

# THE MIRROR

The Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

Issue 26

## On Collaboration in the Dzogchen Community

*A Talk by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche April 6th, 1994, Bermagui, Australia*

I want to say a few words about our Community. Community means practitioners. Practitioners mean people who are living in the same transmission, in the same boat, travelling towards realisation in the same way. That means then that we must know how to collaborate with each other because if we don't know how to collaborate with each other, or if we are not collaborating well, we can have problems with the transmission and with the guardians. So we try to be aware.

Also, we have the responsibility of the teaching and the transmission. That is not solely the responsibility of the teacher. People always think that the transmission and the teaching mean being taken care of by the teachers. But what is a teacher really? I am a practitioner. Now you are a student, but maybe tomorrow you will also be a teacher. You are also on the path and you have that responsibility. For that reason we practitioners collaborate with each other and that is called community.

Community means: if a boat is crossing a very big river, and if there were no other means to cross that river, then everybody in that boat forms a kind of community. The Community is in the boat to travel beyond the river, so if we create problems on board we are not collaborating and then we can't get safely to the other shore. So, for practitioners it is very important to collaborate. This means also that for Community people who are in different places it is very important to collaborate with each other. It is not always necessary to be in one place. There are many ways of collaborating.

Given that our Community has no hierarchical kind of organisation, we have a means of communicating through our newspaper, "The Mirror". I receive many letters from practitioners in different countries. They write to me because they want to know something. They send letters to Merigar in Italy and from there they are sent to me. But when they write they believe that I am in Italy. They don't know where I am or what I am doing, because they do not read our newspaper, "The Mirror". Their sole interest seems to be learning from me how to solve



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche with the Australian Community

their problems. They are thinking only of themselves and that is egoistic. It is very important that we collaborate and think also of each other.

I always ask people to subscribe to "The Mirror" because in that way you can have news of our Community, you can know what is going on and what we are doing. You can write and communicate and then if you are interested in doing something with me you can receive information. The newspaper is very important for communication in our Community; this is a bridge that we have. We have no other organisation.

Centres with a hierarchical system have a number one centre, and then lower ranking numbers two, three, four, etc.; and they send each other envoys, formal letters of communication, and the like. This system does not really correspond with the principle of the Dzogchen teachings, so we do not do it this way, but we do want to collaborate. So if we are really travelling towards realisation and we need this collaboration until total realisation, then we must continue and we must find a solution.

This solution is the main reason for "The Mirror". Some people say "The Mirror" is too expensive, but

"The Mirror" is expensive because there is little support. If there were more support from the people in the Dzogchen Community all over the world, "The Mirror" would cost little.

If I am doing a retreat somewhere then hundreds of people come. In Italy, when I do a retreat in Merigar at Christmas or Easter or in the summertime, then there are always from five hundred to seven hundred participants. But when I am absent, then only sixty or seventy people

circulate actively there, and sometimes not even that many. In other countries at a retreat with maybe one hundred people present, when I ask how many people are active during the year, such as in doing collective practise, the answer is from twelve to twenty.

People do not care very much because they do not understand how essential the role of collaboration is.

I feel that collaboration is very important, because there is no way we can continue the Dzogchen

*continued on pag 8*

### The Temple of the Great Liberation



Padmasambhava, Yeshe Tsogyal and Mandarava painted by Tsering Wangchuck, master thangka painter, in the gonpa at Merigar. "Shading the Gonpa": new phase of work begins. page 7

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# The Base in Dzogchen

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

An excerpt from a teaching given in Kathmandu, Nepal, the morning of December 27th, 1993

Today I want to clarify the zhi (gzhi), what in the Dzogchen teaching we call the base, because it is very important. For example, a teacher who is introducing a student to knowledge is introducing the base, what we have since the beginning, our potentiality. That is what the zhi is. If we do not understand the zhi, we cannot know what introduction means. The Dzogchen teaching is a very important and very essential teaching. A Dzogchen master gives an introduction to the natural state and people receive the introduction and perhaps enter into that knowledge. This is the Dzogchen point of view.

However, in Buddhism, one finds numerous schools and traditions, and it is useful to learn the important distinctions in their varying viewpoints. In the sutra teachings of India, many currents, like the Madhyamika and the Yogachara schools, have flourished, and also in Tibet among the traditions of Tantric Buddhism differences exist. Thus the Dzogchen definition of the base, what we understand to be the underlying reality, is not universally accepted. It is important to know that, to avoid being perplexed should you one day find a book or some other Buddhist source which negates Dzogchen. That there are different schools of thought is not surprising. In samsara everyone lives in a dualistic vision, which means having limited points of view. That is normal. Why do some Buddhist teachings negate Dzogchen? The main point of contention is the base, not the path, nor the fruit.

Dzogchen informs us that the teacher's function is to introduce knowledge. The sutra teaching, and people who are conditioned by the ideas of sutra, will never accept this concept; they see nothing to introduce. In Dzogchen, rigpa means knowledge of our natural state, the contrary of marigpa, which means ignorance of our real nature and potentiality. If you read a book in the sutra tradition you will find that rigpa, instead, means intelligence, ordinary intelligence. Also in spoken Tibetan, it is said of children who are clever, that they have "very good rigpa."

