

THE MIRROR

The International Newspaper of the Dzogchen Community

Issue 24

YEAR'S END, YEAR'S BEGINNING

by John Shane

This issue of 'The Mirror' goes to press as the festive season approaches once again and another year comes to end: a time for family gatherings, reconnections with friends old and new, near and far, and for the giving and receiving of gifts.

A time, too, for thinking back over the past year and for making New Year's resolutions for the coming year; a good moment to reconnect with ourselves, for quiet reflection, for the contemplation that is at the heart of all our Community's activities.

Christmas may be a season for presents, but the truth is that all through the last twelve months the practitioners of the Dzogchen Community have received so much from our spiritual Master, either directly or indirectly, that no Christmas present could ever match it.

On behalf of its readers and of all the members of the Community world-wide who will not be able to greet him personally, 'The Mirror' would like to send our warmest

greetings and thanks to our precious root Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to his family, and to all the Masters who have brought the wonderful benefit of their presence or their teachings into our lives. We have truly received so much, such wonderful gifts of spiritual teaching and empowerment from you, gifts that have the power to open our hearts and minds, gifts that can set us free, that it is difficult to find words to express our deep sense of gratitude.

We are also thankful for the good health of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu that has enabled him to carry out his activities with such vigour, and we offer our sincere prayers that his health will remain good, and that he will continue to turn the wheel of the Teachings for the benefit of all beings.

In addition to the many retreats that Rinpoche has conducted this year, including visits to Israel and Thailand for the first time, 1993 saw the beginning of the Santi Maha Sangha training programme. Through this programme Rinpoche intends to ensure the continuation of the teachings for the future, by providing dedicated students with a thorough training in nine levels that follow on from the Foundation Level



Garab Dorje

from a drawing by Batodalai Dugarov

that he has already transmitted. He has expressed his intention to try to teach one further level each year.

Groups were set up in various parts of the world to study the two texts that Rinpoche prepared for the Foundation Level, 'The Precious Vase' and 'The Wish Fulfilling Vase', which have now been translated and are being published in various languages.

These study groups brought a new level of maturity and cohesion to our relationships as practitioners, with members of the Community working together to present this programme.

Rinpoche's book on the Vajra Dance has also been transcribed and published in Italian this year, and an English translation will be ready shortly.

Two new teachers of the Dance were appointed for Europe, and many people have been able to learn the Dance all over the world. The Vajra Dance, too, is a collaborative endeavour, with each individual moving in relation to every other individual and to the group on the Dance Mandala, so that, in addition to the benefit individuals have obtained from their practice, the collective energy of the Community

has benefited enormously from the harmonious interaction of individuals in the Dance.

Yantra Yoga has also continued to be taught world-wide with great precision by our qualified instructors.

This year has been notable for many important developments in the life of the Dzogchen Community and its related organisations. The

International Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies, the Association for Solidarity in Asia (A.S.I.A.), and Shang Shung Editions, all of them inspired by Rinpoche's teaching and guidance.

The Shang Shung Institute continued its activities for the preservation of Tibetan culture, holding two courses on Tibetan medicine in Arcidosso, Italy, and establishing plans to implement a five-year course in Tibetan medicine which will receive official recognition by the relevant authorities. Talks were also held at Conway this summer to prepare the way for the eventual founding of a Shang Shung Institute in the United States of America.

A.S.I.A. continued its aid programme for the development of educational and medical facilities in area of Tibet where schools and hospitals are lacking. The last issue of 'The Mirror' carried a full report on the A.S.I.A. team's successful visit to

Tibet this summer, which was led by Rinpoche himself, and projects are now going ahead at Dangche, Khamdogar, Jarkando, and Galenteng.

These projects deserve your support, so opportunities for you to make a gift are not limited to putting a package under your Christmas tree!

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Community Membership



The three main Gars of the international Dzogchen community, Merigar in Italy, Tsegylgar in the USA and Tashigar in Argentina, give full details on membership for 1994.

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Understanding the real condition of all phenomena

Excerpts from a teaching by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Bangkok, Thailand, July 1st, 1993

When we speak of Dharma teachings, there are many different forms and traditions, but the principle is not form nor tradition. Dharma means knowledge, understanding.

The term Dharma comes from Sanskrit and the real meaning is "all phenomena"; that means we need to have knowledge and understanding of all phenomena.

In general people say, "We are following dharma", and speak of it as a kind of religion created by Buddha Sakyamuni, but that is not a correct point of view. Buddha never created any kind of school or religion. Buddha was a totally enlightened being, someone beyond our limited point of view. The teaching of the Buddha is to have presence in knowledge.

So if we are interested in Dharma we are interested in knowledge and in understanding the real condition of all phenomena. How can we gain such knowledge? It does not mean we learn in an intellectual way, merely in the condition of subject and object, judging and considering things outside us.

Generally we have the idea, "I am here. I see these objects in front of me and I consider that this is good, that is bad". In this way we perform many types of analysis, through which we develop infinite limitations. For that reason the Buddha taught from the beginning that we should not only look outwards, but should observe ourselves a little. Working in that way, we can discover a little of how the real situation is.

When we speak of the Buddha's teaching, we speak of three different *yanas*, the roots of which are all in the teachings he gave in his lifetime at Saranath in India. We can study how Buddha transmitted this teaching.

Suffering

There is a teaching of his that is universal to all Buddhists called "The Four Noble Truths". That was the first teaching transmitted by Buddha. Even if we have different methods in the teaching such as Tantrism and Dzogchen, they are always based on The Four Noble Truths. Why are they called "The Noble Truths"? "Noble" because they are important knowledge and understanding.

For example, in "The Four Noble Truths" we start with the understanding of suffering. In general suffering is not difficult to understand; everybody can do so. Even if we know what it is, we are distracted and not present, and in particular we are not aware that suffering has a cause. Suffering is the fruit, or effect of cause. If there is effect or fruit, there is cause. Why did Buddha explain suffering in the first of all his teachings? It is not because it was particularly interesting or that people wanted to



photo Rolf Portack

know about it. But suffering is universal; everyone has had that experience. Suffering is not a subject about which we agree or disagree.

If Buddha had explained the nature of mind, for example, there would have been many who agreed or disagreed with Buddha because we human beings are in general very limited, we have very strong egos. Mostly, people are convinced they have knowledge and understanding; they have their points of view.

First of all in speaking in higher discourse of the nature of mind there are many arguments. The main point of Buddha's teaching was not to convince or to argue, but to make clear our real condition. Ordinary people could understand something of which they have concrete experience. If we have no experience, it is difficult to understand or accept.

A baby or small child, for example, has no experience of life. They do not know their condition, their limitations. If we tell children not to touch the fire we say, "You'll hurt yourself", but if the child has no experience (of fire) it is very difficult to accept. But if the child touches fire then it can have direct experience. The fire is hot and they do not touch it again. Of course that problem is one of suffering. So you see this is a concrete problem. Everybody has this experience. But even if we have this experience we do not think very much about the cause.

Karma

When we have problems then we set out to struggle with these problems directly. We say, "Where there is a problem, there is also a solution" - one of struggle. Buddha first explained that the condition of

suffering is something unpleasant and is not liked. If you do not want suffering you must search into the cause of suffering. To overcome the problem, the solution is not to struggle or fight; to discover the cause there are explanations of what the cause is, and what the effect is, and the relationship between them.

All Buddhists and Hindus speak of *karma*; for most people in Asia, *karma* is familiar; however in Europe and the West, this is not so. Some people find the concept hard to accept. But even though they do not use the word, they accept *karma* because there is always a cause and an effect and a relationship with time. Everyone accepts time and cause and effect. That is the main point.

Buddha explained in the Sutra teaching, by hundreds and hundreds of different examples, what cause and effect are and how they manifest. But this teaching is for deepening this knowledge; it is not only a habit, as if we were to say, "We are Buddhists, so we believe that".

I think that *karma* is very real to everybody and that it is very important to understand it in the correct way. Some people think of *karma* as something which is pre-programmed and which we must follow. If problems arise they say, "This is my *karma*, what can I do?" and so they are satisfied. This is not a correct understanding of *karma*. *Karma* is relative in time and relative to situations, actual situations in which *karma* is manifesting.

There is a very famous saying of Buddha Shakyamuni: "To know what we did in our past lives we must examine our present situation". That means we are now human beings, we have human body, speech and mind. Our present existence is produced by past *karma*. And then

Buddha said, "To know how our next life will be, we must examine our present actions". This means that our present actions can produce the fruit of our next life and that we can also modify and purify them. We can do anything.

All Buddhist traditions have many different practices for purifying negative *karma*. That means that when we have the problem of some negative *karma* there is also a chance to purify it. We cannot simply say, "This is my *karma* there is nothing to do". The potentiality of *karma* manifests in the way seeds planted in a field grow. They have the potential to produce flowers and something concrete. For example if we plant a flower seed then a flower grows, not rice or grain. This is called potentiality. And for the flower to manifest we need many secondary causes. Even though the seed has the potential to produce a flower, it needs to be planted in earth and receive water and sunshine and other secondary causes to manifest.

In general we live in our circumstances, our relative condition. Our relative condition is like the earth, the water and the light necessary for the seed to manifest. If we modify our secondary causes, we can change or block negative situations. That is why we do purification practice. This is the correct way to consider *karma* and its manifestation.

Cessation

How can we stop a cause of negative *karma*? It means that if we do not want to suffer, then first we must understand that suffering is produced by a cause. When we have discovered the cause, we must stop it. If we do not stop the cause, even if we have the knowledge of cause and effect, this understanding does not benefit us. For that reason after Buddha explained cause and effect, he gave "The Third Noble Truth of Cessation".

If we have problems of illness, for example, this can be produced by food, or our attitude, or our way of living. There is always a cause that produces this. Somehow we must discover what the cause is. If we cannot discover the cause on our own, then we visit a doctor. Why do we visit a doctor? Because he is an expert. After examining and diagnosing us the doctor will discover the cause and effect. Somehow we are following a teaching and a teacher and we are learning what the cause of suffering is. And when we discover through the teaching and the teacher what the real situation is, then we also receive the solution to how to stop it.

For example, the doctor advises us not to eat or drink certain foods and to change our attitude. Then he also usually gives some medicine. In order to benefit we must apply these. This is an example of how we can stop the cause of negativities.

Emotions

In the teachings, one of the Buddha's names is "Great Physician". This does not mean that the Buddha prepares certain herbal medicines or analyses illnesses. But our illnesses, our problems, everything is rooted in our emotions and in an ordinary way we are totally conditioned by our emotions. We are not even aware of how conditioned we are by these things. In our real condition we have an illness of that kind and if we do not know how to overcome the root of our problems it is not easy to overcome such things as physical ailments.

For example in Tibetan or Ayurvedic medicine the three humours are always explained. These characteristic conditions govern our existence: our body, speech and mind. If we have a good balance of these humours, we will not have many problems physically, but when the three humours are unbalanced, then we can have problems. These three are principally rooted in our emotions of which the main three are ignorance or lack of clarity, anger and attachment. We are conditioned by these and they are also the cause of all problems. If we do not want to have the effects of suffering, then we must stop these causes. That is what the Buddha explained in "The Third Noble Truth".

The Path

In order to stop these different kinds of causes there are many different solutions which depend mainly on the condition of the individual. Some people have more capacity and opportunities and some people less. Buddha is omniscient which means he has total knowledge and understanding of the situation of *samsara*. For that reason, in order to transmit knowledge and understanding, Buddha is working for one person after another, like a good physician. If a good doctor is making analyses and treating people's illnesses, he must do it one person at a time, to see what the situation of the individual is. Sometimes we can prepare a kind of universal medicine which benefits everybody, but if you want to cure someone in a perfect way, then you must go into the situation of the individual and see how his real condition is. For that reason the last noble truth is called "The Noble Truth of the Path".

Buddha taught different kinds of paths. This does not mean that Buddha created different kinds of schools but that he transmitted knowledge and understanding in different ways according to the different conditions of individuals. For that reason we have many different kinds of teachings such as the Suttas, Tantrism and the teaching of Dzogchen. In particular those

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Understanding the real condition of all phenomena

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characteristic teachings relative to the condition of the three existences of the individual.

First we have our physical body which is relative to our physical world on the material level. The Buddha also manifested physically and taught and transmitted the teaching. We also have teachings in the Tantric style.

Tantra

In general *Tantra* is a word used both in the Sanskrit language and in Hinduism, but even though the same name is used it does not always have the same meaning. In the Tantric teachings in the Buddhist tradition *Tantra* means our real condition. The real sense of *Tantra* means continuity or continuation. What does continuity of our real nature mean? It means a kind of recognition or understanding of our energy level. For example, we have infinite thoughts arising which can be good thoughts or bad ones. We also have a conception of good and bad. But the root of these thoughts is relative to our energy. That is a kind of movement. The root of the movement of thoughts is part of our real condition. If we observe a thought, where is it? Where does it disappear to? When we observe it we cannot find anything. What we always find is emptiness, which is called *Dharmadatu*. The real

condition of all things is called emptiness. But immediately another thought arises. When we observe this second thought, it disappears and we find only emptiness, but immediately the fourth and fifth thoughts arise and this continues infinitely. Why do we have this infinite movement? Because we have that potentiality, that energy, in our nature. This is the real meaning of continuation: continuation of emptiness and movement, energy and movement again and again without interruption.

That knowledge and understanding is the principle of Tantric teaching and is related more to our energy level.

This teaching was transmitted through a manifestation of the Buddha, not physically taught by him, and this is a characteristic of Tantric teaching. Those who follow this kind of teaching need more capacity to follow and understand. The physical level is always easier to understand.

For example, if you see someone coming then what you see is their physical body. It is not so easy to see the energy level of that person. If someone has no physical body but is only energy or mind you couldn't see them. If you can see that, it means you have such capacity in a different way. That is an example of how energy is more difficult to understand...

Dzogchen

As to the Dzogchen teachings, "Dzogchen" is a Tibetan word. We say "Santi Maha" in the language of Oddiyana, or "Maha Santi" in Sanskrit. It means a perfected state which means we all have such potentiality and power in our real nature. We can discover that knowledge, that potentiality, that real condition. This is a teaching related more to our mind level, and to understand the Dzogchen teaching we need such a capacity. Of course if we want to know or discover something on the level of mind it is more difficult than on the physical level.

In any case there are mainly three characteristic teachings relative to our three conditions as individuals. So sometimes it is important to know the characteristics of the teachings. It does not mean that we are comparing, saying this teaching is better than that one. It depends on the situation and capacity of the individual. If there were no qualifications there would be no reason to have different kinds of paths.

If there are different paths there are different reasons for them. The main point of teaching in general is to understand our condition concretely. That is the purpose of Dharma. Knowledge of Dharma is knowledge of the understanding of all phenomena. We can have that knowledge when we discover our real condition.

Transcription Maria Simmons

Year's End, Year's Beginning

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The implementation of the membership programme through the three principle Gars or seats of The Dzogchen Community was begun in earnest this year, and there is a centre page report on this in this issue.

The Community is growing, with new Gakyils being formed in various countries, and new land and building projects in various parts of the world. It is not possible to list all the projects at present in progress, but here are a few 1993 highlights:

In the U.S.A., at Tsegylgar, the land at Buckland has been retained and in addition the big old school building in the rural town of Conway has been bought. This provides a wonderful opportunity to create a base for the Dzogchen Community, for A.S.I.A. and for the Shang Shung Institute.

