committed themselves to contributing to it. Of course, we still need some more money, not

only to pay for the school but also to maintain it and develop different activities there. But I hope that everyone will collaborate not only financially but also morally to provide everything which is required because fundamentally, all of us of the Community are like a big family and collaboration is very important both to maintain and to develop our activities for the future.

The Mirror: What is the reason for buying this large school?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: At Tsegvalgar, we have a very large and beautiful parcel of land. The land is forested and there is a lake. We bought this land a few years ago and have organized several retreats there. This place is the source of the Dance of the Vajra. It is the place where I had several dreams about the Dance, the place where it was born and where it developed. So this land belonging to Tsegvalgar has become sacred land, powerful land. As we know in general, where there is the force of energy, not only positive energy manifests but sometimes also the negative aspects of energy. Good and evil always run parallel to each other.

In relation to Tsegvalgar, every time that we have had a retreat there, we have had problems with the neighbours. There really has not been much to make a problem about but they do not want us to go to the land and have felt disturbed by all the people and the movement of cars when we pass near their homes. We have tried to respect their wishes as much as possible, but every time we have had problems with them.

Also the nature of the land is such that we cannot legally have



A view of the Tsegvalgar land

(photo Paola Gatti)

permission to build there. We already have a small retreat hut where I did a retreat for a few months and we have had an idea to construct a few retreat huts for personal retreats. But this project needs to be developed. And even if we have such a marvelous place, we cannot hope to build the base of the Tsegvalgar Community on that land because that is not something which

can be easily accomplished for the reasons I have already mentioned. We can only use the land for things like personal retreats.

Some people have asked us why we don't sell the land if we cannot use it, and buy another tract of land

that can become the base of the Community. But even if it is not possible to do much building on the land we already own, and even if we have problems with the neighbours, and even if thus it might seem better to give up the land, we cannot do so, because this land is related to the principle of the Dance of the Vajra and is therefore sacred land. For this reason we must always maintain

this land, and use it as long as there is a Dzogchen Community on this earth. This is the responsibility not only of the practitioners of Tsegvalgar but all those who are interested in the Dance of the Vajra and its principle. So we cannot sell it but instead should gradually develop this aspect of it.

We have urgent need of a base where we can work and meet which can be the address of Tsegvalgar, and we have looked several times for such a place. The people at Tsegvalgar have been searching for many years and finally we have found this school. The people at Tsegvalgar certainly don't need such a big place just to have a big commitment for themselves to maintain. But from the time that the Shang-Shung Institute was inaugurated in Italy at Merigar we had the idea of having a twin Institute in America, because America is a large, important continent. We knew that when the Institute developed in America it should be in a place that is also an important base where many of the people of the Community live, such as around Tsegvalgar, in and around New York, California, Santa Fe or somewhere like that. And we knew that we would need a large building where we can develop activities.

Then, too, we need a base for A.S.I.A., the Association for International Solidarity in Asia,

another important aspect of our activities. This Association was formed to develop an idea which we have had for years to help the Tibetans both within and outside Tibet, with education through projects such as building schools, with health services such as constructing hospitals. These things are urgently needed and are a means of safe-guarding Tibetan culture because in order for Tibetan culture to continue the Tibetan people must survive. It's not sufficient that they survive but just live like robots. Tibetans must have knowledge of their culture. Besides this, they need hospitals and health services where there are none and in some way we must manage to build these facilities.

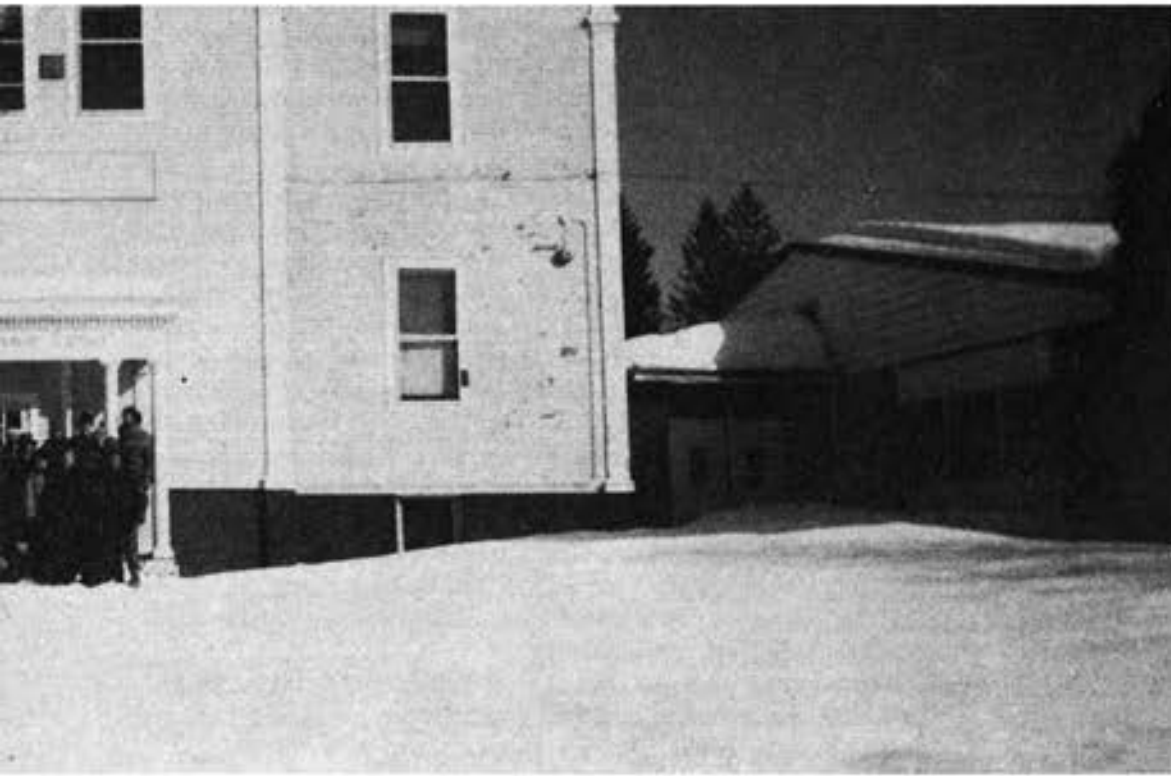
But what is even more important for future generations who have just been born and who are growing up, is that they should have the possibility to receive an education above all in the Tibetan language, Tibetan history and culture. There is at present a great lack of these things, especially in Tibet itself. The majority of Tibetans are nomads who move at least four times a year. They don't live in the towns and in fact there are few towns in Tibet and the few towns or provincial capitals that do exist are mostly populated by government officials. Most of the people live in villages and there are really no schools in the villages. The Chinese have recently built several schools in different places



Buying the Old School at Co

An interview with Chögyal Na

Shang Shung Institute, A.S.I.A. and the Dzogchen Community"



Conway, Massachusetts, USA

Namkhai Norbu for The Mirror

but they always build them in the provincial capitals where they are not really of much benefit to Tibetans.

We are trying to do something about this situation. In order to collect funds for these projects we have created the Association known as A.S.I.A. There are a number of people in America who are already committed to working with this Association, and we therefore also need a base for it in America.

So this large building at Conway will be a base for the Shang-Shung Institute, A.S.I.A. and the Dzogchen Community all together. This is the reason that we have tried to find a big building.