The sutra teaching has never recognised rigpa as explained in the Dzogchen teaching. What is the main reason? In sutra the most important view is that of Nagarjuna (c. 120 A.D.) as expressed in the Madhyamika philosophy. Sakya Pandita (1182-1251) said that no point of view surpasses Nagarjuna's, because Nagarjuna reached beyond concepts. Any other philosophical position, even if considered more important than his, is necessarily a fixed concept. What does it mean that Nagarjuna's explanation "reached beyond concepts"? With great intelligence he employed logic to reach beyond itself, which is the final

goal in Madhyamika. Intellect can go no further.

But Dzogchen knowledge is not analysis and Dzogchen is not an intellectual path. A Dzogchen teacher introduces methods which you use to have meditative experiences. Through these experiences you discover the real sense of Dzogchen. People who adhere to the ideas of sutra do not accept that process. In the real sense this is not negative, because sutra always aims for the understanding or knowledge of shunyata.

How can you reach realisation if you are not going to have experiences? Madhyamika explains with the four "beyond" concepts, which are something neither exists, nor does

scholars asked, for example, how seeds of future karmic payment, caused by our actions, mature; how today is connected with that moment in the future when the karmic result manifests; how the seed is preserved and why it does not change or lose its capacity. To answer these questions, the Yogachara scholars posited the kunzhi, the "base of all" where the karma-producing seeds, as potentiality, are maintained. They considered that the base exists for this purpose.

Nagarjuna rebutted the Yogachara concept of kunzhi, and never accepted it. He could not understand the Dzogchen view of the base and thus his Madhyamika philosophy rejected that as well. Specifically,

someone is arguing and discussing, establishing a point of view, then you must answer appropriately. One person asks, another replies. You cannot respond with a history of your spiritual experiences.

However, a teaching like Dzogchen, and also the principle of Tantrism, are related to the individual's contemplative or meditative experience. Those who deny Dzogchen are simply following a system of logic, thinking and judging. This attitude does not correspond to the real sense of the teaching, since you cannot realise yourself through intellect. Thus you must distinguish clearly between these two very different approaches, the logical and the experiential. You can

the mirror and we call this mode of manifesting energy rolpa. Rolpa means manifesting in its own dimension. This manifestation occurs because the secondary cause presents itself. For example, if a dog stands in front of mirror then that dog is reflected, if there is a statue of Buddha, then a statue of the Buddha appears. For the mirror there is no difference. Reflections appear because secondary causes are present: the mirror is not creating the Buddha or the dog. If you understand that distinction, you will comprehend why the base in Dzogchen has nothing in common with the base in Yogachara.

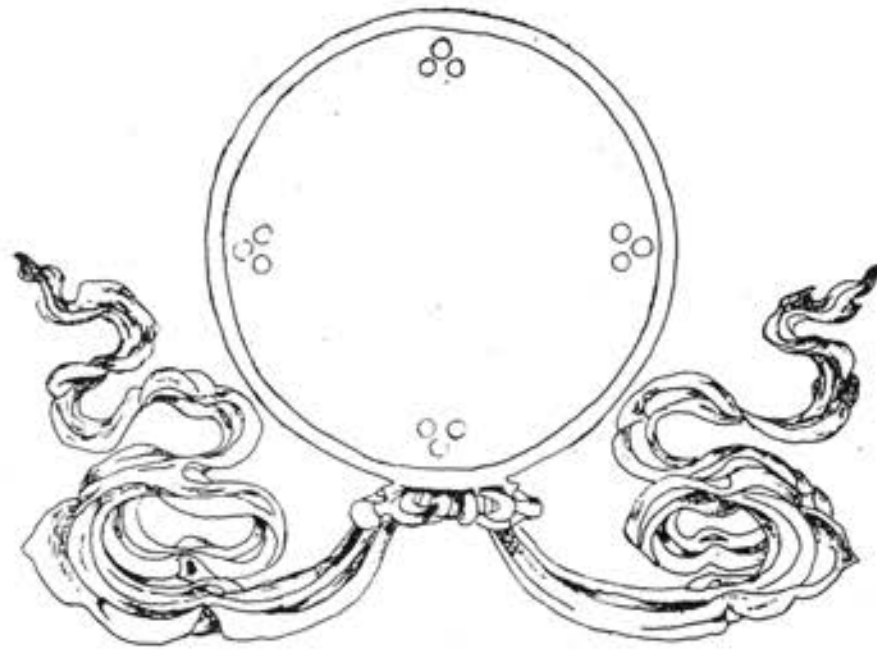
A number of narrow-minded scholars, Kagyüpas in ancient times, and more recently, some Geluggpas, reject Dzogchen in many books, which, if ever translated, you might come across some day. Their arguments might cause you to think, "Oh, something is wrong with Dzogchen." Their principal assertion is that the base as conceived in Dzogchen does not exist. They further declare that the Dzogchen point of view and texts were late and spurious Tibetan inventions, negating the Dharmakaya origin recorded in the Dzogchen tantras. They thus claim that the "Kunjed Gyalpo" itself, root tantra of Dzogchen, is a false creation, not a primordial manifestation. By their reasoning, no original Dzogchen books could have existed in ancient times, because these texts cannot be found in the Sanskrit language in India, though it is said that these books were introduced into Tibet from India. In fact, most Dzogchen books were translated from the Oddiyana language, not from the Sanskrit, into Tibetan, though they may or may not have arrived by way of India.