Vajra Dance Mandala spaces available for Community practice have also been built at Community member's houses at Barrytown, near Woodstock, in New York State, and just outside New York City near Valley Cottage, Nyack.

In the United Kingdom a house and land has been purchased in Pembrokeshire, Wales; and in Australia a project to raise funds to buy land at Gulaga in New South Wales is well under way.

There was an article by Rinpoche himself in the last issue of 'The Mirror' stressing the importance of permanent bases for the Dzogchen Community around the world, in

which he commented: "I don't like the situation where I am invited somewhere to teach, people listen for two days, and then it's 'good-bye'. There is no follow up and people's interest in what I teach fades. If this happens two or three times, I don't feel like committing myself very much. But when I see that individuals are really doing their best, I put my effort there ... When we have land and buildings (and of course I am not saying we need elegant temples or complicated things) practitioners can meet in such places to collaborate and deepen their knowledge, exchanging knowledge, and we can also organise places for people to make personal retreats ..."

Certainly we have seen tremendous development at Merigar in 1993. The Gorma painting project, as our regular readers will know, now named 'The Temple of the Great Liberation' is proceeding well under Rinpoche's personal guidance, with the precious collaboration of Dugu Chögyal Rinpoche, and the dedicated commitment of many practitioners. The Yellow House at Merigar has been reorganised with the big space downstairs now in use as the offices and a little Gorma upstairs.

The newly equipped kitchen for Community members downstairs, and the rebuilt dormitory and showers all function well. The plans for the rebuilding of the house on the adjoining farm, known as Merigar Two, are presently being

completed. There are now two dark retreat cabins, and one cabin for 'ordinary' retreats in the woods below the Yellow house.

In the field of publications, Shang Shung Editions continued its essential contribution to the Community by publishing books and practice materials, particularly the two texts on the Foundation Level of Santi Maha Sangha.

Rinpoche's book 'The Crystal and the Way of light: Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen' was re-published worldwide by Penguin books in their Arkana imprint in a new edition after being sold out for more than a year.

A good year for the Community, a year to remember: 'The Mirror' has tried to reflect it faithfully, and we promise to try to do the same in the coming months that will bring new challenges, new opportunities.

We know that all over the world, many, many individuals, whose names never appear in these pages, have unselfishly dedicated themselves to working to carry out the Community's aims, through practice and through their contributions of time, money, energy and effort to our various projects. We thank you all.

Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever you are going through, 'The Mirror' is here to serve you: please continue to write to us with your news, your articles, your photos, your letters, your comments, and of course, your subscriptions! We look forward to hearing from you.

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

Teaching Programme 1994

Tibet House, New Delhi, India

15 - 16 and 18 January

Retreat of Yantra Yoga and Lecture on Tibetan medicine

N.S.W. Australia

25 - 29 March

Course of Dance of the Vajra with Prima Mai

1 - 10 April

Teaching Retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

13 - 17 April

Course of Yantra Yoga with Fabio Andrico

For information contact: Pamela Oldmeadow, 12 Fox Place, Lynham ACT 2602, tel. 06 2571177, fax 06 2480335. Lynne Geary, 21 Pope Street, Hughes ACT 2605, tel. 06 2825176.

Full information on page 5.

Ulan Bator, Mongolia 6 - 8 May

Teaching Retreat

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

Ulan Ude, Buryatia 13 - 21 May

Teaching Retreat

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

Moscow, Russia 27 May - 5 June

Teaching Retreat

For further information on the retreat see page 4.

Poland 10 - 14 June

Teaching Retreat

Greece 17 - 19 June

Seminar

Merigar, Italy

1 - 3 July

Santi Maha Sangha Exam

Zurich, Switzerland 8 - 10 July

Seminar for Tibetans

Bern 13 July

Conference

France

16 July Public Teaching in Paris

18-24 July Retreat

Merigar, Italy

31 July - 7 August

First Training of Santi Maha Sangha

12 - 21 August

Teaching Retreat

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

Rinpoche's Teaching Programme up to spring 1995, which will include First Training of Santi Maha Sangha at both Tsegylgar and Tashigar, will be published in the next issue of The Mirror.

What happens in Tashigar?

by Maria Gracia, one of the Gekö of Tashigar

Tashigar is having a calm year following the teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and his departure.

Between March and June the *yangtig* retreat house for one person was completely finished. We covered the entire room of the retreat cabin with panels of wood which gave insulation and a sense of cosiness to the place. Once it was finished in July, people started practising *yangtig* for 24 hours. Many people from the Cordoba Community and several from Buenos Aires came to the retreats.

The whole atmosphere of Tashigar changes when a member of the Community is secluded in the cabin. A silence extends through the area and practices feel more concentrated and dedicated among the members of the Community at those times. The *yangtig* space has been used 13 times and everyone has noticed the impact of the experience of 24 hours alone in the cabin trying to develop their contemplation.

Some karma yoga weekends have also been successfully organised between members of Cordoba and Buenos Aires to uncover the roof which, in spite of the work done on it immediately after the Christmas retreat, was letting water come through to the rooms when it rained. Martin from Buenos Aires acted as architect during the operation of removing the roof and cleaning the upper part. Beatriz (la Colorada), generously gave the waterproof membrane to totally cover the roof and all the members from the two communities worked for two full days. After 180 days of dry weather with no rain at all, on Friday while there were no tiles on the roof, the rain poured in. However it helped to take away all the dirt that had accumulated and made the work easier the next day.

The work was done in an impeccable way and everyone was in the best of spirits. The atmosphere was humorous and lunches as tasty as they can be, always richly cooked by the expert on grilling meat ("asados") Horacio. The women also helped cleaning and cooking and it was really a feast among Vajra brothers and sisters.

After the roof had been covered some people from Buenos Aires remained to do *yangtig* retreat. All of them said that Tashigar is really a place to practise Dharma.

Flowers were planted at the beginning of the spring (which starts here in September) and they are now very colourful. Spring here is a feast for the senses; the smell of jasmine, madreselvas, lemon and orange blossoms is an impermanent and delicious surprise every morning because they start and finish quite rapidly. One day the orange blossoms and a few days later they



photo Prima Mai

are finished; then the jasmine starts, then the roses. Nothing lasts long, but other different blooms come instead.

Tashigar is an excellent place for a long personal retreat. The Gorpa has windows in three directions and while doing your practice you can look at the tankhas of Tara or Guru Rinpoche or find them in the open sky through the big windows. At Tashigar one can be totally alone during the weekdays, practising in silence and solitude the practice of your choice while during the weekend you adapt yourself to the people practising in groups and living communally. It is a good way to work on flexibility and adaptability, on rest and on activity.

Sometimes there are storms, sometimes the wind is like a small tornado; the elements are always strong in this part of the planet where the sun travels (we know it is not the sun but it looks like that) turning to the left anticlockwise like in the practice of Tara. Perhaps it is because of that that everything here is involved in a quality of gentleness and sometimes it looks as if things don't work but perhaps it is as in the last line of the practice of Tara that says,

"De gun lhunggyis drubbai draxis xog"

It is not necessary to fight for these things they just arrive."

During the week, on Fridays, the Community meets in Cordoba for Yantra Yoga which is taught by Marisa. After Yantra Yoga there is some discussion about practical things by the members of the Gakyil living in Cordoba. In practice it doesn't work very well to have Gakyil people from other towns because they are far away and they can't come every time they are needed. Anyway people try to do their best.

Some evenings, people study Santi Maha Sangha together with the

Tashigar practice retreat January 13th - 23rd

The retreat will follow Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's instructions on the foundation level of Santi Maha Sangha. During the retreat, there will be sessions of Vajra dance, Yantra Yoga and Karma Yoga as well as the election of the new Gakyil of Tashigar.

Tashigar, Mariano Moreno 382, 5000 Cordoba, Argentina. Tel./fax 051 226845

The Mandala of Tashigar is extraordinarily and beautifully surrounded by three great pine trees in a green space. People dance the Vajra Dance on Saturday and Sunday. Marisa and Beatriz know the Dance with all the correct hand movements, sounds, words and steps and gracefully teach us the Dance. There are always more women than men dancing, but there are also men.

During the week is also a beautiful time to dance alone, learning and relearning what was taught during the weekend and practising with the changes that are in the little booklet that Prima Mai has sent. We would like to thank her for her clear instructions - it is really easy to follow them. There are animals around sharing the solitary life of the week. The cat has had kittens but the dog "Mambu" was killed, we were all very sad. Now there is no dog.

Italian and English books, assisted by the transcription of the last retreat made by the people of Tandil. Other times the study group meets during the weekends at Tashigar. Then we study and practise some of what Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche explained there.

Rinpoche's presence is always there amidst the devotion and love of the Tashigar Community.

We here in the South would like to have some of the brothers and sisters from the North, East and West as visitors for long personal retreats or short ones. Rinpoche's teaching has made this Dzogchen Community a world-wide one. Why not take advantage of it? Perhaps while you are reading this article you will start to have the wish to come and practise with us.

We are waiting for you with open arms and open heart.

Retreat near Moscow

with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

May 27 - June 5, 1994

The retreat is programmed to be held in the countryside outside Moscow.

A participation fee of \$200 is requested to cover the costs of the retreat, plus \$100 for food and accommodation for ten days.

In order to arrange visas for those who wish to participate, the Moscow Gakyil asks that these people communicate their name, citizenship, date and place of birth, passport number, date and place of its issue, validity, and place of residence to one of the contact people in Moscow:

Vladimir Karpinski, tel. 095 300 48 54

Vladimir Maikov, Sovetskaya Str. 14/7, Zheleznodorozhny, Moscow Region 43980, Russian Federation Tel. 095 522 75 83

Helen Antonova, Korneichuka, 44-17, 127543 Moscow, Russian Federation Tel. 095 405 46 64.

Or by fax 095 292 65 11 or 095 444 75 25.

This information should be sent before March 15, 1994.

The participation fees asked for are based on current exchange rates and may have increased by the time of the retreat.

A Gar in the Pacific Region

by Luciano Limonta

The international raffle organised by the Australian Dzogchen Community is still going ahead. It is an effort and commitment to raise money to acquire a beautiful, inspiring and very special piece of land, a site sacred to the Aborigines, on the Australian coast half way between Melbourne and Sydney.

I come from Lake Como in the north of Italy and have been living in Australia for the last five and a half years. What a beautiful continent it is, the size of Europe with only seventeen million people living there in a multicultural society in which a hundred races cooperate together. A place where individuality is found in plurality, a place which, once one has left human settlements behind, seems thrown back in time, to when Australian Aborigines first walked the land over forty thousand years ago, living in complete harmony with it and maintaining its unspoiled state.

The vast expanse of space in which one finds oneself, the austral light of the Southern Hemisphere, the sounds of talking nature and its ancientness have a definite healing effect.

Home of the Aborigines, Australia was a completely spiritual place up to the European invasion two hundred years ago. You can sense this when you stand on the land, and it is precisely in this place that I first met the Dzogchen teachings in a most loveable Community of practitioners who are strongly committed to having the teachings continue here through our teacher, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

The land which the Community wishes to acquire gives breath-taking ocean views, has lakes, beaches, mountains and forests, and is bordered by a delightful pristine creek suitable for drinking and bathing, with smooth boulders and a sandy bottom. The top boundary is a six thousand acre nature reserve forest leading up to the top of Mt. Dromedary (Gulaga for the Aborigines) where there is a spectacular Aboriginal sacred women's site. It is said that part of the mountains were used for the meetings of the tribal elders, one site being regarded as having particular power to reinforce the spiritual energies of the elders.

This remarkable land and truly suitable site for the continuation of the Dzogchen teachings in Australia for the benefit of the entire Pacific region has never been built on and a Dzogchen Gar would be the first occupancy. To make this happen we need the help of everyone in the international Dzogchen Community.

Just think how wonderful it would be for everyone to be able to come to Australia to do practice, retreats and, of course, hear teachings from our Master.

This land project is undertaken first of all for Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, so that his teachings can continue in this remote part of the world.

The winning prizes in the raffle are

1st prize

A trip to Australia with a full months accommodation

2nd prize

A piece of Aboriginal art or an Australian opal

3rd prize

A dryabone full length oilskin coat and an akubra hat

If you would like to have a ticket for the lottery (\$50 US) or wish to make a donation towards the land, as some have already done, please contact: Jean Mackintosh, 5 Kadwell St., P. O. Box 892, Goulburn 2580, N. S. W., Australia or (up till the end of January '94)

Luciano Limonta, via Volta 22, 22040 Malgrate, Como, Italy.

Retreat in New South Wales Australia

with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

March - April 1994

Readers of *The Mirror* will all be aware that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will be giving a 10 day retreat in Australia in 1994. It will be preceded by a five day course in Vajra Dance led by Prima Mai and followed by a five day course in Yantra Yoga led by Fabio Andrico. In between each course there will be a couple of days for relaxing with Rinpoche and or looking at land the Australian Community is interested in buying. You can read about our efforts for land in *The Mirror* before (see page 4 this issue)

Retreat dates are as follows:

Vajra Dance Course from the morning of Friday 25th to the afternoon of Tuesday 29th March.

Teaching Retreat from the afternoon of Friday 1st (Good Friday) to the morning of Sunday 10th April

Yantra Yoga Course from the morning of Wednesday 13th to midday Sunday 17th April.

People will be able to stay from 24th March to 18th April if they wish, or for shorter periods of time for specific courses. It is desirable that people who wish to attend the Dance and Yantra Yoga courses also stay for the Teaching Retreat. If you are already students of Rinpoche's then this is not essential.

Location

The courses and retreat are being held at Hubara on the shore of beautiful Wallaga Lake, on the south coast of New South Wales (see map). The beach is nearby and there are low mountains to the west. The sunsets behind the mountains are beautifully reflected in the lake. There will be a large tent in the grounds at Hubara in which the courses and the teaching retreat will be held. Accommodation will be in the local area.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be in various places and of various kinds. Hubara itself is a motel with ten cabins. Next door there are two caravan parks and camping grounds; we have booked a few more cabins and caravans at these, as well as tent sites along the lake shore. We have also booked a house nearby and a group of six attractive apartments in Bermagui only for the time of the retreat. This is no more than 10 minutes away by car.

In total there are about 100 beds and plenty of campsites. Beds will be allocated in order of the bookings, so book early. All people will need to bring two bed sheets, a pillowcase and towels. Blankets etc. will be provided (except to campers, of course).