With a building of such a size we will be able to organize all the activities of the Shang-Shung Institute. Why have we created the Institute? In order to safe-guard Tibetan culture and to bring Tibetan culture to the Western world. Through the Institute, Westerners who are interested in Tibetan culture will have an opportunity to study and deepen their knowledge of it. This is the soundest basis for the safe-guarding of Tibetan culture because the best way to maintain and develop a culture is to make people understand the value and the usefulness of it. Of course if people do not understand this then the culture will only exist for a brief moment

more, because if the people do not continue then neither does the culture. If people understand the value of a culture and use it and have knowledge of it then it will not be easy for the people to disappear because they belong to the culture. This is the fundamental aim.

When we talk about a culture we should consider all its aspects: the aspects of the mind, the individual, the philosophy, the spiritual teaching. Then there is the fact that Tibet is famous and everyone considers it to be a spiritual country. In ancient times, there was a great deal of knowledge and the Tibetan tradition was born from the original Bön religion and through the many traditions which arose from it. Then at a later period Buddhism arrived from India and China and spread and in this way the spiritual knowledge developed supremely.

Day by day, we can see how Tibetan culture and above all its spirituality is expanding throughout the world. We find Tibetan masters teaching Buddhism, philosophy, sutra and tantra everywhere. Everyone is talking about it and learning about Buddhism from Tibetan masters. This is one of the principles of the Tibetan culture. But we cannot put our trust in this and think, "Ah, there are so many masters everywhere". Masters are impermanent and if there is no certainty of the continuation of the

Tibetans as a people, Tibetan masters too will die out and disappear. The disastrous situation of the Tibetan people has been almost a lucky thing for Westerners, because when the Tibetans suffered through the Cultural Revolution, they were forced to flee their country leaving their homes and monasteries.

This is obviously a sad thing, but from another point of view the Tibetans in this way arrived in many countries and started to teach outside Tibet so that knowledge of Tibetan culture and spirituality started to spread. There are other elements of Tibetan culture such as Tibetan medicine, astrology and art and many other subjects which are still alive today and which embody a profound knowledge of aspects of the whole culture. These subjects are very rich and can be useful in all parts of the world. So in order that Tibetan culture should not be lost, but developed and maintained, we have created the Institute.

It is obviously not sufficient just to form an Institute, rather it is important above all to set to work with it. In the first place, as far as spiritual teachings are concerned, the Institute has hundreds of volumes of teachings and history, all of which are in Tibetan. We want to translate the most important texts into Western languages so that they will be available to Westerners to read and study and for this we will

have to organize a group of translators.

This is not the only work to be done because translating books isn't enough to make a culture survive. A culture has its "life" and we intend to invite masters and scholars, hold courses and study groups on medicine and astrology, philosophy and religion and especially on the Tibetan language because without knowledge of the language it's not possible to deepen one's knowledge. We want to develop these programmes both at the Shang Shung Institute in Italy and, when we have the possibility, at the Conway school where the greater part of the activities will be organized. From this you can understand a little what the scope of this building will be.

The Mirror: Who will take the responsibility of organizing and maintaining these activities? Will this be done principally by the people of Tsegvalgar?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Certainly the people of Tsegvalgar who have the possibility to take on this responsibility will be involved because they live there. But we cannot just drop all this responsibility onto their shoulders alone. We will organise and see who wishes to be involved in the Institute. Of course the general running and responsibilities of the Tsegvalgar Gakyil and Community by both the local people and those who wish to participate will go ahead as usual. But as far as the Institute is concerned we will give the responsibility to those who want to take it on.

The people who coordinate and take responsibility for the activities of the Institute will organize and try to give interested people a chance to work. When there is a place available, people can participate and stay there to study and to follow courses. People from the Communities of other countries may also want to stay there while they are attending courses and study groups and it's also interesting for them to have contact with the Community. If one wants to spend a few months or even a year there, there will be possibilities. Of course it's not ideal if someone comes there just because it's convenient and that won't be possible if they don't participate in the activities there. First of all, those people who are interested in participating in the activities of the Institute must communicate their interest both to the Community and the Institute. And then we can see. If someone wants to come to follow courses etc., they should also get in touch and when there is some concrete organization about activities such as courses etc., information will be sent out. When activities start there will be people in charge of this aspect.

The Mirror: What type of activities will take place there?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Courses on subjects such as medicine, astrology, philosophy, spirituality. And then different activities will arise related to art, music, painting, thankas, etc. Particularly in regard to topics such as medicine, in Italy we are already working towards a collaboration with universities. In the same way we can also collaborate here with universities and medical centres to create a programme of medicine courses lasting for five years. This would be something serious not just a short seminar or a type of information course but a precise programme to deepen one's knowledge. We can invite doctors from India and from Tibet and collaborate with other centres of medicine in Lhasa and India etc., and it will become something concrete. When our students at the Institute become expert enough and are able to communicate a little in Tibetan we can send them to Tibet to have some experience. In this way we will develop a precise programme.

The Mirror: When will these activities start?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Now we have finally received news that the offer to buy this building has been accepted by the Conway town council. So now we need to start preparations. The people of the Tsegvalgar Community have already started to help when they have time. First of all we need to work on the building and we will start the greater part of the activities of the Institute next year. After Tibetan New Year we will present the programme of the Institute and inform everyone when we have the inauguration of the activities.

All those who are interested and who want to have some general information can get it through The Mirror. Those who wish to have more specific and detailed information should get in touch with the Institute through Merigar in Italy because for the moment the Institute is still based there. If you are interested in the activities of the Institute, you should send information about your interests such as courses or collaborating or doing something such as translating or studying medicine or astrology. By sending in personal information we can coordinate things in a better way because we will know what needs there are. Let us also know about the period of time which is best suited to you (to follow activities) and your economic possibilities - whether you are self-sufficient or whether you need some help in this respect. We need to know about all these things and in this way we will have a more precise idea about how we can collaborate.

The Mirror: Thank you Rinpoche.

The effectiveness of Tibetan medicine

An interview with Dr. Pasang Yonten

The Mirror: What does pharmacology consist of in the Tibetan tradition?

Dr. Pasang: Pharmacology has been one of the most important aspects of Tibetan medicine for centuries. In Tibet there have not been any experts exclusively in this field nor any medical dispensaries and it is for these reasons that doctors must have a good understanding of pharmacology, be able to recognise medicinal plants and know how to make medicine. However, in India today things have changed a little and the situation is becoming more like the Western system.

The Mirror: This means that a doctor must go out and gather his own plants?

Dr. Pasang: Yes. All doctors and students have to know the "Materia Medica" which involves going with the teacher from the mountains to the lowlands to find the various plants, minerals, precious and semi-precious stones (which are used in the preparation of medicines). We have to know all about them and without going we could not get a practical education.

The Mirror: After the plants and the minerals have been gathered how are they treated?

Dr. Pasang: This is a very long process. After collecting the plants they are generally divided into two groups. Herbal medicinal plants having a "cool nature" should be dried in the moonlight in the night time. These type of plants have a cooling power for problems such as fever. The plants and materials which have a "hot" power or potential, must be dried in the sun. Only then can we combine the medicine with other ingredients.

The Mirror: How are ingredients combined in order to produce medicines?

Dr. Pasang: (laughs heartily) It's quite complicated but basically there are three important things. First you have to find the principal medicine for the disease - this is like a "king". Second you have to find the strongest supportive medicine - this is like a "minister". Then third, you take a protective medicine - this is like an "army". We combine the ingredients on the basis of their classification in principal, supportive and protective medicines. By combining the ingredients in this way the medicine does not have any reaction or side-effects and is only beneficial for the disease. This is the main principle of the combination in Tibetan medicine. The maximum number of ingredients in a medicine may be 72 while the minimum can be a single drug or the combination of two or three ingredients.