Answering these charges, famous scholars like Longchenpa (1308-1363) and Sodogpa (1552- c. 1624) demonstrated, in many volumes, that the refutations of Dzogchen are false and that such arguments are without foundation. This is all on the level of intellectual proof and argument. Now, centuries later, since the famous Tunhuang documents were unearthed in China, these debates are no longer to the point because actual physical evidence, the ancient texts themselves, definitively confute these errors about Dzogchen.

At Tunhuang, many ancient and important books from the times of the Tibetan kings were discovered, including Tibetan, Chinese, and Uighur texts. For many centuries underground, this vast library emerged, revealing details of ancient history, both spiritual and secular. All scholarly authorities consider these books extremely significant. Among them are two very important primordial Dzogchen texts. With that documentation available, it is not easy to deny the origins of the Dzogchen teaching.

In any case, it is important to know what the zhi, the base, signifies in Dzogchen.

(edited by Nancy Simmons)



not exist, or both exists and does not exist, or is beyond both existing and not existing together. These are the four possibilities. What remains? Nothing. This can be considered an ultimate conclusion in Madhyamika, though of course you are working only in an intellectual way. As an analysis, this is also correct for Dzogchen: Nagarjuna's reasoning is supreme.

However, distinguishing between the use of a logical system on the one hand, and a method which functions through experience on the other by which you discover your nature, you will see that these outlooks are radically different. This is why Madhyamika, which is a philosophical system, negates the existence of the base completely. But in Dzogchen, base does not mean a concrete object or concept, but our real condition. Introduced to your natural state, you become one with that knowledge. That is the meaning of introduction.

People who have learned a little about sutra and then study the Dzogchen teaching often confuse the base in Dzogchen and the concept of the base in the Yogachara system. The Yogachara system uses the term kunzhi, kun meaning "all" and zhi, "base". For Yogachara, the kunzhi is the base because that is where the potentiality of karma is stored. These

Madhyamika does not accept the Yogachara base, because if causes for negative karma are created, then when secondary circumstances arise, karma will always manifest, will never not result. That potentiality is not something concrete on the material level which can get lost, change, or lose its capacity to manifest. For example, though a physical body can have a shadow, we cannot see the shadow if no secondary cause exists. When a secondary cause like light or sunshine is present then the shadow appears immediately. So a repository, the Yogachara concept of the base, is not necessary. In short, in the Madhyamika view when a karmic seed is produced, a consequence always follows, but a consequence which manifests only in the presence of secondary causes.

The Madhyamika and Yogachara schools have different positions on many other points. For example, the Madhyamika philosophy speaks of the aggregation of six consciousnesses, whereas for the Yogachara school, linked to which are many Tantric systems, we possess an aggregation of eight consciousnesses. Reasoning about these distinctions does not mean we are entering into real knowledge in the Dzogchen sense of the term, since such analysis proceeds at the level of mere logic. Of course, logic has its role. If

begin to move toward realisation only through your experience of the state of knowledge. Then there is the possibility of realisation.

People who negate Dzogchen often say that the Dzogchen explanation of the base is influenced by the Yogachara system. In truth, the Dzogchen base has nothing to do with the Yogachara concept: in Yogachara the base is related to mind and, therefore, to the intellectual functions, whereas in Dzogchen, the base is an aspect of our real condition and potentiality.

Some verbal similarities exist between Yogachara and Dzogchen. Yogachara says everything is created by mind, and in Dzogchen, we have the semde series of teachings, sem meaning mind and the nature of mind. Dzogchen appears to say that everything is somehow a manifestation of mind, and so the two systems seem rather similar. But Yogachara, proceeding in an intellectual way, in a series of logical steps, believes that mind creates something.

That is not the Dzogchen view. Dzogchen states that mind or the nature of mind, our potentiality, is like a mirror. Reflections appear in a mirror when secondary causes manifest, but this does not mean that the mirror creates what you see. You must grasp this distinction. Everything, good or bad, appears in

## Meeting the Master in Mongolia



by our special correspondent Liz Granger

Ulan Baator, Mongolia, May 1994

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is seated on a raised dais in the 'gher' (yurt) temple of the Dechen Choenhorling monastery. In front of him is a small table for ritual instruments. On his left is the head lama, Ven. G. Purevsuren in his red and yellow robes. Shaven monks focused intently on Rinpoche sit cross-legged on their benches lined along the walls, their mala beads swiftly moving under their fingertips.

In the centre of the temple a throng of jostling Mongolians are packed, some soundlessly repeating mantras, others in rapt attention. There are people of all ages from babies to the very old, in both Western dress and colourful traditional silk 'del', buttoned at the neck and shoulder. A burly young monk with a heavy stick prowls around keeping order.

This is the first time that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has taught in Mongolia, at the invitation of the Dechen Choenhorling Nyingma monastery. It is the only Nyingma 'datsan' in Ulan Baator, situated in the midst of a spreading area of tall Soviet style apartment blocks. Since Mongolia's autonomy from the Soviet Union in 1990, a series of monasteries and nunneries has sprung up in the Mongolian capital as the fruit of a religious freedom that had not been tolerated for decades by the Soviet regime.

Among these is Dechen Choenhorling, currently composed of a simple structure housing their gonpa kitchen and the Khenpo's 'office' and the almost finished temple where Rinpoche has held teachings for three days.