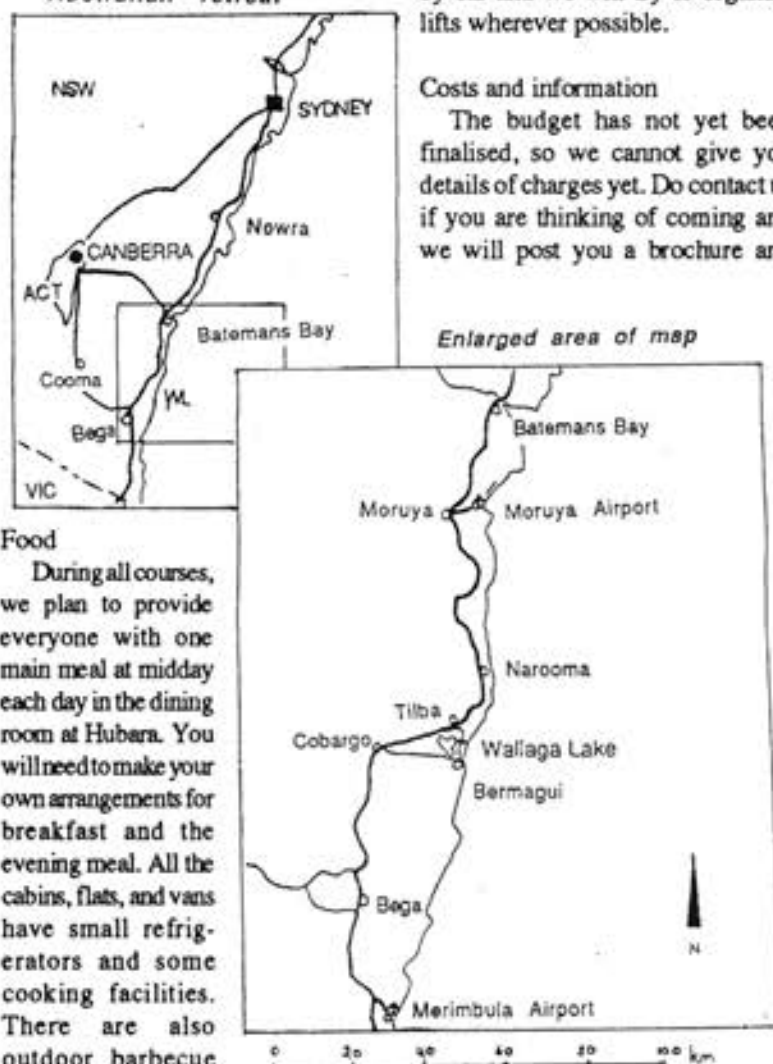
Because of the flexible nature of the arrangements and also because Easter is a busy time locally, it is essential that people book early. Send us a deposit and let us know as soon as possible what your intentions are so we can book the appropriate

accommodation for the various periods.

Children

Children are welcome. Their accommodation and meals will have to be paid for, but child care will be provided during teaching times within the cost of the retreat. During the Dance and Yantra Yoga courses, the child care will only be available in the mornings. At other times, parents can cooperate to help each other. There will be a childcare tent at Hubara and we are hoping to rent a nearby children's centre for morning sessions.

Map with location of Australian retreat



Costs and information

The budget has not yet been finalised, so we cannot give you details of charges yet. Do contact us if you are thinking of coming and we will post you a brochure and

Food

During all courses, we plan to provide everyone with one main meal at midday each day in the dining room at Hubara. You will need to make your own arrangements for breakfast and the evening meal. All the cabins, flats, and vans have small refrigerators and some cooking facilities. There are also outdoor barbecue facilities. Because the cooking facilities for the cabins at Hubara are limited to a toaster and electric jug, people staying there will need to bring fry pans and other equipment. Of course there are restaurants in Bermagui. If you have special dietary needs you will need to let us know beforehand so the caterers can plan a suitable menu.

Climate

The weather is changeable at this time of the year. We hope it will be sunny and pleasant. The average maximum temperature for March and April is 22°C; nights are often cool, averaging a minimum of 12°C. There is a fair amount of rainfall in this area - nearly 200mm falling over 20 days in these two months. You will need wet weather gear including shoes, and a good ground sheet if you are in a tent.

Transport

Wallaga Lake is a few kilometres

from the coastal fishing town of Bermagui. This is about 380 kilometres from Sydney and can be reached by bus from Sydney or Melbourne. If you prefer you can fly (by light aircraft) to Moruya or Merimbula, and then catch a bus to Wallaga Lake.

All public transport is heavily booked over the Easter period and traffic is slow; it is vital that booking be made well in advance. We can assist overseas travellers with this if you let us know well in advance what you need; we will try to meet overseas people at Sydney airport and provide a night's accommodation there; various people will be travelling to the retreat by car and we will try to organise lifts wherever possible.

registration form as soon as possible. We are asking people to send us \$100 Australian as a deposit as soon as possible to enable us to pay pre-retreat costs, such as deposits on accommodation. It will also help our planning a great deal.

Send cheques/money orders made out to the Dzogchen Community Retreat Fund with your name, return address, children's ages, dates you need a accommodation, the kind of a accommodation you want (double bed, campsite etc.) and any other details about travel, diet etc. to Michael Layden, 95 Nicholson Street, Abbotsford VIC 3067, Australia. For further information you can contact Pamela Oldmeadow, 12 Fox Place, Lyneham ACT 2602, Australia, tel. 06 257 1177, fax 06 248 0335 or Lynne Geary, 21 Pope Street, Hughes ACT 2605, Australia, tel. 06 2825176.

Meeting H. H. the Dalai Lama

by Hélène Bureau

I was already acquainted with the Vajra Yogini Institut through my short visits there to follow retreats, teachings and nyung-nā. The Institut was being transformed for the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama with the help of many friends and advice and carpets from the Kagyupa Center in Dordogne which had already hosted His Holiness. When I arrived there on Monday, I found a flurry of activity and tried to help according to my capacity by ironing *katag* for the shop and laying, at the last minute, a fitted carpet at the back of the tent so that when people removed their shoes, they would not make their socks dirty after the rain of the last weeks.

Teaching began at 10 am the following morning.

3,500 people had made reservations to attend the teachings well before the event and at the Vajra Yogini Institut they estimated average attendance to be between 1,500 and 2,000 people each day. The "grape vine", television and the press played a big part in informing people from all parts of France, Germany, Switzerland and Spain about the teachings.

Among the many present there was a Benedictine monk, enthused by the teaching, taking notes, nodding assent or at least thinking it out; a model of concentration. There were many "curious" listeners who, to my great surprise, returned the next morning. Perhaps the "Buddhists" were really in a minority.

His Holiness' teaching about wisdom flew above many heads (even for those who were already familiar with the topic). Concentration in order to understand intellectually required a great effort.

Many of those present felt the presence of His Holiness to be irresistible; we wanted to touch him, to have him look at us, notice us, perhaps even expecting that if he would do so, all our sufferings would disappear into space without any effort. His natural state, pure mind and warmth naturally opened the hearts of his listeners.

Since the weather was wet and parking difficult, a large number of buses were made available to people to come and go from the Institut to Lavaur which was the nearest town. This enabled people to meet during the trip and share their experiences.

There were people from the Dzogchen Community present and we found time to do a short *turn* together.

On Sunday morning, a long life *püja* for His Holiness was held and in the afternoon, initiations of the four Kadampa deities - Buddha Shakyamuni, Green Tara, Sherzei and Myowa. We were lucky to receive these initiations even though the radiance of this event went beyond time and space.

The six day meeting with the XIV Dalai Lama was a great event for everyone who was present there.

Translations, books and texts

by Gerd Manusch

The book, "Il Vaso Prezioso" ("The Precious Vase"), by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, has now been translated directly from Italian into German with the co-operation of the German and the Austrian Sangha. The translators are Horst Gelter, Karin Koppensteiner and Ursula Schaile. The book will be published in spring 1994 by Tsaparang Edition of Austria.

As this is the first book for the study of the Santi Maha Sangha programme - the German study group is due to start in January 1994 - it is a very important text for German speaking study groups. An Austrian study group has already been formed.

The 333 examination questions for the basis of the Santi Maha Sangha have already been translated from English into German by Martha Heinen and will be checked with "The Wish Fulfilling Vase".

Two other translations are important for SMS study groups and are currently being edited: the teachings on Yantra Yoga by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche from "Insegnamenti di Yantra Yoga ..." 1986, translated by Dr. F. P. Rohmann, and the root text of the book "L'Insegnamento Esoterico di Padmasambhava" (translated by G. Baroetto) namely "Mengak Tawa Phurengwal" of Guru Padmasambhava, translated by Gerd Manusch.

There are quite a number of other texts of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's already translated into German: the "Practice of Mandarava", "Do As You Please", "Nascere e Vivere", "16 Domande", "Teachings on Dzogchen Longde" and "Advice from Garab Dorje".

All the above mentioned translations are available or will be through: Odiyana Edition, Gartenstr. 70, 60596 Frankfurt/M, Germany or Edition Tsaparang, Postfach 60, A - 8200 Gleisdorf, Austria.

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 Dzogchen 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.

Celebration and business - First weekend at the Conway Grammar School

by Des Barry

Our first official meeting at the Conway Grammar School began with a long practice of the Guruyoga with the white "A". Dzogchen community members came from Los Angeles, Washington, Fishkill, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Connecticut and Boston, and one very welcome addition to the local Conway community, Glen Eddy, the famous *thangka* painter from California.

The old school building has been abandoned for many years, so that the interior has an enormous amount of work that needs to be lavished upon it. For the weekend, we established ourselves in a room in the annex which we could heat sufficiently; and it felt like we had established a base area to launch our practice, work and discussions. There is certainly a long way to go before we realise the vision of a thriving hub of community activity with practice rooms, administrative offices, the Shang Shung Institute, a new home for The Mirror, and a branch of A.S.I.A., but everyone at the meeting felt sure that we would make it happen. Our discussion on the afternoon of Saturday and the morning of Sunday, concentrated on how we were going to do that.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave a very clear indication of the direction that he wished to see the U.S. community taking with regard to the school. Ernie Renner, who worked with architect Gene Kim from California, laid out the drawings. Ernie gave an overview of how the schematic came about:

"We asked for input from the community in order to come up with the plan. In this space - which is the community's face to the world - would be incorporated artwork, a library, teachings, office space, Shang Shung Institute and A.S.I.A.



A group meeting at the Conway Grammar School

photo Lauri Marder

Rinpoche specified that he wanted the dormitory so that people could have a place to stay when we have teaching. We created a small space for the Gekös. If Rinpoche isn't there so much then that space could be used for the Gekös. There needs to be a kitchen space in Rinpoche's apartment and for the dormitory. We have a provision for handicapped bathrooms. The ideas didn't just come from local people. We received input from New York, New Mexico, California, many places."

Gene Kim added, "We decided that we needed a large space for meeting. Then the public space for offices, and private space for people to stay. Then, of course the facilities such as bathrooms, toilets, etc. It's not a complicated program. Rinpoche's interview delineated what the project should be."

Ernie continued by saying that the School Development Group began by looking at the spaces we need. It put these ideas of Rinpoche into the planning of the building for the building permit. "You have to keep the big picture in mind," said Ernie, "but also we have to start somewhere, and so we allotted spaces to cover those functions that Rinpoche outlined. This plan may not be the building we end up with in ten years but with the plans that we have we can start doing serious and much needed renovation."

Gene Kim pointed out that the people in this area have taken on a major responsibility for this huge project but its scope is beyond the local people to realise on their own. Rinpoche knows people can get things done at Conway, but members beyond the local community need

to be involved in order to make the projects happen such as fund raising, Shang Shung Institute, etc. They need the support of the U.S. community, above all, but also the worldwide community. The speed of the project moving depends on who is going to come and do what.

At this point, Barbara Paparazzo said that we also need to work out a plan for the next few months that is simple and doable. The bigger plan will take longer to evolve. The School Development Group addressed this idea at their last meeting; The big news is that the school can be used immediately for many functions. The annex provides a space we can use for meetings like this. One of the rooms could be used as a dormitory and office space. A mandala will fit in one of these rooms. This building serves all of

our immediate needs; how we develop depends a lot on the timetable for the Shang Shung Institute, the transfer of The Mirror, etc., and that means we will have to look at the main buildings. We've gone through various scenarios with the heating system in order to stop the water freezing.

Glen Eddy provided a somewhat shocking and amusing perspective as one who has observed Tseggyalgar from a distance, "I came to live in this community because it has a reputation for getting things together. People outside the local community have the perception that Tseggyalgar doesn't need any help. But it's not true. We should put this out in The Mirror to the community at large."

For people to come, said Jonathan Swinchat, "a priority should be that we can offer a place for people to live and cook."

"And a place" added Glen, "where people can learn Yantra Yoga, Tibetan language, drawing thanks. There are so many things we have to offer. I could begin in a drawing class right now in this room. It would be so easy."

Gene added, "I was encouraged by a conversation with Barbara and Woody. They pointed out that we can go at our own pace and we always manage; no matter what happens the project will go ahead."

John LaFrance: "Fund raising is a very important aspect here. Presenting the long range plan is essential to that. We will have a detailed outline available soon of all our plans. There is already a budget in place. Vern Harrington has told us that it costs \$600 to \$800 a month just to keep the community operating. Gene Kim says that it would take at least \$20,000 to get the first phase of basic renovation together."

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Tara Mandala finds retreat land in Southern Colorado

by Tsaltrim Allione

In September, a 817 acre piece of land in Southern Colorado between the San Juan National Forest and Ute Tribal Land was found for the creation of a retreat center. The focal point of the land is a peak, shaped like a breast. It is two and a half hours north of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The land is between 7000 and 8000 feet high, the highest point being the peak which is 8051 feet above sea level. It is within the area frequented by the cave dwelling Anasazi people who were a peaceful, egalitarian matrilineal culture. The terrain is alpine meadows covered with wild flowers, ponderosa pine, cedar, scrub oak and cottonwood trees. There are six old homestead cabins in ruins, two ponds, and two springs. A general feeling of openness, sweeping panoramas, and big sky pervades, and there are many great places to practice meditation outside. You can see the Anasazi sacred site, Chimney Rock, where

there is a *kiva* oriented toward the lunar standstill that takes place every 18.6 years. On the other side you also see the Rocky Mountains of the Continental Divide, and south to New Mexico. According to the Hopi Indian prophecies, this area will endure after the next big destruction.

I wrote to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche about it and he said that it sounded good and he will help in any way he can to facilitate its development. The idea is to create a retreat center for personal retreats, long group retreats for about 20 people and larger summer camping retreats. This would not be a commune or live-in community. The vision is to make a space, open to those wishing to experience hermitage. It would be a place where Norbu Rinpoche's practices and *termas* could be developed in depth and people could do long retreats in groups and individually. Areas of the land will be kept undeveloped for camping and vision quests in the Native American tradition. The



entrance to the property faces the continental divide to the east, a geomantically ideal location for "the door". As you arrive you pass through meadows and trees, and a wooded path leads into an upper meadow. There is a knoll with old trees and beautiful practice places. To the left is the peak, and straight ahead a ridge looks down on the back acreage and out toward Chimney Rock. This section is an old homestead with an enclosed valley. It is completely tucked away, like a hidden land, with a big spring that fills a stock pond. The whole place feels safe, protected and contained.

The town of Pagosa Springs is twelve miles away by well-maintained gravel roads. It is the sacred healing springs of the Utes and Navajos, and before them the Anasazi. There are various spas and pools where we can soak in these hot springs. The town itself is small. There is one supermarket, a few

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Easter Retreat at Merigar

1-6 April 1994
with Ven. Ontul Rinpoche

Born in Kham Nangchen in Eastern Tibet in 1950, at the age of four, Ven. Ontul Rinpoche was recognised by H. H. the Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche and H. H. the Gyalwa Karmapa as the incarnation of Ontul. Leaving Tibet in 1959, he wandered with his tutor in India for fourteen years during which he received teachings from a Nyingmapa teacher, Khenpo Thubtan, as well as H. H. Dudjom Rinpoche, Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltan, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche and others masters. In Ladakh he received empowerments, instructions and oral transmissions of the Drikung Kagyu tradition from H. E. Chöje Togdan Rinpoche with whom he travelled extensively there.