These are the extremes but on average there are from 35 to 37 ingredients. Precious Pills contain even more ingredients - from 70 to 100.



(photo Alex Siedlecki)

Born in Kyidong (Happy Valley), Tibet, in 1956, Doctor Pasang Yonten Arya studied at the Tibetan Medical Centre in Dharamsala where he specialised in pharmacology. After holding the position of principal of the Tibetan Medical College from 1981 - 1989, he spent three years in Ladakh teaching Tibetan medicine and running a clinic in Leh.

Recently he was invited by Ganchen Trulku to Milan where he has been involved in intense activities both as a lecturer on Tibetan medicine and as a doctor. Pasang Yonten has been appointed as the main professor for a five-year course in Tibetan medicine at the Kumpen Lama Centre in Milan.

The Mirror: I understand that you are involved in research in Ladakh. Could you tell us a little about your work there?

Dr. Pasang: I was working for many years in the research section at the Medical Institute in Dharamsala and also in Ladakh which is a very tropical place and has tropical plants of its own. But some of these plants are different from those which are collected in Tibet for the preparation of medicine because the environment is different and consequently the plants have different qualities and the identification of these plants is more difficult. So we have been checking various plants to see if they are effective in the same way as their Tibetan-grown counterparts indicated in the text.

The Mirror: Are you then actually adding a list of new plants to the traditional list of plants that you use?

Dr. Pasang: I have collected, identified and made a donation of about 30 or 40 tropical plants to the Foundation in Ladakh.

The Mirror: Can some of these "new" plants take the place of plants used in traditional Tibetan medicine?

Dr. Pasang: Most of them are used in traditional Tibetan medicine and some Tibetan doctors are using them as a substitution for normal plants but we are still checking their effectiveness. These plants are particularly effective for some tropical diseases and other complaints such as stomach ulcers and arthritis.

The Mirror: In the future would you consider the possibility of undertaking similar work in Italy in order to use local plants in preparing medicine?

Dr. Pasang: I have already done this in a mountain area near Domodossola on the Italian-Swiss border. In the future I'm not sure if it will be possible to produce medicine in Italy. I've not been to many mountain areas in Italy but my research in the Domodossola area is just a sample of some of the possibilities that mountain plants offer here.

The Mirror: You have been teaching and practising medicine for more than a year in Italy. What kind of people take an interest in Tibetan medicine?

Dr. Pasang: Mainly homeopathic doctors and different types of therapists: pranotherapists, physiotherapists, chiropractors, naturopaths and also ordinary Western doctors.

The Mirror: Do you think that it's possible for Western doctors to integrate their medical practice into the Tibetan medical system?

Dr. Pasang: Integration is possible but it's difficult to bring this work together. We Tibetan doctors are always happy to work with Western practitioners but most Western doctors are not so interested in alternative medicine. Some open-minded Western doctors work with us not only in the field of Tibetan medicine but also in that of natural medicine. I have always thought that it is possible to combine Western and Tibetan medicine and this would be of great help to patients.

The Mirror: Should a person be a Dharma practitioner if he wishes to practise Tibetan medicine?

Dr. Pasang: This is a very interesting question. It is possible to practise Tibetan medicine even if you are not a follower of a spiritual path. You can see that in Tibet nowadays with the younger generation. In fact there are young doctors who are not Dharma practitioners but still they can be good doctors even if they can only treat on the psychosomatic level, not on the spiritual level. They do not have the spiritual understanding of the nature of the mind, the nature of the body and the nature of the energy.

The Mirror: What do you consider the fundamental differences to be between Tibetan and Western medicine?

Dr. Pasang: There are many differences but also they have many things in common. For example, it is believed in both systems that bacteria are one of the main causes of internal and infectious diseases. However the big difference is the conception of subtle energy function and the conception of mind consciousness and our concern for the psychological aspects. There is a difference between the two systems: the conception of physiology and the functions of subtle energies. And since the conception is different as a consequence treatments must be different, too. In fact we use different medicines and different external treatments. Apparently Tibetan medicine has a more general overall view of all the classifications while Western medicine is more detailed in aspects such as anatomy, physiology, etc. But in spite of this, there are some very close

similarities. There are, of course, big differences concerning the concept of mind: mind is everything, mind is the creator, mind is the master of all. In this respect it is similar to Western psychology even if in some way it's different.

The Mirror: In what way do you think that the diet and behaviour of Western people affect their health?

Dr. Pasang: Western lifestyle is quite hard for health because people get really stressed and nervous which creates physical and psychological problems. The Western diet mainly increases phlegm in the body and affects both phlegm and wind energy. Even if it doesn't affect the body straight away, it has an accumulated effect causing health problems at around 40 - 50 years of age.

The Mirror: Are there some types of health problems which are more common to Westerners?

Dr. Pasang: Western people have more psychological problems and sometimes it isn't even important to check it from the pulse because you can read it in the face or the appearance. In the West there are a lot of emotional sicknesses.

Then the second type of diseases which are widespread in the West are related to neurological and psychosomatic problems. In my experience many patients affected by chronic diseases come to Tibetan doctors because they cannot be cured by Western medicine: for example, people affected by multiple sclerosis or hepatitis, jaundice, rheumatism and arthritis, osteoporosis, chronic bone fracture problems, skin problems - they all come to us.

The Mirror: In the West today, organ transplants are very common. Do you think that morally and spiritually this is advisable?

Dr. Pasang: It's not good. If it is the wish of the dead person to donate his organs, there's no question about it. Otherwise the departed soul should be left in peace to have more time to leave the body. The risk is that, from the religious point of view, you can become a killer when you transplant organs. In fact organs are removed immediately after death according to "Western" practice, not leaving time and space for the elements to dissolve.

The Mirror: Does Tibetan medicine have a cure for some of the fatal diseases of our times such as cancer or Aids?

Dr. Pasang: The first and second stages of cancer are possible to cure, but when the patient moves on to the third stage the disease is incurable. As far as Aids is concerned we cannot say that Tibetan medicine can cure it but, in my experience, it can definitely help Aids patients to improve their immunity system thus making them stronger.

The Mirror: Thank you.

Doctor Phuntshok Wangmo speaks to The Mirror about her experiences in Tibet

The Mirror: Could you tell us a little about your personal history and how your interest in Tibetan medicine developed?

Dr. Phuntshok Wangmo: I was born in 1965 in Lhasa in the last week of the Year of the Horse. My mother said that after seven days I was already two years old because during that period of time we had entered the Year of the Sheep.

My family came from Derge in Eastern Tibet from the Kham region. I spent my first fourteen years at home and I didn't go to school but my aunt, Jam Yang Chödrön, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's eldest sister, taught me at home and I could write and read when I was very little.

Even when I was a small girl I was interested in medicine. I had a brother who was a doctor and I really wanted to become one, too.

Then in 1982 Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche told my mother that I should start to study Tibetan medicine so I started my studies at the home of Khenpo Tse Nam.

The second reason I wanted to become a doctor was to benefit sentient beings by relieving their suffering. It was also a way to deepen my knowledge about Tibetan culture.

After one year Khenpo Tse Nam took me to the Tibetan Medical School in Lhasa where I studied for five years.

The first year at the Khenpo's house I studied about Tibetan culture in general and also learned by heart the first two tantras of medicine from the *gyüd zhi* (The Four Tantras of Medicine) - the *tsa gyüd*, the root tantra, and the *she gyüd*, the tantra of explanation.

When I went to the Medical School I learned the last two tantras by heart. I would go to school all day and then in the evening I would go to Khenpo Tse Nam's house where I would study the Ten Tibetan Sciences.