In typical Mongolian style it is a circular 'gher' structure but larger and built in concrete, rather than the 'ghers' of white felt which fill the Mongolian capital side by side with the multicoloured apartment blocks.

It is the third day of the retreat and the final teaching session. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is giving an empowerment of Guru Dragpo, Vajrakilaya and Simhamukha and

many people have come to participate and to receive his blessing. Rinpoche explains how to participate and the details of the visualisation. He emphasises the importance of participating actively and with devotion in order for the empowerment to function.

After the offering of the mandala, the visualisation, and the invocation, Rinpoche gives the three empowerments of vase, mala and vajra, corresponding to the body, voice and mind, to the head lama and the monks. When this is over he invites all the lay people to file past to receive the empowerment. There is an incredible rush and bustle and pushing akin to trying to get on or off a bus in the Mongolian capital but gradually the frantic moment dissolves. A line of people respectfully file past Rinpoche who tirelessly gives the initiation with the phurba while a tall whiskered monk confers it with the vase and Ven. Purevsuren with the mala. Even after those present have received empowerment, the line of people is constantly growing as newcomers push their way past the door where two little monks are trying to regulate the increasing flow of people. As the wong continues the monks accompany Rinpoche's mantra recitation with cymbals and a large drum.

The faithful leave their money offerings which overflow in heaps on the tables and in front of the images.

Finally the ceremony comes to an end and people rush in for more blessings from Rinpoche, revered as a Mahasiddha among the Mongolian devout.

His arrival here had been long awaited by many. At the airport he was met by the head lama and a delegation of monks from Dechen Choenhorling who had extended the official invitation and by Batadalai Duganov who had assisted in the organizing of Rinpoche's first visit to this part of the world. Rinpoche was offered a traditional Mongolian bowl of fermented mare's milk and then whisked off to a formal reception at the datsan (monastery), in which the handful of European disciples arriving from various parts

of the world were also invited.

Rinpoche and his Western students were regaled with salted butter tea, mountains of Mongolian pozi (steamed dumplings), bowls of yogurt and an abundance of vodka, a local tradition, before Rinpoche was taken to his hotel.

The three days of teaching, attended by more than one hundred people, were an introduction during which Rinpoche explained the importance of understanding the essence of the teaching, that simply receiving a blessing was not enough. This contrast in attitude could be visibly seen in the various types of people who attended the teaching, the very old with their malas in hand, unceasingly repeating the mantra of Chenrezig next to a younger generation who gave great attention to Rinpoche's words. The teaching time though brief was very concentrated, with Rinpoche giving the lung and explanation of the purification mantra, the six syllables, the short tun, Song of the Vajra, the long-life practice of Mandarava and the Chod.

As we gathered outside the temple in the warm sunshine after the last teaching session, I had the feeling that Rinpoche's presence and teaching in that place had created a bridge between the two cultures represented there, Mongolian and European, and that the barriers of language and culture had dissolved. We greet each other with a handshake, a smile, a sniffed cheek, the Mongolian equivalent of a salutary kiss.

In the dry air, the intense light and strong dusty winds of the Mongolian steppes, amidst the bright silk, the clinking wooden malas, the whispered mantras of this distant and immensely vast part of the world, the first teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche here draw to a close.

With handshakes, smiles and prayers, Rinpoche departs on the 'Dzogchen flight' accompanied by a host of Western followers. We leave this bright dry land of white gher which dot the vast yellow brown steppes on our way to Rinpoche's next stop, Ulan Ude.

## NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE Teaching Programme 1994

Poland 10 - 14 June

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Jacek Sieradzki (012) 362649, Krakow; Cesary Wozniak (012) 217835, Krakow.

Greece 17 - 19 June Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Ioulia Theodoropoulou 1 2521962, Panayotis Stambolis 1 2779112.

Merigar, Italy 1 - 3 July

Santi Maha Sangha Examination

Zurich, Switzerland 8 - 10 July

Seminar for Tibetans

Bern 13 July Conference

For information contact: Rikon Tibetan Institute 52 351729 or 352353. Werner Binder 1 2023283.

France

16 July Public Teaching in Paris

18-24 July Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Patrice Lakhdari 1 40311106, Jérôme Crosnier: 1 43560658.

Merigar, Italy 31 July - 7 August

First Level Santi Maha Sangha Teaching

12 - 21 August

Teaching Retreat

For information see page 7

South Africa 26-28 August

Teaching Seminar

For information contact: Jerry Smith, PO Box 136455, Alberton North. 1456 Transvaal, South Africa. Tel: 0027-11-672 7250 Michael Bruni, Fax: 0027- 11- 622 8254

Great Britain 2-6 September

Teaching Retreat

7 September Public Talk, London

For information contact: Dzogchen Community, 14D, Chesterton Road, London W10 5LX. Tel: 0044-81-968-7125

Holland 9-11 September

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Dzogchen Community, Johannes Verhulster, 44-3, 1071 NE Amsterdam, Holland. Tel/ Fax: 0031-20-6623-723

Germany 16-20 September

Teaching Retreat

For information contact: Dzogchen Gemeinschaft, Gartenstrasse 70, 60596 Frankfurt. Tel: 0049-69-618721 Fax: 69-621863

Denmark 23-25 September

Seminar in Copenhagen

For information contact: Dzogchen Community, c/o Jens Rasmussen, Pilegard Alle 5, 2770 Kastrup, Denmark. Tel: 0045-32521840