Returning to India, in 1971 he bought a piece of land at "Tso Pema" (Rewalsar, H. P.) with donations from the people of Ladakh where he constructed Ogmin Thubten Shedrub Ling monastery with the help of his monks.

Ven. Ontul Rinpoche came to Europe for the first time in 1988 visiting Dharma centres in Germany, Austria and France. On his second visit in 1990 he also visited Italy.

In 1991 he established the Drikung Kagyu Dharma Study Group in Hamburg, Germany which offers a five-year Dharma course.



Ontul Rinpoche with his family

Christmas practice retreat at Merigar



by Elisa Copello

In the cosy atmosphere of the "Capannone" (the Barn which houses the Vajra Dance Mandala), the atmosphere of warmth was not only provided by the brand-new heating plant, but, above all, by the friendly warm-hearted spirit of collaboration among new and old practitioners.

Some older students took turns in leading the sessions of practice and explaining the seven mind trainings and the first series of seven *semdzin* included in the programme planned by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche before leaving in June of last year. The programme was exactly the same as that of the August '93 retreat, but the presence of fewer participants allowed for a more intimate and heart-felt exchange of experiences in terms of practice and understanding.

The daily retreat schedule started in the early morning with yantra

yoga, then continued with the "Garab Dorje" practice followed by an explanation of a *semdzin*.

At three o'clock, there was a complete *tun* of dance, including the Dance of the Vajra, the OMA HUM Dance and the Dance of the Six Lokas.

At four the retreat started again with the medium *tun* and the explanation of one or two mind trainings. Some evenings were dedicated to explanations of the *chöd*, the *ganapuja* and the other collective practices done together during the retreat.

It was a good opportunity for older students to refreshen their practice and for newcomers to start getting the flavour of meditation.

Long periods of time were devoted to the study and practice of the Song of the Vajra: old and new practitioners were engaged in learning how to chant the melody, following the correct rhythm and

the various subtleties of the sounds.

In the end everyone agreed that singing it in this way "made a difference" in terms of vibrations, energy and clarity, because, as with all mantras, the "Song of the Vajra" has its own function which becomes more powerful if chanted in its proper way.

Being together all the time, eating, practising, dancing, singing, sitting in contemplation developed among participants a sense of closeness and

friendship which facilitated communication and the sharing of experiences.

In fact during each session, there was a space for discussions and exchanges of experiences and the person leading the group tried his/her best to clarify doubts and supply further information on the basis of his or her personal experience and knowledge.

Gradually the others joined in talking, asking, commenting and sharing their feelings and sensations, in other words "opening themselves up".

It was a good attempt of establishing a form, a climate of collaboration and this was surely made possible thanks to the blessings of Rinpoche who was physically thousands of miles away in Nepal, but whose subtle presence was there in the sacred mandala room, authenticated by his teachings, his dancing and his energy.

2nd Tibetan Medicine Seminar



by Luigi Vitiello

The second seminar on Tibetan medicine given by Dr. Pasang Yonten at Merigar and organised by the Shang Shung Institute has just drawn to a close.

With this cycle of lessons which covered the functions of the organism both on the organic and subtle levels, we finished the chapter on physiology. It was a fascinating journey into the processes which, silently and uninterruptedly, go on in the body and mind and which characterise behaviour.

Tibetan medicine, which is profoundly linked to tantrism, explains systematically and completely the functioning of our being on the physical, psychic and energy levels, making clear their interconnection and showing how it can act on all levels, even though it may start from only one of them.

The topics which were dealt with were not only of interest to doctors (unfortunately still a small number attending the course) but to all those interested in "observing themselves", the basis of Dzogchen practice.

Special merit goes to Dr. Pasang who was able to transmit this subject with a style of Western teaching which revealed a profound knowledge of both cultures. I had the impression that his work is centred on pruning down the study of Tibetan medicine from the super-structure linked to the culture in which it developed in order to make it intelligible to Western students in a proper way.

This need was made clear to him while he was Director of the Medical Institute of Dharmasala where he saw many Westerners who were seriously interested in Tibetan medicine give up in the face of the difficulty of study according to traditional Tibetan methods which include, among other things, hours of reciting canonical texts in their original language in the morning and evening until one learns them by heart. This way of presenting the subject plus the difficulty linked to the language have been, until now, among the greatest obstacles to learning Tibetan medicine in the West. A work of adaptation and translation which will make the subject accessible without distorting it is needed.

With the support and encouragement of H. H. the Dalai Lama, Dr. Pasang is working in this direction and is particularly interested in the group which has formed at Merigar. Among the various courses which he is holding in different cities of Europe, this one is formed prevalently of practitioners to whom he feels able to present Tibetan medicine in its completeness of somatic and tantric medicine and Dharma.

This has greatly motivated us to continue and deepen our studies using to the fullest the capacities and the specific trainings of each one of us.

At the moment we are waiting for the news from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche about the contacts which he is consolidating with the medical institutes of Lhasa and Peking. In the meantime we must find time to study: the next course on medicine will take place in May.

Vajra Dancing in Amsterdam

by Achim Korte

Here we are - the final day of eight days of Vajra Dance taught by Stoffelina Verdonk - and I am now nearly in a constant state of something resembling "Hedawa", my brain has given up, I've lost the ability to grasp and remember new steps and corresponding arm movements. Absolutely nothing to be done but relax.

In the initial days, there were varying numbers of people from the Dutch community and Sally Peterson and myself from England, both of us complete novices. Today, in particular, there is an overwhelming female presence, and I am the only dancer doing the male part, which is an interesting experience, but means I cannot just mindlessly copy someone else.

I don't know how many times in these days with the Dutch community I have felt deeply moved by a moment of recognition, have come into and fallen out of balance again, weaving in and out of pleasant or unnerving dreams. Last night after the Dance, some of us had an exciting discussion over dinner about the differences between self-liberating and purifying in practical terms, trying to bring the theory to bear on our experiences.

I'll certainly miss the beautiful radiance of the Dutch mandala under the spot lights, and the wrathful and joyful mudras! But I have the feeling that this retreat will catalyse also the English community into creating its own mandala, particularly as Stoffelina is offering to teach in England early next year.

To conclude: I feel changed by the experience of eight days of vajra dancing, and I feel happy since then - it has helped me to make a real shift.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE DZOG-CHEN COMMUNITY

"There are things that have to be done, things that involve a commitment. If the Community is to continue everyone must be responsible".

(Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Merigar, November 1991)

Merigar, Italy

The only regular form of income that permits the planning and execution of activities, for a non-profit-making association such as ours, is through membership fees. The simplest way to support and collaborate with the Dzog-chen Community and help to realise its aims is to become a member ... this is the essence of the appeal the Merigar Gakyil made last year, inviting those who feel themselves to be part of the Dzog-chen Community to become members.

Now, after one year, we can affirm with satisfaction that a good number of Vajra brothers and sisters have responded positively to this appeal.

At present there are 430 members altogether. 118 are of these are registered through foreign Gakyils and send half the membership fee to Merigar and they use the second half for their local activities and projects. Also 49 of the total number are from eastern Europe and so pay their complete fee to the local gakyil.

Here we must again stress how important it is for Merigar to be able to count on the commitment of all in Europe who feel that they belong to the Dzog-chen Community.

This commitment is also manifested through our financial contributions which permit the realization of plans to guarantee the survival of the Community in the future, as is the desire of Rinpoche, which he clearly demonstrates through his indefatigable and intense work of spreading the Teachings throughout the world.

- Membership fees may vary from year to year.

- Payment can be made in one of the following ways:

a) in a single payment before the end of January each year.

b) in two instalments (January and September)

c) in monthly instalments, in which case it is necessary to send a photocopy of the banker's order of payment.

- When requesting membership, it is essential to enclose:

a) the fully completed application form;

b) three passport sized photographs;

c) the membership fee or evidence that it has been paid;

d) specification of whether you would like to receive The Mirror or the Merigar Letter or both* together with payment if necessary. * See below "Benefits available to members"

- Renewal of membership should be confirmed by the end of February each year.

- Residents in Italy can apply for membership directly through Merigar or through the Adzangar or Brescia Gakyils.

Benefits available for members for 1994

- Ordinary members, whether preliminary or full, can have:

a) 30% discount on fees for retreats;

b) 20% discount on courses organised by the Dzog-chen Community;

c) EITHER the "Merigar Letter" free

OR The Mirror with a discount of 20% ON REQUEST (see the membership application form); we do not want to send

these publications to anyone who does not want them.

- Sustaining members, whether preliminary or full, can:

a) participate in all retreats in Merigar free of charge;

b) have 30% discount on courses organised by the Dzog-chen Community in Merigar;

c) have both the Merigar newsletter AND The Mirror free ON REQUEST.

- There is a 30% discount on membership fees for students, pensioners over 60 and persons who belong to a member's immediate family, living with the member.

- Special conditions have been drawn up for countries with extraordinary financial problems such as Eastern Europe.

Membership of Merigar for those resident outside Italy

Those living outside Italy can apply for membership through their local Gakyil if there is one. If there is no active Gakyil in their country they can apply directly to Merigar. With the agreement of Merigar, Gakyils may keep a maximum of 50% of the membership fees with which they will be able to maintain and develop their activities, retreats, rental and maintenance of building, etc. Of course, if a Gakyil does not have heavy expenses, a higher percentage can be sent to Merigar. In many countries membership fees have not yet been introduced, so many people will not satisfy the third condition for full membership. Therefore, at their discretion the local Gakyils can decide who should have full membership.

Gakyils of Europe - Registering membership of Merigar

Yellow Gakyils should:

1) Make application forms available to those who request membership. The membership application and renewal forms used for Merigar should not be charged in any way. If translation is needed this can be supplied separately, together with explanations of how to make payments through the local

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Tashigar, Argentina

Tashigar in Argentina is situated at the foot of a mountain chain called "The Gigantics", 60 km from Cordoba and 6 km from Tanti, a small town where one is able to buy necessities, make phone calls, send a letter, stay in a hotel, or go dancing. When you arrive at Tashigar you will find a big white house surrounded by a park of eucalyptus, pine and fruit trees, among which five-colour prayer flags move with the wind.

The upper part of the house is Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's residence; the middle floor stands as a restaurant; in summer we also use the terrace over the park. The lower floor is the guests' house, in front of the mandala. When it is not rainy or too cold we dance there, otherwise we use the mandala under the "quincho" where the teachings were held during the last retreat.

In front of the main house is the geko's house and the nursery, where the children play and keep their toys, books, etc. There is a swimming pool, but some people prefer the natural pools or waterfalls near the Gar.

A little further away are the public bathrooms with cold and hot water and lavatories. The camping ground has grills, light and one can set a tent under the shade of fruit trees. Across the little bridges that span two creeks (when it rains) we have a "quincho", a hall that can fit perhaps 200 people and where Rinpoche teaches.

During Rinpoche's last visit we had the great fortune to have Jim, Ernie, Joe and Verne from Tseggyalgar to repair part of the roof of the main house, and materialise the immensely meritorious task of building a dark retreat house. It is ready to be used now, and it is meant to serve for personal retreats as well.

The Gakyil of Tashigar is composed of people from all over the country: Tandil, Buenos Aires, La Rioja and Cordoba. The Argentine Dzogchen Community is very new, but as it grows, slowly but steadily, we are open to people from all over the world to share this wonderful land that Rinpoche has generously given to the Dzogchen Community with us.

The Gar has everything you need to practice, and the people here have their own style to welcome you as their best friend. There aren't too many rules here. You can come any time and use the facilities; during the weekends the Community from Cordoba come for dancing, working, reading and, once a month, we have a national Gakyil weekend meeting.

Come and enjoy and practise with us. We always find a reason to have fun.



If you are thinking about becoming a member of the Dzogchen Community, you can send your application form to Tashigar. So far the Gar has been sustained by donations from benefactors including Rinpoche himself and by the monthly contributions of the members. Your membership at Tashigar

will be a great help as it will support not only the maintenance of the many facilities there, but will also allow the Gar to develop more and more for the future: we want to publish books in Spanish, connect a pipeline for drinkable water, fix the main kitchen for cooking during retreats, measure the land and improve the boundaries map. We are also thinking about some long term projects such as public dorms, personal retreat cabins and even a gonpa. We are opening membership for subscriptions and we'll be glad to receive yours. May this auspicious land bear many fruits, and allow the teachings to

prosper for the benefit of all.

Conditions for becoming a member of Tashigar

These are basically the same as in Merigar and Tseggyalgar. Those who wish to become members can request either a "preliminary" or a "full" membership card. Those who have been involved with the Dzogchen Community for at least three years and have attended at least three retreats would request "full" membership while those who have not yet been involved for that period of time would request a "preliminary" membership. Both "preliminary" and "full" members can choose to become either "basic" or "sustaining" members. The cost of annual membership for a full sustaining member is \$450 and \$200 for a full basic member. Membership for a preliminary sustaining member is \$450 and \$200 for a preliminary basic member.

Benefits for the sustaining member

Cost of retreats will be free if the full membership fees are paid for the current year, 30% discount on any activity organised by Tashigar, 20% discount on books, free lodging at Tashigar except during retreats and a free subscription to The Mirror.

Benefits for the basic member

30% discount on cost of retreats, 20% discount on any activities organised by Tashigar, 10% discount on books and free lodging at Tashigar except during retreats.

Subscribing or re-subscribing to "The Mirror"

Please read the following information carefully if you are a member of one of the Gars and wish to subscribe to "The Mirror". It is based on the information from the three Gars published on these pages. Ask your local Gakyil or Gar to communicate your subscription to either the secretary of Merigar or "The Mirror" according to the requirements below as soon as possible so that you will not miss the next issue!

Subscription for members of the Dzogchen Community

If you are a member of Merigar and pay your membership fee directly to Merigar, sustaining membership entitles you to a free annual subscription to "The Mirror" which you should indicate at the time of making or renewing your membership. If you are an ordinary member and wish to receive "The Mirror", you should give Lit. 32.000 (discount of 20%) to the secretary of Merigar when you make or renew your membership. If you are a member of Merigar through your local Gakyil, you are entitled to the same advantages. Your local Gakyil will forward your membership fee and request for "The Mirror" plus the Lit. 32.000 if you are an ordinary member to the secretary at Merigar.

If you are a sustaining member of Tseggyalgar or Tashigar, you are entitled to a free subscription to "The Mirror" and should indicate your wish to receive "The Mirror" to Tseggyalgar or Tashigar, who will be in direct contact with "The Mirror" for your subscription. Ordinary members of Tseggyalgar and Tashigar must make a normal subscription to "The Mirror".

Subscription for those who are not members of the Dzogchen Community - see page 15.

Tseggyalgar, USA

This letter marks the commencement of our second membership year at Tseggyalgar. As you know, we have many on-going activities that require the physical and financial participation of those in the community. These include practice retreats, mandala construction, Vajra Dance, answering our ever growing correspondence, distributions of tapes and books, maintenance of the retreat cabins, and plans to build seven more cabins for personal retreat on the land. With the commitment and participation of community members both locally and from afar, we have been able to help foster and support projects that benefit those interested in the Dzogchen teachings.

Tseggyalgar is now about to embark on a new phase of development in the community with the purchase of the Conway Grammar School. This beautiful building offers a home for many of Tseggyalgar's activities including group retreats, Vajra dancing, and the international Dzogchen Community newspaper, The Mirror.