After five years of study I completed my exams very successfully. Then my Khenpo suggested that I study astrology because this is a very important aspect of Tibetan medicine. I studied both astrology of the elements and astrology of the constellations.

While I was at school I also studied Western and Chinese medicine for six months. When I decided to study astrology, I went to my teacher, Khenpo Tse Nam and to a Sakya Khenpo, Tshultrim Gyaltsan, and asked them if they would kindly teach me this subject. Khenpo Tse Nam taught me *Kar tsi* (the astrology of the constellations) while Khenpo Tshultrim Gyaltsan taught me *Nag tsi* (the astrology of the elements) and more about the Five Major Sciences (see note). They also taught me Dharma.

In 1988 Rinpoche came to Lhasa and at that time I was working at the hospital in Man zikan Lhasa. He said that I should go to Derge for my medical practice because there was



(photo Alex Siedlecki)

Relieving the suffering of sentient beings

a lot of work to do there.

There was a lot of work to do and besides being a doctor and treating a lot of patients I was also supposed to supervise the work of Galenteng gampa. Because there was no school and no teacher in Derge, I also started to teach children how to read and write. And so in this way I spent the last five years between Derge and Lhasa where I teach at the university. At the university I teach astrology and specialise in teaching about the inner organs. In particular I teach about the stomach and the digestive system.

I am the only doctor in Derge and I see a great number of patients. At the beginning I would see between 100 - 120 patients a day and even now I see at least 60 a day because when the people heard that there was a doctor in the village, they would come from great distances to be treated.

Sometimes when a person is seriously ill I have to go to their home which might even be a walk of a day or more because there are no cars, no roads and no horses. When I arrive at the patient's house I sometimes remain there two or three days because while I am there, other patients come for treatment.

The Mirror: Who is treating people in Derge in your absence?

Dr. Phuntshok: At the moment there is nobody and they must travel three hours by car in order to reach a doctor. It's also difficult to find a car.

The Mirror: Are there many Tibetan doctors who are women?

Dr. Phuntshok: In the towns many

Tibetan girls study medicine today but not in the villages.

The Mirror: Is there some field of Tibetan medicine in which you specialise or have a special interest?

Dr. Phuntshok: I am interested in

walk, to eat and to use their hands. My teacher, Khenpo Tse Nam, said that I had gone to Derge to fight the disease like an enemy and had been victorious.

I have also successfully treated dark phlegm diseases in the stomach

Dr. Phuntshok has spent several years treating patients in the remote and hard to reach areas of the province of Derge in East Tibet where she has been the only medical practitioner.

After an extended visit to Merigar, Dr. Phuntshok has just returned to Lhasa to continue her work teaching at the university. During her visit here, she treated many patients and taught at the first week-long course on Tibetan medicine held by the Shang-Shung Institute. She very kindly spoke to The Mirror about some of her experiences.

all fields of Tibetan medicine but I have had some good results with a disease of the blood and of the serum which affects the channels.

When I arrived in Derge there were some patients who had been very sick for many years with this disease. They couldn't walk or extend their arms and legs, they were suffering from a type of paralysis and they were not even capable of going to the toilet without being carried.

Their chests were swollen and they couldn't chew or even open their hands to use a spoon. After I began treating them they started to

and in the intestines.

The Mirror: We understand that reading the pulse is a vital part of Tibetan medicine.

How long does it take to learn to read the pulse and is it necessary to do this in order to diagnose illnesses?

Dr. Phuntshok: Pulse reading is a very important aspect of Tibetan medicine and it is the most important method of diagnosis. It doesn't take so long to learn the theory but it takes a long time to be able to put this theory into practice.

The Mirror: In treating children,

Tibetan doctors, I have noted, examine the child's ear. What type of indications can this examination give and why does the doctor examine the ear?

Dr. Phuntshok: Small children don't have a clear pulse so when we do a pulse reading we don't get a clear indication.

Instead we can diagnose children's diseases through the veins on the ear because they are very clear. Each ear is divided into three main veins which means that there are six veins in both of the ears with each vein corresponding to a main organ.

The Mirror: You have been treating several patients since you have been in Italy. Do you find that common illnesses in the West are different to those in Tibet, and if so, on what does this depend?

Dr. Phuntshok: From the little that I have seen, I have noticed that there is a predominance of lung (air) imbalance. Also I have noticed, though I don't understand the reason why - perhaps because Tibet has a higher altitude - that while we give a three pill dosage of medicine to Tibetan people, here this quantity is too much for people. Sometimes it makes their heads spin. Instead I give a dosage of only one pill.

In women I notice there is a great frequency of menstrual disorders. Tibetan women are much more regular.

The Mirror: What are your projects for the future?

Dr. Phuntshok: Since I am a doctor I would like to be of benefit to sentient beings. I particularly want to relieve the suffering of people who cannot afford treatment and medicine because in Tibet although there are many good doctors it can be quite expensive to be treated by them. I want to practise medicine in the villages and the countryside where there are no doctors.

I will also continue to help with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's projects for schools and hospitals in Tibet. In these ways I hope to be of some benefit to Tibetan culture.

The Mirror: Thank you very much.

Translated from the Tibetan by Jacobella Gaetani

Note

The Ten Sciences are divided into: The Five Major Sciences - *Rigs gnas che ba lnga*

1. Grammar (*sgra*)
2. Medicine (*gso ba*)
3. Painting and handicrafts (*bzo*)
4. Logic (*gtan tshig*)
5. Philosophy (*nang don*)

The Five Minor Sciences - *Rigs gnas chung ba lnga*

1. Poetry (*sgyan ngag*)
2. Semantics (*mngon brjod*)
3. Lexicography (*sdeb sbyor*)
4. Astrology (*rtsis*)
5. Dance and Drama (*zlos gar*)

Karmic influences determine rebirth

The Second Medical Tantra discusses embryology. From embryology we can understand all the formation of chakras, channels and the esoteric practice of medicine.

In the Second Tantra Vairocana started to teach in this way: there are seven divisions in the formation of our bodies. The first is embryology, the second is the analogy of the body (with the outer world), the third is anatomy, the fourth is physiology, the fifth is the classification of the different natures of personalities, the sixth is the functioning of karma in respect to the physical body and the seventh is the process of dying.

Before studying embryology we have to know certain conditions such as whether the time is correct to conceive the baby or not. And there are some factors that can disturb conception. The first consideration is to know the quality of the semen and the ovum. It has three subdivisions: the material causes (sperm and ovum) of the baby, the causes of the development and the symptoms of delivery. The first causes of the baby also have five sub-divisions all of which are very important. First it is most important that the semen and ovum should be of very good quality.

There should be a proper consciousness in the intermediate state which decides to take rebirth. The karma of the consciousness which is in the intermediate state, or bardo, should find a proper karmic relation with his parents. Then there must be certain karmic causes which push the consciousness to the parents and finally there is the quality of the Five Subtle Energies. If any one of these five factors is missing, conception will not occur.

Karmic connection

The consciousness that is roaming in the bardo in the intermediate state



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must have a strong karmic connection with the parents in order to take rebirth. The consciousness is driven by this karmic force to find his parents and his next rebirth. The karmic connection depends on past lives in which he has been child and parent and because of this there is a meeting. But it is often very difficult to meet the parents.

This is due to two factors - a strong karmic force and good fortune. If there is a combination of these two forces, then the meeting will take place. If there is a good karmic connection but either the parents or the consciousness which is in the bardo is not very fortunate then they cannot meet. This means that only when there is a strong karmic connection and good fortune can they meet.