New York 30 September - 1 October

Teaching

For information contact: Ed Goldberg, 111 East 14th Street, P.O. Box 287, N.Y., N.Y. 10003. Tel: 212-560-7209

Tsegyalgar 8 October

Inauguration of the Shang Shung Institute

14-23 October Teaching Retreat

27-29 October Santi Maha Sangha Examination

1-7 November First Level Santi Maha Sangha Teaching

For information contact: Tsegyalgar, PO Box 277, 63 Hart Road, Conway, Mass. 01341 USA. Tel: 001-413- 3694153, Fax: 001-413-3694165

The schedule for Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's teaching programme through spring 1995 will be published in successive issues. During his travels, he will be holding examinations on the Foundation Level of Santi Maha Sangha and giving First Level training at Tashigar, in January 1995.

## A Company within the Community

by Giovanni Arca

For some time now, nearly a year, there has been talk of creating an international company made up of Dzogchen Community members working to produce an income for themselves and for the Community itself.

Differently from the other organizations connected to the Community, this company would, then, have a profit motive. It would be a normal commercial activity but, with one particular distinguishing feature; it would be built on principles inspired by the Dzogchen teachings. It would be under the authority of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche himself and part of its profits would be dedicated to his initiatives, organizations and projects.

In the beginning this project was not widely spoken of, as it needed to be defined more clearly and it did not seem wise to circulate incomplete information describing something which was likely to change from one moment to the next.

The first step was to establish whether there was a concrete willingness to participate among the members of the international Dzogchen Community. To this end the Tsegyalgar gakyil was informed, and community members from Conway, New York, New Mexico and California were invited to a series of meetings where the project was explained by Gualtiero Bosio, John Shane and myself. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was kept in touch throughout on every aspect of the project, which became operative only on receiving his encouragement and approval.

These meetings in the United States were very interesting; above all because the many questions raised by those present clarified many aspects. However a concrete willingness to participate was indicated only by Station Hill Press (publishing company) and by John Shane as an individual.

The idea of this company emerged in part from the continual frustration experienced in our attempts to attract capital for Shang-Shung Editions. Everyone agrees on its importance to the Community and on the need to help but when the moment comes, very few come forward. In trying to understand why this might be, we realised that one of the reasons, perhaps the most important, was that Shang Shung Editions is a non-profit making company where an investor has no way of controlling what happens to the capital. No one therefore feels inclined to invest, let us say, \$75,000, without having an influence in the company that reflects the size of his investment.

We thought therefore that we would create another company, where individuals or businesses with the desire to invest (either capital or other values) can take part in the management of the company, thus deciding how best to deploy their

investment. The company, then, should be formed by people interested in the Dzogchen teachings and in the life of the Community and who wish to help maintain it. Our intention is to work in a fraternal and collaborative spirit, drawing inspiration from the principles of the teachings and recognizing, both in form and practice, the authority of Rinpoche not only as head of the Dzogchen Community in a spiritual sense, but also in these practical aspects of the Community's existence.

Our intention is that this company be managed with the attitude and behaviour appropriate to a Dzogchen practitioner, using the resources and methods of contemporary society. We have, furthermore, decided to create two divisions, one, a publishing house, the other for the production and/or the commercialization of various products.

The reason for this separation is that the two sectors should balance one another. The commercial sector, which receives its profits more rapidly, should provide for the



notoriously fragile editorial sector where investments are more risky and profits are, on average, seen three years after a publishing house is started.

Shang-Shung Editions would, then, be the operating wing of the editorial sector, taking charge of publications that the new company would produce and market. Certain titles, which would also be of great interest to the Dzogchen Community, cannot even be considered by Shang-Shung Editions, as the cost of acquiring rights to books which have been successful in other countries are prohibitive, and can only be met by companies with greater financial resources.

If by publishing such books for the new company, Shang-Shung Editions could increase its own turnover, it would be able to invest more in projects for the translation and publication of texts specifically linked to the teachings. The marketable value of these texts, by nature, bears no relation to their intrinsic value. Thus, from an economic viewpoint, they are investments made with little hope of return.

The commercial section has already prepared a project ready to be implemented of about ten products of a high quality paper line and a graphic

model of other products, ornamental plates, carpets, etc. All these articles bear motifs inspired by Tibetan art.

Cathy McGrane from Conway is examining distribution opportunities in the United States, both for these and other more accessible and cheaper products. Finding two people, Cathy McGrane and Laurie Marder (who is also from Conway and is working on distribution and development of "internal" publications in the United States) has encouraged us to feel we are half-way to our goal. Up to now the lack of reference points in the United States had been one of the chief stumbling blocks and our initiatives never seemed to get off the ground. As I said to Cathy and Laurie, I now have the feeling, for the first time, that we really can do it. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their kindness and professionalism.