The school will also house the Shang Shung Institute and A.S.I.A. (Association for International Solidarity in Asia). The Shang Shung Institute will offer seminars on Tibetan language, medicine, astrology, art and spiritual teachings as well as publish books, maintain a research library and art gallery. The purpose of A.S.I.A. is to help insure the continuance of Tibetan life and culture by assisting the Tibetan people within as well as outside of Tibet. Projects are underway to help with healthcare, education and means of support.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has asked that members of the community who are interested in helping with any aspect of these activities to please contact him at the Shang Shung Institute in Merigar.

This undertaking requires the commitment of not only local community members at Tseggyalgar but of community members world wide, especially those living in the United States. We have just recently finalized plans for construction of a dormitory at the school to enable those interested in the Dzogchen teachings from around the world to participate directly in these projects. Your financial participation through membership in Tseggyalgar is an expression of your commitment and will help to ensure the continuation of the Dzogchen teachings of the future.

Sincerely

Tseggyalgar Gakyil

How to Join Tseggyalgar

If you wish to become a member of Tseggyalgar, please indicate whether you qualify for preliminary membership or full membership. Those who have been participating in the Dzogchen Community for at least three years and have attended at least three retreats may request full membership.

Those who have not yet been involved for that period of time may request a preliminary membership.

Both preliminary and full members can choose to become basic members (for \$300.00 per year).

As a member, you will enjoy the following benefits: free quarterly Tseggyalgar newsletters, a 10% reduction of retreat fees for basic members and a 20% reduction for sustaining, and 10% discount on books and publications.

As a sustaining member, you will also receive a free subscription to The Mirror.

All members will also receive an updated Tseggyalgar telephone and address list.

Anyone who becomes a member of Tseggyalgar and is also a member of one of the many smaller Dzogchen communities spread across North America (California, Santa Fe, New York, Hawaii or Vancouver, for example) can join through their local Gakyil if they wish to do so.

If you want to join through your Gakyil, half of your membership fee will go to Tseggyalgar and half will remain in your local community to help fund your Gakyil's activities.

To do this, indicate the name of your local Gakyil on the enclosed membership form and we will send them half of your fee.



Note: If you wish to join through the California or the New York you must fill out two membership-applications: one to be sent to Tseggyalgar, and one to be sent with your check to the California or New York Gakyil.

Both applications should have a passport photo.

The California or New York Gakyil will then send your membership card to you. Their addresses are as follows:

Dzogchen Community, 755 Euclid Ave, Berkeley, CA 94798

or Dzogchen Community, 111 East 14th St, Box 287, New York, NY 10003.

Membership is due by January 31, 1994.

If you will be paying in instalments, please indicate your intention to do so on the application form. Also, if your circumstances are such that you are unable to pay, please feel free to make special arrangements with the Gakyil. We can work out either a special work plan or a payment plan. To do this, fill out the application indicating your interest in becoming a member of Tseggyalgar and a member of the Gakyil will contact you.

Renewal of membership:

If you were a member of Tseggyalgar last year and wish to renew your membership for another year, just fill out the application form and mail it with a check and your membership card to Tseggyalgar, Box 277, Conway, MA 01341. We will stamp your card and return it to you.

New Members:

If you are becoming a member of Tseggyalgar for the first time, please fill out the application form and send a passport sized photo along with your check. We will then send you your membership card for 1994.



Important points to remember:

Those who apply to be members of the Dzog-chen Community declare that they are aware of the statutes of Merigar, especially article 7. The following is a translation of article 7.

"i) All those who have taken part in the life of the Community for at least three years, have attended at least three retreats and have paid their membership fees throughout that period can become "full members".

ii) Those who do not satisfy all of the above conditions can become "preliminary members" on payment of the same fees." - Both preliminary and full members can be of two types: "ordinary" or "sustaining".

So there are four different kinds of membership card:

1) Preliminary ordinary (Light pink)

2) Preliminary sustaining (deep pink)

3) Full ordinary (light blue)

4) Full sustaining (blue)

- Minimum fees for 1994: ordinary members 360.000 lire, sustaining members 750.000 lire.

- The membership card is effective and fees are paid from 1st January until 31st December each year.

Working with Tibetan culture

A.S.I.A. project in Amdo, Qinghai Province

by Tony Laurent

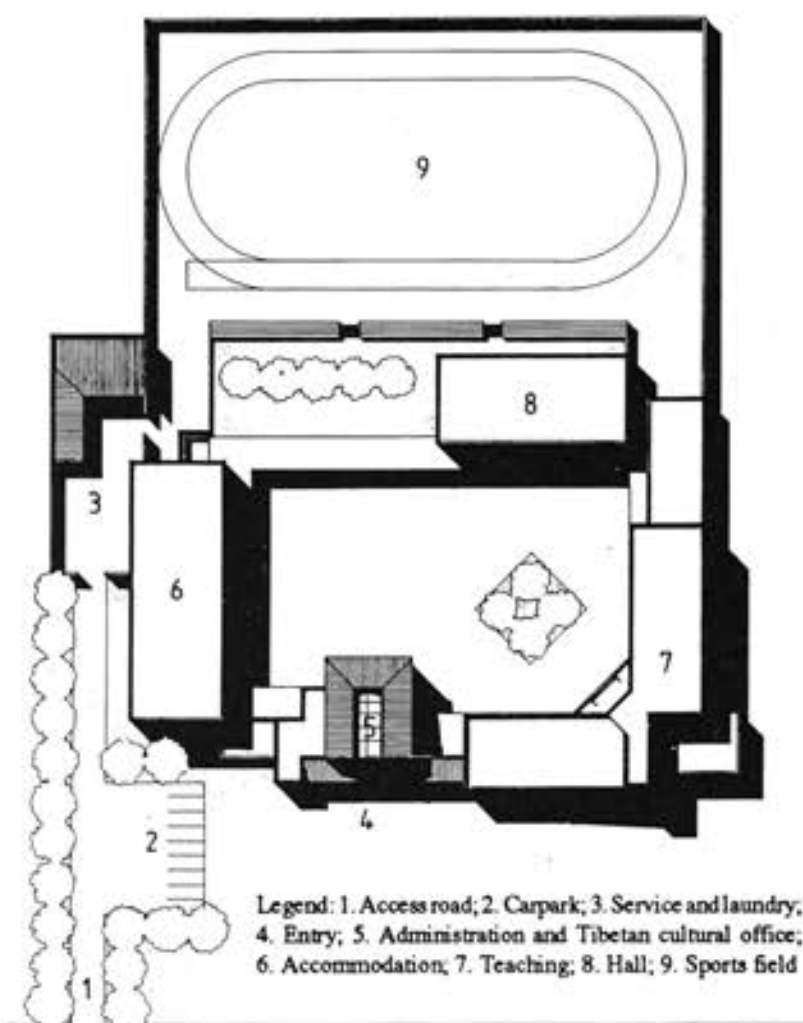
Between the Himalaya mountains and Mongolia two thousand kilometres to the north-east, lie the vast high plains of the Tibetan provinces that are now part of China. This 'roof of the world' has traditionally been the home to Tibetan people who have, for centuries, blended a life of nomadic pastoralism with agriculture and now face cultural extinction due to the difficult political situation.

The development of a project for a Tibetan primary school in the Amdo region of Qinghai province provides the opportunity for some reflections on the role of ASIA, working in the interest of an ancient culture, and the implications that such activities have in the present day. The aim of ASIA is to ensure the survival of the Tibetan people, which means working with the Tibetan culture, applying the principles on which this ancient culture is based and through this process allowing these principles to become available to the modern world.

The project has developed from the idea of Cai Rang Tar, Tibetan research scholar at the Chinese Centre for Tibetan Studies in Beijing and a guest of the Shang-Shung Institute at Merigar during 1992 - 93. His discussions with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche about the lack of education for the children in his village area of Dangche, and his requests to the Chinese local government for their co-operation, initiated negotiations which led to an agreement for ASIA to commence building a primary school. Now that the ASIA field mission to Tibet has returned, we have a clearer idea of the requirements of the people and the particular conditions of the region.

Traditionally the Tibetan people of Amdo have woven a complex culture from agricultural settlement and nomadism as two direct responses to natural conditions of the territory and climate of the region, and tempered this by values of their spiritual outlook. The pattern of life is a synthesis of the movement of nomads with herds of yak and *dri* (the flocks of the Tibetans), linked to the paths of seasonal pastures between mountainous areas and the plains, with settlement built around agriculture and earth houses that offer refuge from the intensity of winters on the Central Asian steppes. The Tibetan mentality seems to unite mobility and seasonal rhythm on the one hand with fixed place and definite boundary, on the other, fusing diverse aspects of the human spirit.

The landscape of Amdo is set on a vast plateau at an altitude of 2000 - 3000 meters, interspersed with regions of desert mountain that support a light covering of grazing pasture after the winter snows. The



Legend: 1. Access road; 2. Carpark; 3. Service and laundry; 4. Entry; 5. Administration and Tibetan cultural office; 6. Accommodation; 7. Teaching; 8. Hall; 9. Sports field

excessively dry and cold climate has a yearly average temperature of 5°C; only 150 to 180 days in the year are free from frost and able to support crops. Poor soil conditions permit only meagre production of wheat, broad beans and potatoes and the traditional nomadic herding is essential to provide the necessities of daily life in the harsh climatic conditions.

Qinghai Province, together with the Tibetan Province (Tibetan Autonomous Region), are the

and summer, the official figures do not include a large number of permanently nomadic groups who move up to four times throughout the year on a seasonal path. The government authorities tend to play down the interests of the Tibetan life style; they see a necessity for on-going assimilation into the settled agrarian way of life, despite the natural conditions of the area.

Educational needs within this cultural fabric have traditionally been provided for by the Buddhist

shift away from the traditional lifestyle adapted to the region, and to aspiration for the new living standards promised by the revolution (as yet not even vaguely realised in this part of China). Today the Tibetans settled in the farming villages of Dangche find themselves without the necessary greenhouses and soil technologies for more modern production, and remain unable to produce the capital necessary for economic development. Few of the Tibetans speak Han (taught in the Chinese schools of the Province). Less than one third of the Tibetan children of the area are receiving education today.

The Tibetan Primary School of Dangche will provide an education facility for 450 children, and will be the first school to present a curriculum taught in Tibetan in the region. Dormitories and living facilities for 100 will be provided for children from the nomadic families of the area. Apart from the program defined by the Chinese Education Department, which ASIA has had to carefully consider and conform to, there is a deeper issue at the heart of the project since the objective is to preserve the Tibetan people of the area. This means understanding and working with the culture on which the community is based, conserving and in some measure restoring a culture which has suffered destruction at the hands of the cultural revolution.

The program seeks to provide the six grades of primary school with twelve classrooms, accommodation areas, physical recreation areas, and the various offices and meeting rooms that are general to any school and well defined by the norms of the

education system. Tibetan education traditionally would include medicine, astrology, logic, grammar, poetry, drawing, music, all derived from Buddhist teachings, forming a basis for the elaborate Tibetan culture. A Tibetan Primary School where education is given in the Tibetan language is a beginning from which a preservation of Tibetan traditions can develop.

The school project has developed from this idea. The architectural design uses the traditional courtyard, a form almost universal in eastern architectural traditions, which serves to create a definite place, distinct and focused. The centre and pivot of the school is a building to be used both for the administration of the school and as focus for the Tibetan culture. This building is the entry point, and delineates between the courtyard inside and the world outside. The individual classrooms to one side and living quarters to the other form an enclosure that offers protection from the intense winds of winter and the spare environment outside. The building is sited on a wide open plain with a backdrop of distant mountains. The long and low form of the mass of the building, in the earth colours of the area, blends into the landscape as traditional buildings have always done.

The Tibetan cultural offices have a number of applications. Firstly, they serve for administration, the daily running of the school. They are to provide a literacy centre for wider education of the community that is to include the teaching of English and give the opportunity to enter into communication with the modern world. There is provision for a meeting space, where the Tibetan community can celebrate



Front elevation

poorest parts of what today forms the domain of The People's Republic of China, and the isolation of these provinces from the administrative and productive centres of China, coupled with the cultural diversity of the Tibetan people, ensure a lack of financial support for these areas. The village area of Dangche covers about 60 square kilometres and is made up of a number of agricultural settlements with an official statistical population of 6,000. Apart from many who leave their dwellings to take up living in tents and grazing their herds in the seasonal pastures in the mountains throughout spring

monasteries that were found scattered across the region before the widespread destruction of Tibetan cultures under the cultural revolution.

These could be of majestic proportions like the monastery of At Er Si that housed a community of more than 3,000, or simply the 'black monasteries' that took their name from the colour of the felt of the nomad tents, and were erected by itinerant monks serving the needs of a nomadic community. The destruction of this system and resulting lack of education for the Tibetan people has given rise to a

Chinese Education Department. These need to be assembled with consideration for classroom layout, circulation, relationship between various areas, natural light and orientation for optimum sunshine. But the program of ASIA demands more than this and includes the preservation of Tibetan culture. To this end, the main idea for the school project is to provide school facilities for Tibetan children and to centre these facilities around a focus that is traditionally Tibetan and can function to maintain the culture of the region, not becoming an instrument of the general Chinese

the song and folk traditions which mark the course of the year. The centre is also to function as an archive that can document and collect traditional art forms and expressions of the culture. In this way a repository will exist for gathering traditional texts, recording of folk-song and collecting traditional garments, fabrics, jewellery and carpets. This will provide a focus and reference point for the memory of the community and will be used as a teaching resource within the school, in the long term ensuring that the values underlying the

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Lotus petals

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's journey to the sacred places of India



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at Tso Pema

by Fabio Andrico

When one arrives in Tso Pema, the first thing to do is a *korwa* (circumambulation) of this sacred lake. Small and very beautiful, the lake is surrounded by temples, monasteries and a small natural park and inhabited by shoals of fish and special bushes which seem like living petals in this lotus lake.

Walking around the lake one comes to a small group of temples dedicated to Shiva where the bank of the lake is bounded by two or three stone steps which go down to the water: it is mainly here that the fish of the lotus lake meet to feed.

Years ago all the fish were poisoned as a result of a terrible story of religious rivalry. I remember

Tzering and his wife Nima. They were both extremely happy for the unexpected visit and immediately and kindly looked after us. When we spoke with them, we asked if the fish had returned to the lake. They told us that they had and there were a lot of them although they were a bit small.

It should be mentioned that the original fish were enormous and among them, it is said, there was a giant one which leaped out of the water one day while the Dalai Lama was doing a *korwa* of the lake. When you arrive at the place where the fish gather, you imagine finding some small fish, but, on the contrary, even though they are not all as large as their predecessors, they are

happens when you throw food into the water, what a noise and confusion they make; it seems like a game of American football. Dozens and dozens of bigger and smaller fish throw themselves at the food jumping on each others backs. If you hold a little dough in your fingers they will even come and eat it straight from your hand. It is hard to believe! They are so used to being fed that while you are preparing the dough at the edge of the lake, they understand immediately, I do not know how, and start to make a tremendous noise and confusion right next to you, they are so excited. So much so that several times both Rinpoche and I found ourselves with soaking wet shoes and trousers.