When such a meeting does not take place the consciousness tries to find another person with whom he has a karmic connection. There are thousands and millions of people with whom he has a connection although sometimes the consciousness may wait a very long time for such a meeting.

Bardo influence

From a practical viewpoint most women suffer from problems of being nervous and tense before, during and after menstruation. In Tibetan medicine this is not only explained by the changes taking place in the body or because of the hormone system.

It is like a fresh flower around which you can find many flies or bees (because they are) attracted by the honey.

Before menstruation the consciousnesses in the bardo can all understand that there is a greater possibility to obtain a human birth so many of them who have a karmic connection with the woman compete among themselves.

So a woman can feel the effect of this struggle and become very nervous.

Point of entry

Some teachings say the consciousness in the bardo enters through the breathing of the father. Others say it enters directly through the sex organs of both the father and the mother. Still others affirm that

the consciousness enters through the nostrils of both of the parents, in particular the right nostril of a man and the left nostril of a woman. So there are many different ideas about this.

However in the most diffused and accepted teaching, it is believed that the consciousness enters through the nose of the father. If the soul or consciousness is to become a male then it enters through the right nostril, if a female, through the left nostril.

Karmic forces

The bardo soul or consciousness is always waiting for contact between the father and mother and when contact occurs then the consciousness can see what is happening.

But when the consciousness starts to enter into the body of the father, he enters into a state of dream or trance and is not aware that he is entering through the father's nose. He becomes a dreamer.

If the consciousness which is taking rebirth is very fortunate, then he will dream the sensation that he is entering a big house or palace or

monastery or the mountains and at that moment he enters through the breathing (of the father).

If the consciousness is less fortunate, then he will feel like he is entering a normal house or normal place when he is entering the body. If the consciousness is not very fortunate, then he will feel like he is entering a small hut or cave.

When the consciousness sees the sexual contact between the parents, he feels like touching the parents and at that moment he starts to dream. What is it that induces the consciousness to feel that he is entering a beautiful or a normal or a lowly place?

It is a type of fear because at that moment a series of situations which may be unpleasant, noisy, etc., manifests around the consciousness and frightens him so that he feels like hiding.

These unpleasant and noisy situations are the karmic forces which push the consciousness towards a particular rebirth which varies according to the fortune of the consciousness and which give the feeling of entering a lofty, medium or lowly dwelling. Karmic forces are a very important factor in conception.

It is important that the enjoyment of the mother and father should be equal at the time of contact. The consciousness enters through the nose of the father, reaches the sexual organ and goes through the semen. So first of all the consciousness becomes unified with the semen and later with the ovum.

As we said before the consciousness contains Five Subtle Energies. Through its meeting first with the semen and then with the ovum, it meets the Five Gross Elements which are present in them. This combination between the Five Subtle Energies and the Five Gross Elements causes a reaction which produces the embryo.

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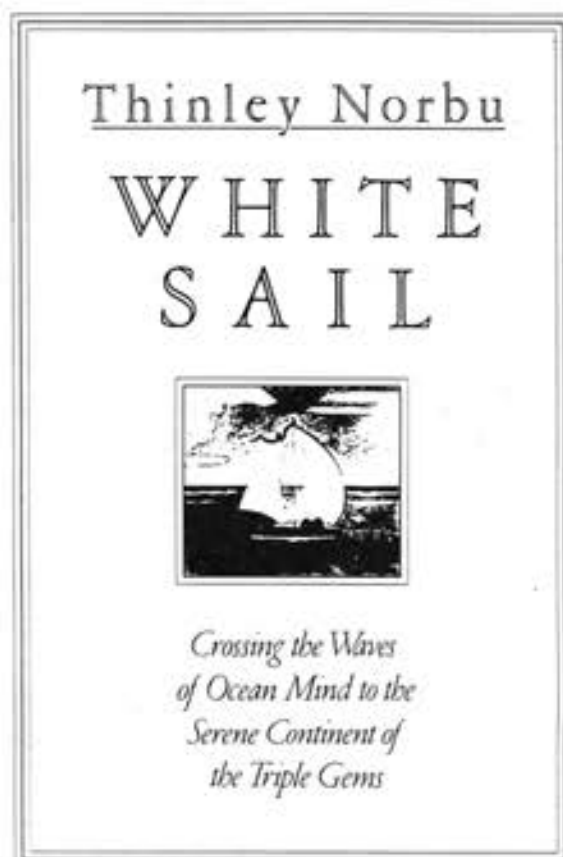
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BOOK REVIEW

In the Same Boat

WHITE SAIL: Crossing the Waves of Ocean Mind to the Serene Continent of the Triple Gems

by Thinley Norbu
Shambhala, New York, 1992
205 pages, \$15



Thinley Norbu Rinpoche is a precious Vajrayana master whose teachings and writings have greatly contributed, over recent decades, to that arrival of Buddhism in the West which the historian Sir Arnold Toynbee considered the major event of the twentieth century. He is less widely known than our own Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche or, for example, Lama Thubten Yeshe or Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, all of whom he resembles in deep knowledge of Western language and mental patterns, because he lives and travels in seclusion and his books have usually been privately printed. The publication by Shambhala of *White Sail*, his most extensive work, offers an opportunity (and a challenge) to many new readers.

This book is underlying overview—the meaning, principles and relevance of Buddhism in all its paths. Better said, it quietly communicates the desperate necessity, if we want to make anything at all of the extraordinary fortune of human birth, of opening ourselves, through practice, to immeasurable wisdom mind. It explains rigorously, stimulates poetically, assists the imagination and understanding, speaks to the senses, in a remarkable exercise of skillful means. As in texts by other

great lamas, timeless tradition and highly personal expression are indivisible.

To help us avoid the waste of further lives, the author explains how we can proceed from nihilist delusion—the deception of the limited, finite, tangible on which we fearfully insist—into the vastness of enlightenment. He uses the classic distinction between nihilism and eternalism to establish the Buddhist view which goes beyond both. "Since the nihilist point of view distorts perception through its singular focus on substance, intangible spiritual phenomena cannot be seen and intangible continuous mind cannot be recognized."

For practitioners, his help in looking inward and identifying the nihilist habit of mind will be invaluable. As Thinley Norbu Rinpoche points out, there is no reason not to believe in anything. Watching this pessimistic habit, we see that it makes no sense. "Many of us feel threatened by religious teachings, including the precious teachings of the Buddhas, because we cannot fit their vast qualities into our narrow minds."

Almost every issue raised is illuminated for us systematically with pure Hinayana view,

compassionate Mahayana view, the complete bravery and nonduality of Vajrayana view, each understanding opened by, and opening, the others. We are granted, in some measure, a felt sense of stainless seeing from the mountaintop. This foretaste helps us toward reasonable faith (that is, with some understanding) in substanceless spiritual qualities. This is very different from our habitual gross eternalism—attributing permanence to gods and those who have faith in those gods, grabbing onto them as "real"—and from our thieving nihilism—disbelief in Dharma, indeed in mind, yet constantly grasping at, trying to possess, the wondrous qualities of wisdom. Of course, in daily living, we are always jumping back and forth, refusing to remain between the extremes.

Wisdom answers our very personal questions as and often before they arise. Many of us have had this experience with spiritual teachers, and will again reading Thinley Norbu Rinpoche's text. (For a teacher speaks to the individual, even when addressing a crowd, unlike a politician, who always addresses a crowd, even when speaking to an individual.) In the course of his exposition, the author touches on many themes, always usefully, sometimes like rain after long drought. He considers, for example, sectarianism and nonsectarianism, science, philosophy, karma, love and faith, the basic idea of deities, the kayas, practice.