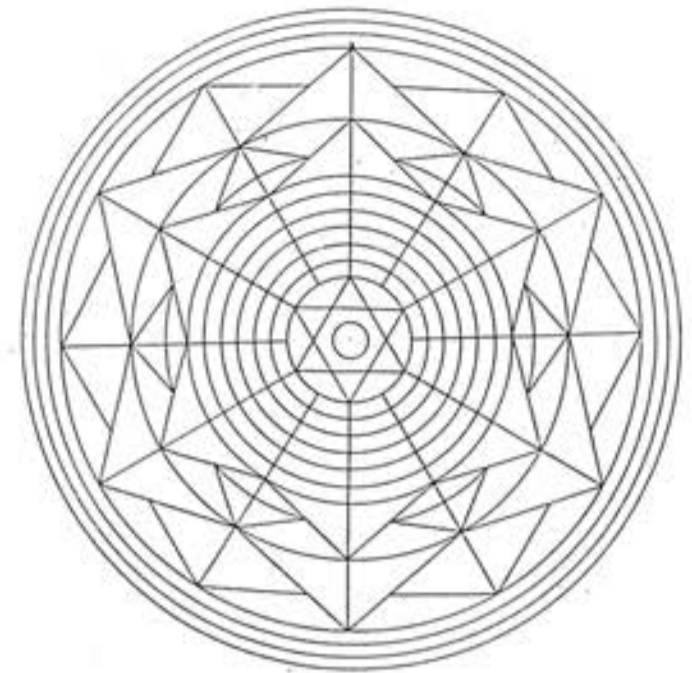
Even though the company is not yet formed, things are beginning to move and we should very soon have fuller information on our chances of operating in the United States. Certainly, we are still awaiting a further show of interest in this project from America, but we are prepared to go ahead in any case, leaving the door open for other participation later.

This initiative, essentially an international one, is open to Dzogchen Community people in any country, and we urge anyone in sympathy with its aims to write to us and join in working towards its fulfilment. The broad lines of the project are already defined; the particulars are necessarily to be completed, bearing in mind that our resources in the form of individuals and companies are still manifesting. When we presented the project in America the first time, we were asked for detailed information on the new company. To this we replied that it was not our intention to set down all the finer points, as we wanted the project to be open to ideas from everyone taking part. From discussion we would then move on to agreement on the particulars and to writing the statute, all this being in line with Rinpoche's ideas on the subject.

We would like to take advantage of Rinpoche's forthcoming visit to Merigar, this summer, to present at least a draft of the statute. Therefore, if you are interested please contact us as soon as possible.

Taking every opportunity to promote a good cause, it occurred to me that the line of products we will market could all bear an easily recognized trademark. This emblem could be used in every promotion, as a symbol for Tibet as a nature park and ecological zone protected by international agreements, as His Holiness the Dalai Lama wishes. This aim should be a dominant element in

## An Urgent Plea



This is a plea for funds. This is a world wide appeal to the gakyils, communities, and practitioners of the Dzogchen Community.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has set the Dzogchen Community of New York the task of collecting the budget for a video tape of the Dance of the Vajra, the Six Lokas, and the Om Ah Hum Dances.

In the spirit of our Master's request, we propose a contribution of \$1000 from each of those Dzogchen Communities who can afford this amount. A donation commensurate with their possibilities is asked from those communities for whom this sum is not possible. The Dance video budget is currently set at \$14,000. However, Rinpoche and Prima Mai have generously offered to donate their efforts and time in amending the video, to include substantial changes to the Dance and make it fully up-to-date. An additional \$4,000 is necessary for this shooting, dubbing and editing. Much of the equipment and most of the time has been donated by those involved with the tape, but a substantial amount is still required.

A recent notice in "The Mirror" proposed a pre-selling of the tape to individuals for \$50. Unfortunately, this brought in very few contributions. We are still offering the tape at this price to individuals, but our voice is aimed to those communities who have made the Dance practice a reality in their home towns. Generating the Dance practice is a group effort and it is the community whom we hope to rally round the tape's completion. Tsegyalgar has generously begun our drive with a donation of \$1,000, followed by the New York Community and Tashigar. We heartily thank those individuals and groups who have pledged.

The videotape is an exciting work unto itself. It consists of an interview with Rinpoche explaining the origins of the Dance; a slow motion version of the dance for women and men individually; Rinpoche explaining each movement of the men's part; Prima Mai explaining each movement of the women's part; and men and women dancing to the music and singing. After attending a dance retreat it is still a very important tool to have on hand.

Please make your check payable to: The Dzogchen Community of New York Fund Account. The members of the Dzogchen Communities have the opportunity to complement the intention and energies of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Prima Mai in their efforts to create a Dance of the Vajra videotape for the benefit of the Practitioners of the Dance. It is our move to see this process reach fruition.

P.S. As a means of facilitating communication between gakyils and practitioners, the New York gakyil is attempting to gather all available e-mail addresses. If you have an e-mail address and can be reached via computer modem, please let us know at the address listed below.

Speedy computer interaction holds a lot of opportunity for the Dzogchen Community. Don't put it off, let us know as soon as possible. Thanks!

New York Community Fund Account, No. 2115 4259 09, National Westminster Bank USA, 528 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, USA.

**New Tsegyalgar phone number 413 369 4153  
new fax number 413 369 4165**

The old telephone number (413 625 6378) will automatically forward calls to 413 369 4153 for a few months.

the company image and appear in various forms (symbol, writing, etc.) on all the products and possibly also in the publications. The company should undertake to promote meetings, seminars and campaigns to sensitize public opinion as well as organizing fund collecting. Part of the company's profits would be

donated to advance this ecological aim of world-wide significance.