Rinpoche very much liked not only to feed the fish but also the monkeys and for several days he was busy feeding them when they came close to the lake. It was a sight to see because after a while, some of the monkeys became more trustful and came in groups around him to take the food. Often Rinpoche had to "discuss things" with the stronger males who struck and bit the smaller monkeys in order to get the food or simply because they were nervous and he punished them by not giving them food. Until one fine day a naughty monkey came and broke the bag of corn and knocked it all over the ground. Then, for some time Rinpoche did not give them anything to eat to punish them for their rudeness.

Another wonder of the lake was the bushes of which there were many and which, it is said, originate from that on which rested Padmasambhava in the lotus position when, while people were trying to burn him, the lake manifested. These bushes travel, moving from one part of the lake to another, apparently with no reason;

they just get up and go! Some of them travel like mad while others remain almost always still.

Each one of us chose one of the bushes, his favourite, which we decorated with *katak* of attention. Rinpoche's was always moving around and was never still. Sometimes they were decorated not only with *katak* but also with *lunda* (prayer flags) and even with *dadar* (of long life) flowers and small *gyaltsen*. The fact is these bushes really seemed to be alive.

'I am a bush of Tso Pema from a noble lineage, descended directly from the feet of the lotus of Guru Rinpoche, decorated with white katak, coloured lunda and a dadar of long life.'

I live in this lotus lake and travel

monks and nuns. Some of them had not gone down to the village for twenty or thirty years.

This is where Lama Wangdor has mainly lived.

Years ago it was ideal for practice, isolated and quiet, an important sacred place. Now it is still very beautiful but unfortunately besides the construction of a road to arrive there conveniently, another is being built that will pass through the middle of the retreat area, the caves and the huts in order to arrive at the summit of the mountain where, besides building a large new temple dedicated to the goddess Kali, a site for a hotel for the supposedly numerous pilgrims has already been prepared.

Very gradually, peace is leaving this area.



An image of Guru Padmasambhava at Tso Pema

following the mysterious flows of the energy of the water, of the air and all that which surrounds me, visible and invisible.

The men and women who visit this lake, respect and honour me and I follow the currents of love without name.'

Tso Pema is very beautiful and serene, even the dogs are good, affectionate and calm. We stayed at the guest house of the *nyigmapa* monastery, the oldest monastery built on the edge of the lake. There were two other monasteries: a *drikug kagyü* where Ontul Rinpoche lives and a *drugpa kagyü* of Lama Wangdor. We were frequently invited for succulent meals in one or the other of the monasteries. Then for four days, we climbed up the mountains to the caves of Mandarava and Padmasambhava where there is a community of practitioners, mainly

However, the four days that we spent up there were very beautiful. It really is a place for practice. The caves have a special dimension and the people were very kind and solicitous.

When we came down from the mountain, for several days we continued our routine of *korwa* around the lake (three times a day), *momo*, *thukpa*, *tsampa* and tea (our daily food), a little practice and a lot of time spent fixing the prayer flags, freeing the bushes overgrown by the grass and feeding the fish and the monkeys.

Before we left, we bought and sewed a string of *lunda*, one for each one of us. The day before the waxing moon, we placed them close to the lake together with hundreds of others which adorn it. Early the morning after, with a final *korwa*, we saluted the lake, its petals, its energy and its beauty.



A 'moving' bush adorned with katak

when it happened and I found it very sad. Then the lake was gradually repopulated with fish. His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself brought a large quantity of live fish there during his visit.

In this way the lotus again became full of boisterous petals.

When we arrived there with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, we met one of his relatives, Jam Yang

enormous. There are really a lot of them and they are the only species there.

I do not think that other beings like them exist in any other place or at least that they are not very common. They come there because both the Tibetans and the Indians feed them: biscuits, bread, corn and dough made from flour (their favourite). You cannot imagine what

Traditional Community Role of the Tibetan Astro-Practitioner

By Jhampa Kalsang - Tsipa Kachupa

Jhampa Kalsang - Tsipa Kachupa - was born in 1965 in Kathmandu, Nepal. When he was two, his parents moved to Dharamsala where he received a modern education. After his graduation in 1984, he started to study astronomy and medical astrology, graduating in 1989 with a first degree called "Tsipa Kachupa". He currently works at the Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute in Dharamsala where is involved in translation and horoscopes. In March of this year he began teaching astronomy and medical astrology in Dharamsala.

Astronomy and astrology have been harmoniously blended with medical knowledge for more than 2,500 years in the Tibetan culture. In order to understand and master such a unique combination, one should have a basic knowledge of astro-sciences and medicine. However, in order to become a master astro-practitioner, one naturally places more emphasis on the study of astronomy and astrology. At the Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute in India, astro-practitioners are trained in a five-year theoretical course of study that is followed by one year of closely supervised practice.

Tibetan astro-sciences encompass three main subjects: *karts* or white calculation, *magtsi* or black calculation, and *yang char*. *Karts* can be likened to the Western field of astronomy as it includes the study of the planets and stars involving a great deal of mathematical calculations. *Magtsi* is similar to the Western field of astrology, and may be defined as the study of elemental relations, such as son/mother and friend/enemy. No calculations are required in *magtsi* and it is generally a more interpretative field than *karts*. The third subject that astro-practitioners study is *yang char* which literally means "Arising Vowels" and is actually a secretive (Tantric) part of the *karts* category. *Karts* is mainly derived from two Indian sources: the Kalachakra Tantra and the Arising from the Saradhya Tantra (taught by Lord Shiva). *Magtsi* shares many features with the classical Chinese system of element relations and calculations. Birth horoscopes are cast using calculations from both the *karts*, *magtsi*, and *yang char*.

The active role of a Tibetan astro-practitioner in his/her own community is featured especially during important life events such as: 1) the birth of a child; 2) the time of marriage; 3) when an illness does not respond to regular treatments, and 4) death. Astro-practitioners are also consulted during other times of change such as moving from one residence to another, and beginning an important project or journey. There are several reasons why an astro-practitioner comes to be consulted and various kinds of information the astro-practitioner can provide.



When a child is born, Tibetan parents are very eager to know about the child's life. Hence the parents visit an astro-practitioner and ask him/her to make a birth chart, or horoscope. In Tibetan communities, some parents are guided by this birth chart, especially as it concerns the future: 1) plans for the child's education; 2) occupational field they are best suited for, and 3) whether the monastic or religious life is one that they should be encouraged to follow.

If the birth chart is unfavourable, an antidote for preventing mishaps will be prescribed. The antidote is often in the form of a prayer that is appropriate to the particular unfavourable situation. The parents may also be required to give alms to poor and needy people. If the child's life is in danger, preventive measures may be taken in the form of saving the life of an animal; usually a sheep, a goat, or a fish that is about to be slaughtered.

When a child reaches marriageable age, again the parents may consult an astro-practitioner for the child's marriage calculation. Either the boy's or the girl's parents may consult - depending upon which household the couple will live in after marriage. From this calculation, the astro-practitioner can predict: 1) life-spans; 2) an economic standard of living; 3) health conditions, and 4) fortune/luck. This is the most basic form of the marriage horoscope, however, more detailed calculations can be made to predict the number of children, the most powerful partner, and other such information. Sometimes, if a couple is quarreling frequently, they may come to the astro-practitioner for calculations and antidotes.

If any of the four conditions mentioned above is unfavourable, and the child is already married,

then the role of the Tibetan astro-practitioner is to prepare a special amulet for the child. The life span and fortune/luck aspects are considered to be most important for the man, as traditionally, he must provide the food for the family. If either of these calculations is unfavourable, he will be prescribed an amulet. On the other hand, if either the health or the economic conditions are unfavourable in the woman's chart, she will be prescribed an amulet as it is her traditional role to keep money in the family, rear children, and maintain health. If all is favourable in the marriage horoscope, neither the man nor woman need wear an amulet; or perhaps one partner may wear one or in the most unfavourable match, both couples may wear amulets.

Another kind of antidote prescribed in the cases of unfavourable marriage charts is known as *tor chos*. Here an offering of one's best clothing is made to a lama or a monastery. The parents, who consult the astro-practitioner, may also be asked to do a special prayer determined by the calculation.

When Tibetan people have fallen ill and have sought medical treatment for a long period of time, without any signs of improvement, they often look to another resource. As written in the Tibetan medical texts, physicians never look only at the physical causes and symptoms of a disease, but it is also necessary to consider the diseases caused by the spirits and negative *karma*. (For our purposes, *karma* can be simply defined as an imprint made in past lives.) Such diseases are called karmic and spirit-inflicted; medicine alone cannot heal these diseases. It is very important to have the support of an antidote prescribed by either an astro-practitioner or a lama's divination, at times people

will seek help from both.

Astro-practitioners determine which spirit is afflicting the sick person, the type of disease that results from such a spirit, and the prayer that is needed to appease the spirit. A number corresponds to each of the eight main categories of spirits and there are prayers and protector deities that also correspond to the numbers and categories of spirits. This system of correspondence guides the astro-practitioner towards a correct determination of which spirit and illness are troubling the sick person, as well as which prayer would prove to be the most beneficial to the particular individual. Only after performing the necessary prayer will the medicine work for the patient.

Another way astro-practitioners can help sick people is to determine which doctor and medicinal elements (either allopathic, Ayurvedic or Tibetan) are most favourable in consideration of the particular disease. A calculation based on the *yang char* or the "Arising Vowels" is used to make this kind of determination. Also, if an operation is under consideration as a possible cure, astro-practitioners can assess whether or not there will be a successful result. This interpretation can be made from examining the *yang char* calculations in combination with the very time the person asks for the calculation.

Once again, an astro-practitioner plays an important role during the deaths of loved ones within the Tibetan community. The astro-practitioner will do a death calculation to determine whether or not the deceased has any remaining life in the body. An astro-practitioner may be called at any time from anywhere, often by a relative or a neighbour, to make this type of calculation. In this case, the remaining family members' circumstances are considered. No fees are charged for this calculation. Should donations be given, they are

offered to the poor, or for butter lamps, or for a Medicine Buddha ceremony.

The astro-practitioner prescribes when the body should be moved from the room (or house) by fixing a favourable time and day in accordance with conjunctions of the planets and constellations. It is important to avoid bad spirits when transporting the deceased to the crematorium. In order to avoid these bad spirits, other prescriptions include: 1) who can or cannot touch the body; 2) the day the body can be removed to the crematorium; 3) the direction in which the body should be moved, and 4) which prayers the family must make.

In the Tibetan culture, after the death of a loved one, the family will invite at least four monks to read the holy texts and to chant certain fixed prayers that are prescribed according to the death calculation. This ritual is still followed quite regularly in Tibetan communities since it has been a custom for many hundreds of years.

Tibetan people will often obtain advice from astro-practitioners when: 1) they want to change their residence; 2) start an important project; 3) begin a journey; or 4) achieve their goals smoothly and peacefully. Once more, it is within the role of the astro-practitioner to give guidance in determining the favourable time and day for any transitional ventures. If an unavoidable and unfavourable event has commenced, antidotes will be suggested: 1) reading holy texts and 2) giving alms to the poor and needy.

In conclusion, whenever Tibetans need guidance in either the major or minor transitions of life, they are likely to consult a traditional astro-practitioner. In this way, astro-practitioners continue to occupy an important role in many Tibetan communities, in much the same manner as they have for thousands of years.

First published by 'Tibet Journal', Vol. XVII, No. 3, Autumn 1993.

SHANG-SHUNG VIDEOS

Yantra Yoga

A complete course of Yantra Yoga teaching given by Fabio Andrico in Argentina. All the preliminary movements, the warm-up exercises and the five movements of the first two groups of Yantra Yoga are shown in detail. Available in Italian, English, Spanish.

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Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche does the Tun practices and then shows the principal positions of the Longde. (Filmed by Y. Namkhai.)

Price per video including p/p \$23. PAL system only.
Shang-Shung Edizioni, 58031 Arcidosso (GR). Italy.

Journey to Maratika

by Elio Guarisco

Maratika, the place where Guru Rinpoche and his Indian consort Mandarava realized the siddhi of deathlessness and the place from which the Guru first set out on his journey to the Land of Tibet in order to convert its people, is known in Nepal as Halesi. In recent years, the first to identify Halesi as the sacred place of Maratika was probably the venerable Gendun Chopel, the Tibetan genius unrecognized in his own country. Gendun Chopel mentions the Nepalese name when discussing Maratika in his 'Guide to the Buddhist Sacred Places of India and Nepal'.

Halesi is situated in the eastern part of Nepal towards the south. To reach Halesi, there are three possible approaches: by land from the north, by land from the south, or by air from Kathmandu to Lamidanda followed by a few hours' walk to arrive in Maratika by afternoon of the same day. This latter approach is the easiest, but since wealthy residents of this remote area regularly take that particular flight, one must make reservations fifteen days in advance. One-way fare is about sixty U.S. dollars for foreigners who are treated to higher prices. The return flight must be booked in Lamidanda.

The southern route passes through the village of Katari, a five-hour bus journey from the Indian border town of Karkavitta. From Kathmandu, one can take an overnight bus which will reach Katari in about ten hours. One then continues on to Halesi by foot, a gruelling two-day walk.

The northern way leads the pilgrim through beautiful forests and mountains, over the course of five days. From Kathmandu one first takes a bus to Giri, the starting point for trekking to the Solu and Kumbu areas. Three buses leave daily from Kathmandu for Giri: the first at 5.30 a.m., the next at 6.30 a.m., and the last at 7.30 a.m., but all three reach Giri at about the same time, a trip of about eight hours. Giri is well-endowed with guest houses to spend the night. The owners, however, try

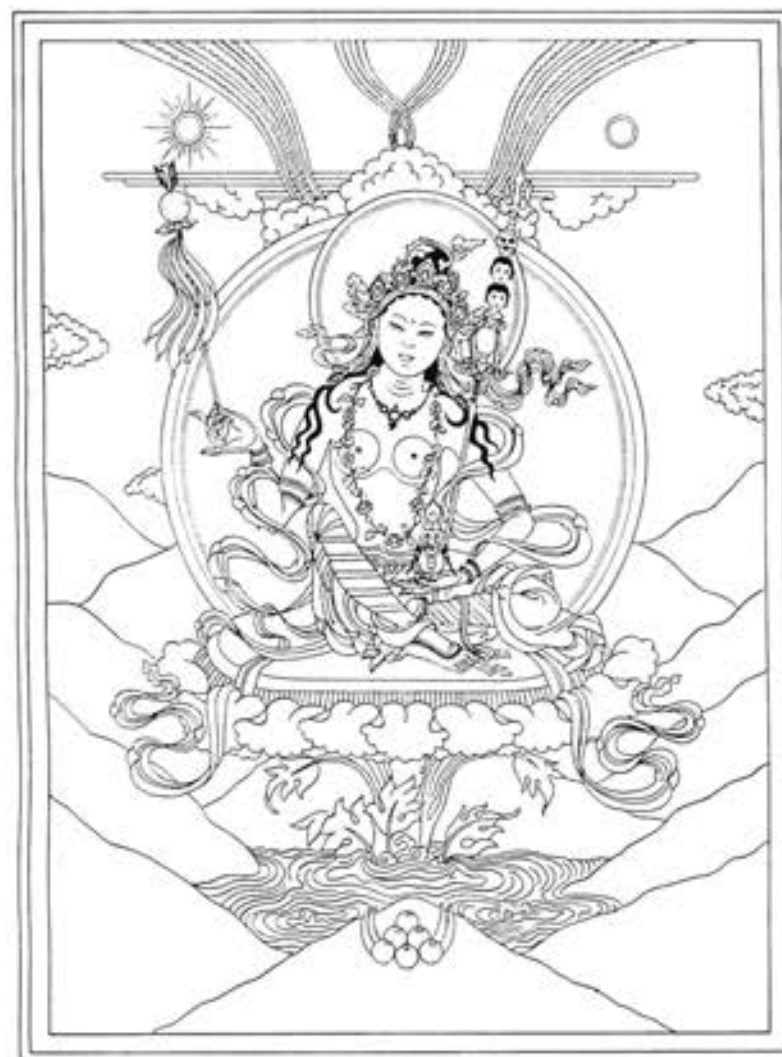
to cheat their guests by charging too much for food compared to local prices, especially if one orders meat or other items of luxury. There is no other alternative, however, because one reaches Giri by evening, and one can start walking only the next morning.