Time and again, we are shown the uselessness of our expectations and categories. "Truths" abound, in many shapes and sizes, but reality is something else—"all phenomena originate from, and are inseparable from, great emptiness. Great emptiness means the limitless, stainless, unobscured, spacious origin of all wisdom qualities...The three aspects of Buddha's qualities of wisdom body, speech and mind are the pure appearances of wisdom mind's display. Buddha's wisdom body is inconceivably secret. It can never be defined because it has no limitations...Buddha's wisdom speech is inconceivably secret. It can never be judged because its quality is so profound...Buddha's wisdom mind is inconceivably secret. It can never be known because it is beyond dualistic mind. It reflects immeasurable knowledge unobstructedly in infinite aspects..."

Many of us, for example, are excited because orthodox science appears to be becoming receptive to spirituality. But, as Thinley Norbu observes, "...the general view of material science is to look for meaning within and between objects and only to believe what is found within substance. This produces a continuous misinterpretation of the interactions between subject and object through grasping at a reality

based on a division between objects and mind. Existence is seen as separate from mind, like a projection with no projector...It is a mistake to confuse the theories of modern physics with Buddhist theories of emptiness and phenomena. Even if an idea of emptiness as the vacuous absence of phenomena is accepted by nonspiritual scientists, the great, empty space of their own limitless mind, which is the sky of wisdom, is not acknowledged."

Nonsectarianism, again, is an easy, often well-meant slogan. Thinley Norbu points out that "...it is difficult to judge who is sectarian and who is nonsectarian. For example, some people who are actually nonsectarian may seem to be sectarian because they do not associate with many people from other traditions in many sophisticated spiritual activities. But this may be because they are predominantly focusing inwardly, trying to nourish what they know through their own teaching's tradition in order to open nondualistic wisdom, rather than outwardly trying to look good in front of others...There are many kinds of nonsectarian facades...One category is actually made up of sectarians who use the technique of showing a nonsectarian face through their facility with efficient Dharma politics. This is done to attract and seduce...and strengthen their own sects's material power...The second category of nonsectarian facades is based on the indifference of nihilism, and consists of those who do not believe in or care about either the point of view of enlightenment with faith or following any particular doctrine's tradition with respect...The third...is based on the dullness of indifferent stupor. It comprises people who think it is wonderful to accept all spiritual traditions but do not benefit from any of them due to a lack of commitment to practice any tradition."

As the author notes, "Wisdom teachers are always abiding in

nondualistic wisdom mind, so they are truly nonsectarian. They do not see any divisions of lower and higher qualities in Dharma phenomena since they recognize that all phenomena are one's own unobstructed manifestation and equally immaculate. Even though differentiated aspects of Dharma arise, they are all seen equally as the qualities of discerning wisdom." Yet this book offers no bland syncretism; Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa is cited, saying that wisdom teachers are, "according to relative truth, suitable with everyone's traditions, and according to absolute truth, the opposite of anyone's traditions."

Continuing to quote is very tempting, for only the author's own words can convey the particular quality of his sea journey, from the "beginningless beginning" across "misinterpretation...habits which produce (six) different realms of phenomena..." to the "precious teachings of the effortless Great Perfection." Any right-intentioned person will benefit from the chapter on love ("deep caring...aimed toward sentient beings, including those who are less fortunate than we...") and faith ("the same essence...aimed toward sublime beings, including all Buddhas and enlightened guides"). Any meditator will benefit from the discussion of the basic ideas of practice, and of faults and how they can be overcome, which artfully addresses each reader at his level of knowledge and experience. Those of us privileged to study with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will recognize the winds and currents of the crossing.

At the end, *White Sail* speaks of "the intangible, miraculous rainbow wisdom body for the benefit of all beings." Even in this degraded time, there are great lamas who, "like many sublime saints and the vajramaster Padmasambhava," manifest as guides "for tangible beings to lead them toward the inexhaustible qualities of intangible, luminous Buddhahood."

Barrie Simmons

SANTI MAHA SANGHA "The Wish Fulfilling Vase"

In 1992 Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche wrote the Tibetan text, "The Precious Vase", to be used as the basis for studying and practising Santi Maha Sangha. Following this he compiled a shorter version which has been translated from Tibetan into Italian by Adriano Clemente and into English by John Shane and published by Shang-Shung Edizioni under the title, "The Wish Fulfilling Vase". The text is not in book form but bound photocopies.

Copies are available from either your local Gakyil (each Gakyil around the world has received a copy) or from Shang-Shung Edizioni, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy. Due to differences in postal rates, the text including postage and packing will cost: Europe - \$20 US, USA and overseas - \$22, Australia and New Zealand - \$24 US (or dollar equivalent).

"The Precious Vase" will be translated into English in the near future and its publication will be announced in *The Mirror*.

Reflections Reflections Reflections

Judaism, Zen, Dzog chen and Me

by Ji-Kwan Sunim

Recently I participated in the Dzog chen retreat that took place in Hua Hin in Thailand. It was the first time I learnt details about the practice and gained some insight into Tibetan Buddhism and Dzog chen. I heard two lectures daily, all encompassing, by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. We were lucky because, as I see it, he was presenting the peak of Tibetan Buddhism, which is Dzog chen, which is Rigpa, which touched my heart.

Listening to Rinpoche, many things from the four years of studying and practising Judaism in my past became very clear. Many Jewish practice techniques are amazingly similar. Later on, for some years, I studied Zen and now I am a Buddhist Monk under the Korean Zen master Sung Sahn Sunim. I also found a lot of Zen in Rinpoche's talks.

In Judaism the practice has two dimensions: one is to develop devotion and trust (refuge) and the other is to develop mindfulness. For example we are all familiar with the times when reading a book, our eyes go technically over the lines while we go somewhere else. At the end of the page we realise that, even though the eyes followed the words, nothing came in. In real life there is no end of the page so we keep on doing things mechanically while we are somewhere else. With a book, it is obvious, you can go back and read it again. With your wife, eating a meal, having sex, going to work, talking to someone, you cannot go back.

In Judaism, there are a hundred

times in a day to recite prayers; like mantras. These occasions act as the end of the page, bringing us back to awareness. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche suggested saying mantras when you have contact with the



elements, especially water, fire and air. In Judaism we have mantras only for contact with water, but the direction is the same. In Judaism one also recites mantras before sleeping and on awakening to collect the mind. Rinpoche spoke of concentrating the mind on the White A at these times. All these practices are meant to bring us into the here and now, into the present moment, to re-unite and become one with the wonderful power of existence.

Judaism consists of philosophy and practice - two quite separate and different things. The point of the philosophy is to push one into practice and to root one into the small practices over and over again throughout the day. Philosophy is important for people who need a reason to practise, who need to understand first. This is what Rinpoche was giving us. After a

while the philosophy becomes less important because the fruit comes from the practice itself, not from intellectual understanding.

After time in the army and the war in Lebanon I was not content with Judaism and I went overseas to look for answers to big questions and for some special training (more exciting than mindfulness training!) After starting with Hare Krishna, I went through several Buddhist schools. Six years ago I was given this koan from a very famous Zen master in Korea: "Who is the host of your mind?" This question I kept with me from waking up till falling asleep at night. At first a lot of thinking and later on just keeping it in the belly like a burning charcoal.

For four years I kept this question and things became more and more clear. It is like many guests come to the house but who is the owner? Who is the host of all these physical, emotional and mind guests? One night just before falling asleep, it came to me that it is me. I was always in the house but I thought I was a servant imprisoned by obligations to the demanding guests. Then at the same time, as with switching on the light, the frightening monsters turned out to be silhouettes and shadows of small and unharmed guests with no power over me. Then a tremendous feeling of relief, a taste of freedom.