International Company Project  
c/o Shang-Shung Editions  
V.le Davide Lazzeretti 29  
58031 Arcidosso GR Italy  
Tel: 0564 966039  
Fax: 0564 966752

## Australian Retreat

Alexander Hood

The significance of the upcoming Easter retreat in Australia with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche hit home as I drove down to Bermagui for the Vajra Dance coursescheduled before the retreat itself. The greatness of the gift that Rinpoche has given to us became clear.

As we entered into the Dance, we felt how strong this practice really is. Compassion and gentle awareness moved across the mandala. There was a consistently pleasant environment of shared interaction and we went much of the way towards making the Dance harmonious and collaborative. We had only five days in which to learn, and so we decided to concentrate on the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra. There were about twentyfour people dancing, three quarters women practitioners. Prima Mai's considerate air and inspired teaching made the course very pleasant and rewarding.

During the course Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche joined us for a Ganapuja on the full moon, the 27th of March. Afterwards a good time was had by all with much singing and revelling, including by Rinpoche. With the final day of the Dance course, the dancing did not stop. Each day after we danced. During the teaching retreat we learned the Om Ah Hum Dance with Prima Mai. We continued to dance throughout the Yantra Yoga course and afterwards. Perhaps we are dancing still.

Rinpoche gave, at Easter, abundant and precious teachings, which included the revelation of a dream in which many folk danced and sang the Song of the Vajra around the great Longchenpa. The presence of this Dance was felt as a radiant energy. We received much teaching that had not before been given in Australia, particularly the *Upadesha* teachings, which perhaps showed us that the Australian Community is growing up. As part of the growing process the push for a new gar was in the forefront. It became clear that our collaborative energy needed this process to prove positive. The land is nearly in hand as our Community dances and sings in the new phase of its growth. The teaching course ended with a second Ganapuja.

New people came and many of the old ones stayed to absorb Yantra Yoga with Fabio Andrico who had already been giving classes in the early morning during the teaching retreat. His style was fast and furious. Within five days we achieved much even with a mini cyclone tearing up tents, and also multiple victims of the flu. We finished the whole retreat with another Ganapuja and celebrated with some fire stick juggling by two young dakinis. An early night was had by all as our energy had already been absorbed by the teaching.

This was a very positive retreat in that the Community can now move forward toward maturity and dance its way toward a time when we have a fully functioning Aussie gar.

Many of us will work toward that end personally and we look forward to your help as well.

## New Gakyils

### California

Blue: Joan Goodman, Lynn Sutherland and Paul Giorsetti  
Red: John Bidleman, Jey Clark and Margaret Bradford  
Yellow: Ruth Corwin, Ken Bradford and Roseanne Welch

### Great Britain

Red: Barry Patterson & Claire Sharkey  
Yellow: Richard Dixey & Geoffrey Blundell  
Blue: Arnie Stratton & Richard Eagleton

### Caracas

Blue: Yone Catalan, Ingrid Bertet, Dilicia Moreno  
Yellow: Nieves Chique, Alicia Lau, Pablo Lau  
Red: Walter Perez, Blanca Chique, Haiskel

## Australian Land Update



Jean Mackintosh

It was the first day after the ten day retreat at Bermagui, Australia, the first day of the new moon, and many people had left on their homeward journeys back to their everyday lives. A few of us were staying close by to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, in a house overlooking Wallaga Lake with a view through the small lake's entrance and out to the expansive Pacific ocean beyond. As we lazily began the day Fabio Andrico came by to let us know we could practise with our Master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, in a few minutes time. Soon Rinpoche came walking along the lake's edge and we joined him to walk around the lake and over the headland. From there we had an expansive view of Gulaga mountain rising up behind Wallaga Lake, both sacred places to the Aboriginal people. We walked past the hunting ground of a large hawk who daily circled Rinpoche's house and our house and the retreat place at Hubara motel during our stay.

Rinpoche made his way carefully down the cliffs to the rocks at the ocean shore. There was one rock large enough for one person to sit precariously on with the ocean pounding down below. Rinpoche said that this was a good place to do a practice of the elements. We all sat on a much flatter rock down closer to the sea.

Rinpoche prepared an offering of some alcohol and fruit and a small candle which he placed on a rock ledge nearby. Then sitting with the

immense blue ocean in constant movement before us and the spacious bright blue sky above us, we did a Mandarava Ganapuja, sharing small pieces of fruit and a small taste of alcohol in our cupped hands. At the end Rinpoche covered the offering and candle with many tiny stones, leaving it there in a protective house of stones on the rock ledge. As we walked back along the shoreline we discussed plans to make concrete our acquisition of Woodlands.

Rinpoche visited Woodlands three times during his stay. On the day after his arrival at Bermagui, Rinpoche asked to go to Tilba and then to Woodlands. He said Monday was a good day for first contact with the land. I went to the land with Rinpoche and Fabio Andrico and we walked a short distance onto the open slope overlooking the sea and the distant hills and Rinpoche made a *sang* offering and rite for the local guardians. He said the land reminded him of some parts of Tibet, particularly Khamdogar.

Rinpoche returned to Woodlands for a second visit during the teaching retreat and about eighty people accompanied him for a picnic. We ate under a Coral tree and fig tree and ate ripe pears from the pear tree, laden with fruit. Rinpoche met the owner Mal Dibden who took Rinpoche down to Couria creek which runs through the property. We all made our way along this fern-covered stream which meandered through rocks and

boulders, grasses and trees, with the sound of the water singing over the rocks as it continued down to Wallaga lake. Rinpoche once more did a fire puja and *sang* offering on the land and we all sang the Song of the Vajra together.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's third visit to Woodlands began with auspicious signs as we drove over the small bridge on Wallaga lake. The bridge was festooned with palm leaves and flags and as we drove under these and up to the mountain we felt the day had begun very well indeed.