From Giri, we begin our journey on foot. At the end of the day, we arrive in Bhandar, a point distinguished by two stupas with two guest houses nearby, located in a pleasant valley. It is advisable to lodge in the guest house that is owned by a Sherpa woman, a widow of about forty years of age who has several daughters. Her guest house offers nice rooms and a family atmosphere, and guests are served the usual rice, dal, and some greens. She also prepares a good beer made from corn. If you are gentle with the woman, she may send a daughter into your room for the night, but usually the intention is to give her in marriage, which is not so convenient.

After a day's walk from Bhandar, we reach the unfriendly village of Maili. The last horrific hour of the walk requires climbing a relentlessly steep path. Just before the final ascent to Maili, I notice a restaurant but avoid it due to its inauspicious location in terms of geomancy, being right between two rivers. Maili consists of two or three houses and its inhospitable and mistrustful inhabitants. We manage, however, to find a Tamang woman willing to prepare the usual rice. We sleep outside in a tent although we could have slept in the woman's house.

From Maili we walk through a snowy forest of rhododendrons and arrive at the top of the mountain pass known as Taklung, a desolate but enchanting spot swept by cold wind. We take refuge in a hut where we are able to get a meal of noodles and pork. In the early afternoon, we reach Tolu Gonpa, where we rest one day to restore our legs.

Not long after setting out toward Okaldunga, we arrive at Japri Gonpa, a small monastery surrounded by a few houses and a couple of guest



houses, overlooking a splendid valley and facing an entire mountain range. It is a welcoming place; coming from Maili, it is better to stop here rather than Tolu Gonpa, which is an hour out of the way. The one considered lama of Japri Gonpa is a man in his fifties with a slight speech impediment, but he is simple, warm, and direct. He recalls having seen Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche passing through here a few years ago. He explains to me that he has not yet completed the construction of the monastery and that he has about fifty young students; around the temple a few young fellows with shaven heads memorize rituals. His father was a lama from Kham who settled in the Solu Kumbu region many years ago. Among the photos on his wall is one of a yogi with long hair. This yogi, he informs me, was

his teacher, a Ladakhi lama who had studied with the famous Tibetan yogi Sakya Shri. A master of both Mahamudra and Dzog-chen, Sakya Shri lived at the beginning of this century in eastern Tibet; although he resembled a wandering Indian sadhu, he had thousands of students.

Descending for a thousand meters on a long road paved with stones, we arrive at Okaldunga with the nerves of our thighs seeming to shoot out of our legs. The village has two parts, the new bazaar and the old village. We rent rooms at the old village and eat well for a reasonable price. We leave Okaldunga the next morning, and after many hours of walking downhill on a stone-infested path, we arrive at Dudkoshi, the "River of Milk" that originates in the Everest region. A trunk of a tree transformed

into a canoe and piloted by two old men dressed in underwear and cooked by the sun carries us across the river. A group of Sherpas from Namche Bazaar are waiting to cross on their return journey from Maratika. Opposite the river is a steep path leading to a pass between two mountains: there is Halesi.

We climb the slope of the mountain for several hours and arrive at Maratika just as it is getting dark. The place is a small hill right on the side of the pass. It is a wonderful place: only the enchantment indicates the presence of the two hidden caves. Voices of pilgrims camped near a water source assure us that we are at the sacred place. The pilgrims are predominantly Mananghi, Sherpa, and other ethnic groups of Buddhist faith from northern Nepal.

Thirty meters of path within the mountain itself leads to the smaller cave. It contains a platform and is tubular in shape, rising steeply to a round opening adorned with trees. The larger cave is above the hill. Next to it is a temple. Twelve years ago, a Sherpa lama had tried to build himself a house. When threatened by the villagers who wanted to burn it down, he had the ingenuity to convert it, into a temple; the villagers were thereby placated. The cave is set on the side of what looks like a volcano crater; one descends into the cave from the opposite side. Above the entrance of the cave an arcade of rocks intertwined with vines suggests an unusual place. The inside of the cave is spacious, replete with stalactites and stalagmites. Being a place that is sacred for Hindus as well, who consider it a power place of Shiva, the cave is adorned with tridents implanted in rocks and piled up in a corner as offerings.

Climbing a stair one comes to a point that provides a view of the entire interior of the cave, with its array of stalagmites that Hindu fundamentalists take to be the phallus of Shiva.

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CHÖD: Cutting Through Dualism

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

This digital recording of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, is the first in a series which Amata Records will dedicate to the preservation and propagation of Tibetan culture. The series will focus on the Dzogchen teachings but will also include selected recordings, both religious and folk, from various parts of Tibet.

"Chöd: Cutting Through Dualism", was originally intended to be a clear representation of the Chöd practice for the benefit of practitioners.

However, during the recording session, which took place in Rinpoche's little retreat hut, nestled in the wood below the



The cover of the CD and cassette

Gonpa at Merigar, Rinpoche spontaneously gave us a complete rendition of the Long Life Practice of Mandarava. To this, he added the Song of the Vajra and a dedication. Needless to say, thanks to the generosity of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and to the quality of the recordings, we and successive generations will have an opportunity to learn these practices in a precise way.

CHÖD: CUTTING THROUGH DUALISM is available on CD (\$18 US) and cassette (\$14 US) including postage, through Shang-Shung Edizioni, 58031 Arcidosso, GR, Italy.

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" has just been translated into English and is now available in the same form and at the same price as "The Wish Fulfilling Vase" from Shang-Shung Edizioni.

Reflections Reflections Reflections

"A Day at the Tashi Place"

It was Saturday night. The city was crowded and noisy and lights of every colour were shining brightly everywhere inviting people to have fun. The car stopped on the most popular corner downtown.

The girl ran and came into the car. "Let's run away!" the driver said. In a few minutes the car rushed along the main avenues and was heading for the highway. The car was driven in a dark night full of stars. They passed a little village called "Charles Peace" and started climbing up into the hills. They turned left and soon the imposing figure of "The Giant Mountains" appeared in front of them like a challenge.

Another car was climbing straight ahead towards the hill. "Look! Yurmed Drolma is driving in front of us" Sangye Tsomo exclaimed.

The two cars greeted each other with lights and horns. "It's nice to find friends on the path, isn't it" Sangye Tsomo said. Dechenma answered with a silent smile. "Every time I come to this point of the way I start to feel so happy" she thought.

Arriving at The Place, "Mam bo", the dog, appeared barking and running beside the car welcoming them. The house was open and the fire was burning in the chimney but nobody was at home.

Trinley Dorje and Emma Ho were coming from the "Little dark house". They had taken the dinner for Drolma, who was doing a "light retreat". They kissed and hugged each other very happily and soon they gathered around the fire with cups of coffee. The Spanish woman, Emma Ho, the new geko, started speaking about the news of the week.

She came for a retreat nine months ago but was caught by the spirit of the land and remained there. In the beginning she tried to resist and became ill but now she has completely surrendered to the enchantment and is enjoying it. Yurmed Drolma showed everybody her new discoveries: two new books bought in "The Old York city" in the North. She started reading about the difference between the mind and the nature of the mind.

Then someone said, "Let's practice" and the "Song of Diamond" sounded loud and clear all over the place creating an atmosphere of calmness and peace.

"A la la ho!" someone exclaimed when finished. "It's always a miracle to be here!" They agreed laughing and celebrating like children. Then, a few mattresses were thrown in front of the fire and they prepared for sleep. "What about doing the last practice before we sleep?" someone asked and started reading about the "Milan" practice while they fell asleep. The morning met them around a Long Life Practice under the big eucalyptus trees.

While practising they could observe a fantastic dance of little cotton flowers that the wind spread over the blue sky. Suddenly the wind changed its route and blew directly towards them.

Soft, white cotton flowers started falling on their heads, on their thunderstruck faces, on their open mouths like a blessing coming from above. In the end everybody was very touched by the profound effect of the practice. The group lay on the dry leaves that covered the earth and laughed. What else can you do when you realise that reality and fantasy are the same?

Soon, everybody gathered around the table in the sun for a barbecue. A beautiful sunny day greeted the Spring this Sunday.

After lunch Dechenma followed by "Mam ho" went for a walk around the place. She stopped on the top of the mountain and observed the valley - the Spring had created such a magical atmosphere, flowers of every colour had blossomed everywhere.

The woman and the dog remained for a while immersed in the fragrance that emanated from the flowers around. "I can't imagine Dewachen being different from here" she thought. A red turmoil started to flow and suddenly Pema appeared shaking her long, red hair. A few minutes later the music sounded and the brothers and sisters moved on the mandala in the harmony of the Vajra Dance.

When the sun set, a committee went to look for Drolma. A bell announced to her that the light retreat was over. She appeared at the door with smiling face. Her face was shining like a full moon in the dark. As every time someone comes from the dark cabin, it was a solemn, sacred moment. The Great, Perfect Silence reigned for a while and touched everybody's heart. A few minutes later the cars were going down the hill.

Another gentle peaceful weekend was ending at the "Tashi Place".....

Up in the mountain, the giant

Born to

Jack and Marsha Ellison of Boston, Massachusetts, USA, a son, Jay Lhundrup Ellison, on September 28th, 1993.

Marion Lindlar and Henryk Borowicz, in Germany, a son, Adrian Lindlar, on April 25th, 1993.

Congratulations to the happy parents!

Guardian yawned. "What a busy day!" he said, and prepared for sleep.

All the names and characters are real and every coincidence with a place or circumstances is not casual.

An "Anonimus" article sent from Tashigar in Argentina.

Yoga and functional psychotherapy



photo Laura Salvini

by Luigi Vitiello

As a psychotherapist and practitioner of yoga, I am often asked if there is any relationship between the two disciplines, and more specifically whether it is a good thing to practise yoga while doing functional psychotherapy. I find the question particularly interesting as many people who want to work on themselves in a holistic way - that is to say with an approach involving body, energy and mind - find it difficult to choose between oriental methods used for centuries and modern techniques which speak a more familiar language.

It is interesting to consider the use of breathing in the two approaches, as *pranayama* on the one hand is a fundamental part of many forms of yoga, while a return to deep breathing using the diaphragm is one of the main aims of functional psychotherapy. The intentions apparently overlap: in both systems deep diaphragmatic breathing is seen to be fundamental to good psychophysical equilibrium. However, the means employed to reach this goal are different. In yoga, the

practitioner, under the guidance of a Master, applies various controlled breathing techniques to gain progressive mastery of the respiratory movements. This leads to control of what in Sanskrit is called '*prana*', the deep, vital energy of the

organism. The positions, or *asanas*, aid the practitioner in his intent by almost automatically inducing correct breathing and a particular flow of *prana*. The end result is a serene equilibrium of the mind, which is no longer disturbed by the chaotic impulses of vital energy at the mercy of internal and external stimuli. The use of certain sounds (*mantras*) can also be of help in the process.

In functional psychotherapy on the other hand, the therapist helps the patient to relax the muscular tensions that have become stratified in the body right from the very first days of life as a consequence of the organism's adaptations to frustrating events. The therapist employs massage, suggesting body movements and stimulating the use of the voice to help the patient regain contact with the deep parts of the 'Self' where imbalances and disconnections have arisen. This also has the aim of reviving deep diaphragmatic breathing, which is useful as a means of entering psychosomatic regression, that is to say coming into contact with the areas where it is possible to reconnect the various functions of the Self. Once this has been achieved and mobility has been recovered by dissolving the muscular tensions, the breathing becomes stable of its own accord, returning to how it was at the time of birth. Clearly, the body work is associated with character analysis.

It should by now be clear that although both systems give maximum importance to breathing

and body movement, they differ both as to their aims and the significance attached to the means they employ. In fact, in functional psychotherapy, attention is called away from the breathing process, which is then shifted in such a way that the patient loses voluntary control, thereby restoring a spontaneous physiological movement not conditioned by physical or psychic tension: an indispensable basis for what is known as 'character mobility'.

In yoga, the mind controls the breathing so as to correct and redirect it until a situation of positive feedback is reached, at which point conscious control is no longer necessary since the refund harmony of the *prana* spontaneously produces a serene, clear and relaxed condition. With constant practice, this can reawaken deep mental abilities that are unlikely to develop in a distracted, conditioned mind. This all obviously requires time and dedication; on average more than what the modern Westerner, who tends to want everything at once, is prepared to concede.

Maybe this brief discussion poses more questions than it answers (a systematic comparison of the two systems would require considerable space), but it may be of help in assessing the possibility of practising both approaches alongside one another.

Although no single answer can be given, my personal experience is that they can harmonise perfectly well. Both approaches agree that deep diaphragmatic breathing is physiological, and is at the root of good psychophysical equilibrium. The ways in which it is developed, however, are different, and this may represent a source of confusion to beginners in either discipline. But anyone who has advanced beyond the initial stages of therapy, and has already recovered good breathing dynamics has everything to gain from practising yoga.

Vice versa, with tantric forms of yoga - where the emotions are not looked upon negatively, but as a means for reaching deeper levels of consciousness - practitioners who may wish also to work on themselves with an approach such as functional psychotherapy should feel free to do so. By contrast, anyone who sees yoga as a way of self control to override the passions and sublimate them without having passed through them with awareness will certainly experience much resistance in confronting a task such as functional psychotherapy.

Either way, the error to be avoided is to search for a method that is 'right' for absolutely everyone, without taking into consideration the individual characteristics of each single person.

Celebration and...

continued from page 6

This first major community meeting at the school decided to open a building fund to begin improvements. Tsegylgar Gakyil would provide some seed money to start work. We set up two groups to oversee the project. One group is responsible for communication, and the second group for carrying out the physical renovation of the building. John LaFrance was elected coordinator of the communication group, and Ernie Renner coordinator of the Facilities Group. They will cooperate with the Gakyil in organising a full program of work and events over the next few months, which has already begun with this very successful weekend.

It was at this moment that Woody Paparazzo, the President of the Gakyil, tried to focus on the perspective of the old school house project as an aspect of our activity as practitioners. He asked, "Is this project separate from Tsegylgar, or not? In a way the project is a worldwide community project and Tsegylgar is taking responsibility for seeing that it happens. There is a responsibility here to be taken on by the community at large, especially in the U.S.A. to see that this project becomes something concrete." The final event of Sunday was a beautiful Ganapuja, incorporating the *sang* ritual of Adzam Drugpa. Clouds of consecrated juniper and cypress were offered to purify the space of the school. The first step for this major new development of the Dzogchen Community has already been taken. It is up to us to make sure of its success.

Tara Mandala

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restaurants and cafes, and a health food store. There are about 300 sunny days a year in Pagosa Springs.