Guests continued to come unceasingly. Some guests are good and to some I say, "Go away, I don't need you" especially to my crow who whispers in my ear trying to convince me that he is me; that without him I'm nobody, that if I

follow his advice (desires) no one will laugh at us again. But I realised that he is not me, and I don't really need him.

Sitting quietly on the meditation mat, completely awake, feeling the I-am-ness of the body, the breathing in and out, hearing whatever was around me, complete freedom from guests. Becoming the mirror, I am filled with a gentle, subtle joy and the crow is quiet; this is the Zen state called "Shikantaza", total "drompa" in Tibetan, perfect balance and mirror-like state of mind where the sense of you disappears and there is just everything else alive and vivid. From the I-am-ness, the "I" falls and there is just am-ness, total integration with existence.

Rinpoche was teaching us that the state of Rigpa is a step beyond that, and that is keeping that during the day while in action, with a scent of joy following you like your shadow.

In an interview with Rinpoche we talked about that and he said that this is it indeed and the thing is to keep it continuously, which is the peak of Dzog chen. I would like to express my happiness that, using different terms, we are talking about the same thing; using different techniques we are coming to reality

itself.

The infinite pieces of puzzle that I have been carrying in my backpack for so long are coming together into a clear picture. I believe that everybody carries large numbers of puzzle pieces (or guests) but most people still have them in a pile. No matter what you have in life, unless you allow these pieces to come together your life will always have a bad taste.

Practice is letting this process of harmony happen, following natural law, to allow the pieces of the puzzle to fall into place. Nature, as with a drop of ink in water, aspires to balance and integration, not separation. We don't have to do anything, it just takes place. As Rinpoche says, "Just relax". On a small scale, psychology or psychotherapy tries to match pieces of the puzzle. Joining small patches of the picture, we experience some relief and joy. Seeing the big picture requires true practice, which allows everything to come together in a holistic way. Why go retail when you can go wholesale?

I would like to thank Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for giving his life to teach the way of clarity, day and night. May Rigpa become the host of your mind and help all beings.

*Namkhai Norbu, blue eyed Lama, jewel of the sky
Born the year of the Tiger in the hour of the Dragon ... Reborn
as the Dorje that dissolves time and empowers the living
Mandala where World Teachers shine.
Master of dreams (Life is a dream).
Killer of dreams (Why do I dream?)
Knower of the peace-full Void transcending every dream.*

Antonio Eduardo Dagrino
Caracas, first week in March 1993.

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English commentary



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Impressions of Israel

continued from page 4

This Noa is a musician and composer, who teaches at Tel Aviv University and specialises in working with handicapped children and healing through sound.

We proceed by car and taxi to Jerusalem along a highway that cuts through the sun-blasted scrub land punctuated with greener settlements: Ayal, Rinpoche's taxi driver, was later booked, at Rinpoche's request, to take him everywhere. A much decorated veteran of two wars with a pistol in his pocket, he was a mine of information about all the places we visited.

Arriving at Mishkanot Shaananim in Yemin Moshe, where the teachings were to be held in a small comfortable air-conditioned hall, we found our way through the maze of elegant little backstreets lined with private houses and artist's studios to the cool apartment where Rinpoche, Fabio, and Barrie and Nancy Simmons were to stay, whose balcony looks out over the walls of the old city. Mishkanot Shaananim, a group of long low buildings built of stone, is no ordinary hotel: you must be an artist, musician, or cultural figure of note to stay there.

I went to stay with Menachem at his apartment a short walk from the center of town in a jumble of houses built in concrete, an apartment crammed with books in Hebrew about the Kabbalah, interspersed with books about the Buddha Dharma. We went out to eat dinner together in a corner restaurant full of locals and khaki uniformed soldiers with their Uzi machine guns laid down on the floor under their booted feet. Over humus, olives and pitta bread we caught up with each other's news and travels. In Jerusalem Menachem was an invaluable guide and mentor, well versed in local lore and customs, a boon companion and true friend. (No dry scholar he; he had been to see Bob Dylan play at a concert in town the night before.) The regular routine of his prayers punctuated our days together, and I was interested to know not only about his Kabbalistic studies, but how he integrated the Hasidic practices he was following with the Dzogchen teachings he has received from Rinpoche. There have been many conferences on the theme of Christian Buddhist dialogue, but not so much has been attempted to promote an encounter between Jewish and Buddhist thought.

Jerusalem: Tuesday, 22/06/93. Morning. Today is our day to tour the city before the retreat begins tomorrow. Meeting for a buffet breakfast in the lobby of the Mishkanot, we go first to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding on a donkey, and where on our visit Fabio and Liane took rides on the camels waiting patiently there for tourist dollars. A heat wave has just begun, and under the scorching sun, a view of the whole of Jerusalem and all its holy sites is spread out

before us. Driving back into town we stop at the Temple Mount, known to Muslims as Haram esh-Sharif, 'The Venerable Sanctuary', where we visited the Al Aksa Mosque, a vast complex that can accommodate as many as 5000 worshippers in its enormous prayer hall, then moving on to the mosque known as the 'Dome of the Rock', inside which is the sacred rock on which Abraham was said to have prepared the sacrifice of Isaac, and from which the prophet Mohammed, during his mystical journey to Jerusalem, is said to have mounted his steed to ascend to heaven. Below the Temple Mount is the Western Wall, or 'Wailing Wall', the most important



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Jerusalem

(photo Fabio Andrico)

Jewish holy site, the last remnant of the ancient temple built by King Solomon, where we walked before entering the old city and wandering up its narrow winding streets flanked on each side by market stalls. From here we climbed to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, on the site of the crucifixion at Golgotha (Hebrew), or Calvary (Latin), a multi-denominational Christian place of worship, within which are many shrines, including the tomb in which Jesus was laid and rose from the dead. After this tour of the most important sacred sites of all three of the great religions present in Jerusalem, we rode in our taxis again to have lunch at a Chinese restaurant before we went to the University of Jerusalem where Rinpoche, introduced by Menachem, gave a talk, answered questions and engaged in dialogue with scholars. One of the professors told me afterwards over tea that while the Buddhist ideas he had heard at this encounter could be found in a book, the presence, and simplicity which Rinpoche brought to the meeting were evidence of the power of his tradition.

Jerusalem: Wednesday, 23/06/93. Morning. Rinpoche is the first Tibetan Buddhist Lama to teach in Israel, and the newspapers and television stations want to interview him, but it is more than just curiosity or the search for something exotic that has motivated those who came to participate in the retreat. There is a buzz of anticipation among the crowd of about eighty people awaiting him in the cool of the hall out of the insistent sun. Fabio sets up the video camera, and Rinpoche arrives and begins to speak in

English, no translation being needed. He expresses his pleasure at being in a country so full of holy places, and goes on to introduce the teachings, proceeding, as the days of the retreat pass, from the sutras and the Four Noble Truths, through the tantras to Dzogchen, transmitting the short tun, which we practised together each day. Those present showed a sincere interest and delight in the teachings. On the Saturday the Israelis sang Hebrew songs to Rinpoche, and that evening a new Gakyil was formed.

From sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday is the Sabbath. Everything was closed, and the whole city became quiet: the usual

delightful meal (once again in a Chinese restaurant) we drive back to Jerusalem.