Durango is the nearest big town one hour away. Flights depart every half hour to and from Denver, making the land easily reached from both coasts. Durango has a university, Telluride ski area and is growing rapidly.

There have been several synchronistic events with the 'local protectors' connected to this land which indicate to me its auspiciousness. When we got there the first time a large hawk was sitting in the tree nearby and circled over and around us as we got out of the car. As we climbed up the peak we were followed closely by two hawks and a raven flying together.

Then when I returned home I heard that Bertha Grove, called Red Earth Woman, Elder of the Ute Nation, was to be teaching near our home in New York state with her husband and brother two days later! It turned out her reservation land adjoins this property! She is a seventy-year old wise woman, raised in a tepee, by her grandfather, a medicine man. She welcomed us to the land.

After we made our first *sang*

offering, a rainbow appeared that stretched from one side of the land to the other. Tara Mandala will begin the process of buying the land on November 29. All donations are welcome. Adjacent pieces of land in eight 35-40 acres pieces are also available for individuals or families who want their own land within walking distance from the retreat land.

Please write: Tara Mandala, (we changed our name from Tara Foundation) 227 Old Mill Road, Valley Cottage, N.Y. 10989, U.S.A., or call 914-268-3050 or fax 914-268-4280 about any questions you might have about the land.

Membership-Merigar

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Gakyil according to conditions.

2) Request the number and type of membership cards they require from Merigar (The local Gakyils are responsible for verifying in all cases the conditions for full membership [See Art. 7 of the statutes quoted above]);

3) Collect the completed forms and membership fees and send at least 50% of the total amount to Merigar together with the (reduced) payment for The Mirror subscriptions for ordinary members;

4) Send to Merigar a copy of each of the forms filled in by applicants together with one of the photographs of each person;

(The members can then be legally registered in Merigar and allocated a serial number which will be sent to the local Gakyil)

5) Copy each member's serial number onto the application form and onto the membership card;

6) Fill in the card and stamp it in the space provided.

7) Issue the card.

Renewal of membership

The local Gakyils are also responsible for annual renewal of membership. See the renewal form.

Working with...

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traditional objects, the principles expressed in the forms of the culture, are generating ideas that can insure the survival of a culture. At the heart of any good work of art lies the essential nature of what is expressed.

The materials and construction techniques for the construction of the school are to be those used in the local area and where necessary using the construction technologies of today. The three storey teaching block and accommodation block will be constructed using the brick and concrete system found today throughout China. The cultural centre will be constructed using the traditional Tibetan timber post and beam system. The enclosing walls and the single storey elements such as toilets and laundry will be built using the earth wall material of the area. The whole complex will be proportioned with respect for the

traditional Tibetan architecture. This means generally a great consideration for the windows and openings that have always employed so much attention from the Tibetans. A second characteristic of the Tibetan form is the treatment of walls to form a composition of distinct layers and horizontal bending, particularly the definition of an uppermost colour band where the building meets the sky.

Buildings are one of the primary forms that express the values of any culture, and while adhering to the style of Tibetan architecture may have some benefit, it does not necessarily guarantee the preservation of a culture. Like all traditional architectures, the Tibetan form is a response to the particular qualities of a place and the natural conditions of climate and landscape. The traditional buildings repose and reinforce the landscape and there is no attempt to stand out and grab attention. The forms reflect underlying values in the culture and ultimately reflect the condition of the people.

For example the Tibetan pillar is not only a post to hold up a beam and then rafters and so on to support the roof. The passage from stone base, to pillar, to ornamental capital, to beam, to blocks, to the myriad of rafter ends, and on to the roof is a symbol that represents the Tibetan view of the process of manifestation in all created things. The intricate carving and decoration is an elaboration of the spiritual view and social order. The use of so many pillars in the prayer halls of the Tibetans is not just to hold up the roof, but offers a support for their meditations. The choice of square plan that respects the four quarters does not represent a lack of imagination to invent intricate modern geometry. It is square because it represents the Tibetan view of the nature of the spatial condition in which the human realm finds itself. Every element of construction in the traditional architecture becomes an ornament to support a traditional view. The elaborate carving is not added on to improve the look, though they might also serve that function. It comes about through the sense of space, the opening of junctions between various parts to reveal detail and to

elaborate an underlying idea.

While the project at Dangche is not of the order of the sacred Tibetan architecture, the basic principle of a construction expressing a certain function is never the less the same. It is a process that over time with the function of the culture leads to the elaborate ornamentation found in the traditional Tibetan system. The school project in Dangche has tried to respect this principle and in some way contribute to a preservation of the Tibetan culture. Traditional architecture comes about quite naturally through a view and the application of the principles of this view. If these principles can be discovered modern methods, materials and techniques don't have to lead to buildings of the present day being void of cultural value. It is not a copying of the style that has value, but the application of the principles of the culture that can offer continuity in present day.

Journey to Maratika

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One small stalagmite is enclosed on three sides by a fence; in front of it, local brahmins recite their dualistic invocations to the bhagavan or god, propitiating him with offerings arranged on leaves. Inside the cave are a few Buddhist pilgrims, who generally prefer to circle the caves from the outside.

There is rarely a time that this sacred place is not being visited by one important lama or another, undergoing the austerity of staying in this remote area, having only meager food and the most basic shelter far from devotees and luxuries. Lamas remain here for periods of retreat usually with the intention of removing obstacles to their lives. I engage in friendly conversation with a monk, the young son of the lama who built the temple; he explains that a former king of Nepal declared Maratika to be a sacred Hindu place. From that point on, Hindu pilgrims have arrived in a steady flow. Buddhists believe that it is from here that Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) departed to Tibet on the invitation of the Tibetan king. When asked to specify his location, Padmasambhava sent a message through the Tibetan translators to

inform the king that he was staying in a place (Maratika) whose outer, inner and secret qualities were inconceivable.

While I talk with the young monk, who offers to help me if I decide to do a retreat at Maratika, a curtain made from a monk's robe opens and someone speaks to me in Tibetan. He had overheard our conversation, introducing himself as Chimey Dorje Rinpoche, he informs me that he had been a college mate of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at the Sakya monastery of Dzongsar Khyentse Chokyi Lodro and was presently working in Chengdu on the same project as Zenkar Rinpoche. He was doing a retreat at Maratika, but was soon to return to Tibet. He also told me the sad news that Lama Sala, the disciple of Tobden Urgyen Tenzin, the uncle of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, had passed away in Bodhanath three months ago. It was this lama who, in 1988, at the invitation of Rinpoche, gave us the transmission of the multicolored garuda belonging to the cycle of teaching on Vajrapani contained in the Rinchen Terdzos.

Someone mentions that on the upper floor of the monastery an important lama from Dharamsala or somewhere else is doing a month's retreat; the next day I learn that the lama is Ayang Rinpoche. At Halesi we are able to stay at the home of a brahmin woman, a character direct and without prejudices, still retaining her beauty after having generated nine sons. She had just spent a month fasting in the cave; everyday she performs a puja there.

We leave Maratika to begin our return journey to Kathmandu via Katari. This route entails a day and a half of scrambling across dried-up river beds and over rough and narrow paths that wind up and down through dusty hills; crossing back and forth hundreds of times a small river that weaves through narrow crevices - in short, a sort of 'Way of the Cross' - all to be followed by a night bus ride to Kathmandu.

Now, some time later at my home in Sonada, a deep impression remains in my mind of the place made sacred by the presence of Guru Rinpoche and his consort Mandarava, an experience enriched by the visions of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche that he shared with his students.

THE MIRROR

The newspaper of the international Dzog-chen Community

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Annual subscription: \$35 U.S. outside Europe or Lit. 40.000 within Europe.

Send cheque or money order to: The Mirror, Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

Due to the complicated international banking system and high bank charges on cheques that are complicated to negotiate, please send your subscription fee in the following way:

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Towards ecological responsibility

by Allan Hunt Badiner

*"Our obdurate egocentricity
ingrained in our minds
since beginningless time
contaminates, defiles and
pollutes
the environment
created by the common karma
of all sentient beings."*

Stanza 3 from the poem, "The
Sheltering Tree of
Interdependence," by H. H. Dalai
Lama

A three day international
conference in New Delhi on
"Ecological Responsibility: A
Dialogue with Buddhism," hosted
by H. H. Dalai Lama ended
October 4th with an urgent appeal
to humanity to take greater
responsibility for our threatened
environment.

The densely visible air pollution
of the city was a fitting backdrop
for the event.

Two hundred participants from
twenty-two countries participated in
the conference which followed the
consecration by His Holiness of a
magnificent gilded statue of the
Buddha, in the Earth touching pose, in
the Buddha Jayanti Park overlooking
New Delhi - a gift from the people of
Tibet to the people of India.

The conference, postponed from
March due to communal violence,
seemed at first to be distinguished

as much by who was not there as
who was. Where was Gary Snyder,
Helena Norberg-Hodge, Robert
Thurman, Joan Halifax, John Seed,
or Vandana Shiva?

But it rapidly became apparent
that the event was not only a rich
experience for all in attendance, but



an important milestone in
Buddhism's continuing develop-
ment in the post-industrial era.

The inauguration of the
conference also marked the birthday
of Mahatma Gandhi, whom, as the
Dalai Lama noted, put into practice
many of the Buddha's teachings.
Professor Ramachandra Gandhi of
Hyderabad cautioned against selfish

humanism, and Brazil's Jose
Lutzenberger decried the promotion
of technology at the expense of natural
systems.

A major discussion revolved
around the rights and duties of private
ownership.

It was noted that the environmental
crisis has reached such proportions
that the effort to save Tibet might
become marked as much by the
need to move all its agriculture
indoors due to climate change, as it
is by the ending of its domination
by China.

One stunning example of
Buddhist environmental activism
was applauded by all: the tree-
ordinations by the monk Pra
Prachak in order to save what
remains of Thailand's forests.

Several speakers urged that
Buddhism align itself more actively
with the efforts of indigenous
people to preserve their way of life.

Professor Stanislav Menshikov,
the prominent Russian economist
who recently came under the
influence of the Dalai Lama,
articulated the economics of
compassion - the middle path between
the extremes of state socialism and
free-market capitalism.

Professor Lambert Schmuthausen
of Germany closed the conference
by pointing out that while Buddhism
does not equal environmentalism,
it can help humanity toward an
ethic based on the ultimate value of
nature.

PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL DAYS

12th Month, 11th day Sun. 23rd Jan. 1994

Today it is good to do a Medium or Long Tun with intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

12th Month, 15th day Thu. 27th Jan. 1994

FULL MOON. This is in general a day for honouring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the Long-life practice of Guru Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences".

12th Month, 18th day Sun. 30th Jan. 1994

This day is the anniversary of the great Dzog-chen master Longchen Rabjam Longchenpa (1386-1363). On this very important day try to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lamai Naljor" Guruyoga with the White A, either collectively or personally.

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

This is a **Dakini day**, so try to perform a Ganapuja with the transformation of the Dakini Simhamuka together with your Vajra brothers and sisters. Otherwise you can do a Medium or Short Tun in the usual way.

12th Month, 30th day Thu. 10th Feb. 1994

Last day of the Water-Bird year. This is a good day for purification practices. Therefore try to do "Purification of the Six Lokas".

1st Month, 1st day Fri. 11 Feb. 1994

First day of the Wood-Dog year. You can practise the Riwo Sangchod if you know how to do it. Otherwise you can do any Long-life practice.

1st Month, 4th day Mon. 14 Feb. 1994

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

1st Month, 8th day Fri. 18 Feb. 1994

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

1st Month, 10th day Sun. 20 Feb. 1994

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

1st Month, 16th day Sat. 26 Feb. 1994

There is no 15th day in this Tibetan month.

FULL MOON. This first full moon of the Tibetan New Year is the very important anniversary of the Great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje. It is also a special day of Buddha Shakyamuni, the day he performed many miracles, and it is the anniversary of the Master Marpa as well as that of Shenrab Miwoche, the founder of Bon.

Therefore, on this day when it is 8 o'clock in Oddiyana (same time as Delhi), it is good for all Dzogchen practitioners to practise at the same time, practising the "A Kar Lamai Naljor", Guruyoga with the White A. You can do this practice collectively or alone.

SEE THE UNIVERSAL TIMETABLE published in issue 19 page 8.

1st Month, 25th day Mon. 7 March 1994

This is the anniversary of the lady Master Ayu Kadro, so it is good to do "A Kar Lama Naljor" and in general this is a **Dakini day** and a good day to reinforce our energy. Try to do a Ganapuja with the transformation into the Dakini Simhamuka.

The U.B.I. and the Dzog-chen Community

by Leopoldo Sentinelli

The Dzog-chen Community
joined the Unione Buddhista Italia-
na (U.B.I.) in 1992. An idea of the
initiatives the U.B.I.
organises will explain why
the community chose to take
part.

The Union's statute says:

"...The U.B.I. ... sets out
to support the overall Italian
Buddhist movement,
respecting all the traditions
of the Doctrine as they are
articulated ...

to develop collaboration
between groups from
different schools of
Buddhism. ...

Especially fostered are
collective or individual
meditation sessions, and
mantra recitations. ...

The U.B.I. is apolitical. ..."

The governing body is
elected every three years by a
general assembly of
representatives from the
various centres, and
themselves choose a president and
vice-president. The current president
is the Venerable Ajahn Thanavaro,
who is a monk in the Theravada
tradition. I was elected to the
governing board as a representative
of the Dzog-chen Community. Many
internal and external activities are
underway, and the U.B.I. also

participates in the European
Buddhist Union.

Each year the birth and
parinirvana of Buddha Shakyamuni



are celebrated in the Vesak
festivities, which the U.B.I. arranges
each time in a different centre. In
1994, the celebrations will be hosted
by the Lama Tsong Khapa Institute
of Pomaia, Merigar's Tibetan
Buddhist neighbours in northern
Tuscany. Members of all the centres
who belong to the U.B.I. take part in

the festival and offer donations. There
are meditation practices of the three
biggest traditions (Tibetan,
Theravada and Zen). Masters,
students and practitioners all
take part together.

In January 1991, the U.B.I.
was officially recognised as a
religious body by the Italian
government, and negotiations
are underway to set up
institutional agreements. This
should regulate the
recognition of Buddhist
Masters and monks in Italy,
make it possible to receive
tax-deductible donations, and
to take part in the system
whereby Italian taxpayers can
set aside 0.8% of their income
tax returns for a religious
body of their choice. Conscientious
objectors should also be able to spend
their obligatory year of
national service working with
U.B.I. organisations in
providing spiritual assistance
in hospitals, prisons and
barracks for practitioners who desire
it, as well as taking part in
conferences, courses and meetings
on religious themes in schools.

Recently, through the U.B.I., a
social research company has got into
contact with the major Buddhist
centres in Italy. Before, long, we will
be seeing the results of their enquiry.

THE MIRROR

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

Published by the Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzog-chen.
The Mirror, Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.
Tel. and fax 564-966608.

Director: Raimondo Bultrini
Managing editor: Liz Granger
Editorial advisors: Anna Eid, Giovanni Arca
Editorial collaboration: Nancy Simmons, Maria Simmons, Robin Cooke
Layout and pagination: Tiziana Gottardi
Printer: Tipografia 2A, Arcidosso
Issue 24, December-January 1993-1994
© 1993 Ass. Cult. Comunità Dzog-chen.

Registrato presso il Tribunale di Grosseto al n. 5/1990 del 26 Aprile
1990