The Dead Sea: Monday, 28/06/93. Morning. Getting up very early, after a sweltering drive from Jerusalem, we reach the spa resort of Ein Gedi. Amid much laughter Rinpoche and those accompanying him coat themselves in thick black mud from a metal bin, until we are all shiny and slick like ceramic statues ready to be fired. Walking down towards the sea shore under the baking sun, the mud dries on our skin. At the sea shore, we float effortlessly in the salty water. On the way back to town we visit the Qumran caves, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, and sing the Song of the Vajra in one of the caves. Rinpoche comments that the landscape is like that around Mount Kailash, and wonders if Jesus might have walked the rocky path we climb, where the Essenes lived and practised. Rinpoche says on the way back to town that there are many terms to be found in this landscape.

Jerusalem: Tuesday, 29/06/93. Night. It's late, and I'm walking home to Menachem's apartment to sleep. Rinpoche left this morning for Thailand. I stroll up Ben Jehuda Street, a pedestrian boulevard full of pavement cafes, where locals and tourists promenade deep into the night to browse the late opening stores and shop at the street vendors

stalls selling jewelry, clothes and souvenirs. A young woman just arrived from Russia plays classical music on her violin, a young Israeli-born man sings rock songs to his guitar, a south American group play pan pipes, an old man sings Yiddish songs, all the conversations from the cafe tables, and the chatter from shoppers mix and mingle into a litany of human hope and aspiration, not as solemn as that of the prayers of all the faiths that jostle one another in this city, but no less intensely felt for all that. A one-legged beggar with a big black hat, wooden crutch and long beard, looking as if he had just stepped from one of the photos of the ghettos in the Holocaust Museum lies down on the sidewalk to rest, rattling coins in the tin cup in his hand. Three beautiful young girls in jeans and teeshirts stroll by with machine guns casually slung across their backs. Tomorrow morning early I leave for Rome.

Lod Airport: Wednesday, 30/06/93. Morning. "Why did you come to Israel? Who did you stay with? Do you have any gifts? Did you pack them yourself?" Boarding the plane in Israel, I find security even more intense than at Rome airport. I hope to return to Israel when Rinpoche goes back to lead a longer retreat there. May the Dharma, in all its many forms, blossom and flourish in all realms. May wars and tensions diminish. May all beings be well and happy!

Get a raffle ticket to support the Australian land fund

The Dzogchen Community of Australia is organising an international raffle which will run for about a year during which we hope to raise around \$70,000. The money will go towards the Community's project to buy about 150 acres of land near Central Tilba.

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A trip to Australia (air fare paid) and one month's accommodation with members of the Dzogchen Community as host. If an Australian wins the prize then that person wins a trip to the Gar of their choice: Merigar, Tashigar or Tsegialgar (air fare paid and some accommodation).

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Tickets cost \$50 US. The amount should be sent by cheque or money order (specifying that the amount is for the raffle), made out to Dzogchen Community of Australia Inc., Land Fund, and addressed to:

Dzogchen Community, c/o Michael Layden,
5 Nicholson St., Abbotsford, Vic 3011, Australia.

Coloured sand in Rome



Preparation of Kalachakra mandala in Rome (photo Leopoldo Sentinelli)

A Tibetan ceremony rarely seen in the West recently took place in Rome. It began with the ritual preparation of the Kalachakra mandala with coloured sand.

On June 9th five monks of the Namgyal monastery of Dharamsala started preparing the mandala, after performing practices of purification and harmonisation of the local energies.

The mandala was made in the Aquarium of Rome, an ancient building recently restored and now dedicated to cultural events.

Day after day the mandala was built up and the 722 divinities were invited to settle there for the mandala's duration.

This event was very important because of its subtle influence for peace in the world.

It was an opportunity for all who saw the mandala during its formation to appreciate details of an art that has no equivalent in present and past Western culture.

And it was an invitation to participate, on an inner level, with the monks as they proceeded in their work and practice with presence and concentration.

The climax of the ceremony came on July 8th, 1993, the fourth day of the waning moon of the fifth month

of the Water-Bird year, 2120 in the Tibetan calendar. On this day the mandala was dismantled, after a simple rite.

The procedure for dissolving the mandala began with the monk who led the ceremony picking up a pinch of sand from the "abodes" of the 722 divinities. He then traced some lines in the sand with his vajra from the outside towards the centre. Afterwards the other four monks picked up the sand.

Within a short time the mandala lost its character as a splendid and brightly coloured composition, built with concentration and total attention to detail for many days, and became an ordinary heap of gray sand.

The more a structure like this is transitory, the more such concepts as the impermanence of human actions and the relations of cause-effect (karma) are strengthened in the minds of those who perform and those who understand the practice.

The messages the monks wanted to stress were essentially:

—inviting visitors to consider the building of the mandala as practice on an inner level, aimed at creating causes for inner peace, which then extends outward toward peace in the world;

—considering this ceremony not as something limited to the Buddhist religion, but assisting it with prayers of any faith, to help reach the goal of peace;

—remembering the material difficulties that the Tibetan people are undergoing and helping them preserve their religious and cultural identity;

—realising that Buddhism is a path to understand and overcome one's own and other people's suffering;

—not limiting oneself to admiration of the beauty of the mandala, but considering it a representation of spiritual beauty, unconditioned at the material level. "Avoid looking at the finger which is pointing at the moon," says a traditional Buddhist image.

After the mandala was dissolved, the ceremony moved to the Isola Tiberina, an island in the Tiber River in the centre of Rome. With further rituals, the sand was dispersed in the water, which acquired a slightly reddish colour.

At the end of the ceremony, the monks thanked all those who had attended and participated, as well as the agencies and organisations whose support permitted this event to take place in Rome.

Accompanying the manifestation was an educational exhibit on the history of Tibet and the meaning of a mandala, as well as a display of 108 photos taken by Fosco Maraini during his expeditions to Tibet between 1937 and 1948.

The same photographs were shown at the Castello Aldobrandesco in Arcidosso (Italy) on the occasion of the visit of H.H. the Dalai Lama, and have been published as a book by Shang-Shung Editions 'Prima della Tempesta'.

This manifestation was organised with the collaboration of the Maitreya Foundation, the Italian Ministry of Culture and Environment and the National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome.

PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL DAYS

7th Month, 30th day Thu. 16th Sept. 1993

NEW MOON. This day is ideal for purification practices. Try to do either the "Purification of the Six Lokas" or the "Namchos Shitroi Nalgyor", the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or on your own.

8th Month, 10th day Sat. 25th Sept. 1993

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

8th Month, 15th day Thu. 30th Sept. 1993

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

8th Month, 25th day Sun. 10th Oct. 1993

This is a **Dakini day**, and also the anniversary of two great Dzog-chen masters, Rigzin Kumaraja, who transmitted the Dzog-chen teachings to Longchenpa and to the third Karmapa, and of Rigzin Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755), a great Dzog-chen master of the Nyingmapa school. It is therefore an excellent day to do "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor", the Guruyoga with the White A.

If you can do it in the morning, that is best. Then, if you have the time, you can do a medium or long Tun later in the day, with an intense practice of Simhamuka.

8th Month, 30th day Fri. 15th Oct. 1993

NEW MOON. This day is excellent for practising the "Purification of the Six Lokas". Otherwise you can do the medium or long Tun.

9th Month, 3rd day Mon. 18th October 1993

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

9th Month, 10th day Sun. 24th Oct. 1993

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

9th Month, 15th day Sat. 30th Oct. 1993

FULL MOON. This is a good day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences", either collectively or personally according to your possibilities, early in the morning or in the evening.

9th Month, 22nd day Sat. 6th Nov. 1993

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

9th Month, 25th day Tue. 9th Nov. 1993

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

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