On Woodlands we met Mal Dibden who drove Rinpoche and some of us up to the top of the land in his tractor chariot. It was a wonderful ride as we drove through ferns and grasses up into the tall trees. We could see for miles out to sea and over the distant hills. As Rinpoche said during the retreat it is really a "wonderful land". On the top rock we ate our lunch and made an offering to the guardians. We then climbed down a little to a special place of rocks shaded by an old, old fig tree.

There Rinpoche placed some special stones in the rocks. He had prepared a *namkha* for the land and two white scarves with sacred signs and seed syllables inscribed on them. These were carefully hung in the trees nearby. We made a *sang* offering and sang the Song of the Vajra under these ancient trees and rocks. After that Rinpoche hung some prayer flags in the trees over one of the highest rocks. Mal Dibden who joined us for these ceremonies said the flags looked as if they had always been there. Rinpoche thanked Mal for the help he had given us and invited him to become a member of the Community. He also invited him to come to Tibet on Rinpoche's next trip. At the end of the day, we unfurled the Vajra Dance mat on the grassy flat under the coral tree and together danced the Song of the Vajra, with the sun forming tigles in our eyes as we danced.

Tonight I am in Sydney as Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is about to leave Australia in a few days time. We have just heard that the owner of Woodlands has accepted our offer and we are soon to sign a contract for this land.

## CHÖD: Cutting Through Dualism

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

This digital recording of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is the first in a series which Arniata 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.

## Tashi Delek

Enjoy warm and friendly Tibetan hospitality

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## Who is Singing in Singapore?

by Cheh "Who's Singing" Goh

During the retreat in Kathmandu, the Singaporeans requested that, since there would be a big gap of more than ten days between Rinpoche's arrival in Thailand and his departure for Australia, would he be so kind as to come to Singapore? With tremendous luck, a six day teaching retreat was agreed.

After arriving in Singapore, Rinpoche and his two travelling companions were accommodated in a quiet apartment 14 floors above the ground, not far from the central shopping area of Orchard Road. The organiser tried to fill the kitchen up with provisions according to a list put together by Fabio. In the day time, the Master was generally invited out to lunch, and in the evening, he preferred staying home and resting, with Fabio doing the saltless, fatless, non-fried health conscious dishes.

The teaching started on March 11 in an alumni hall of a famous Chinese high school. A variety of nationalities were present at the retreat.

Every day Fabio would begin in the morning at 8.30 with Yantra

yoga, and the Master would start the teaching at 10.00. After lunch, the teaching resumed at 3 o'clock, with the Vajra Dance continuing till 7.00.

Even though the retreat was only six days, the Master covered a wide range of topics, including the four ordinary mind trainings, the seven trainings of the mind, some *semzin*, a very detailed explanation of the Mandarava long life practice and doing the practice together, Chod and doing the Chod together, Vajrapani and many other transmissions.

I volunteered to take over Fabio's cooking task one evening. Together with Paula, we created a four and a half dish dinner. There were plenty of tasty things to eat, and all five of us had a fun evening together. It was discovered that since my name pronounced in my dialect is totally different from it pronounced in Mandarin, Fabio decided to try it out. The result? "Who's Singing" becomes my name. Finally I found out what I should be called!

On the last days we had, as usual, a Ganapuja with interesting local meat dishes in the offering.

After the Ganapuja, we went to the cinema to catch the penultimate show

of "The Little Buddha". Emerging from the theatre, we all agreed that the film was well done, and everybody was impressed by the acting skill of Sogyal Rinpoche, and his unforgettable laughing face in the film.

We then moved on to a dinner that the participants of the teaching retreat had prepared to thank Norbu Rinpoche, Fabio and Prima Mai. It was a buffet type "steam boat" dinner, which corresponds to a Tibetan "gyak kok", a way of eating originating probably in Mongolia, with each person cooking his own food in a boiling pot.

The days after the Master mainly rested, also arranging for some funds to be sent to Chamdo in East Tibet for the construction of roads.

A swim in the evening, followed by a visit to the zoo the next day, and the stay in Singapore was over.

We are grateful to our Master for having come.

The Singapore community will be doing the OM A HUM dance regularly every Friday evening in addition to the normal special day practices.

All are welcome to join in!

## Eminent Woman Master Sakya Jetsun Chimed Luding to teach at Merigar August 23rd to 25th



The cost of the retreat is 120.000 lire or 50.000 lire per day. Babysitting service available. Small fee. Reservation required.

Invited by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Sakya Jetsun Chimed Luding Rinpoche will teach at Merigar from August 22 to 25. Sister of Sakya Trinzin, head of the Sakya school, Jetsun Kuchog began her first yogini training at the age of eight. From the age of eleven, she studied the extensive teachings of *lamdre* (path and fruition) at Ngor monastery. At the age of eighteen, Jetsun Kuchog gave her first three month retreat, attended by hundreds of monks and nuns.

Rinpoche is one of the three women in the history of Tibet to have transmitted the *lamdre* teachings, a system of contemplative and meditative practices particular to the Sakya lineage. She escaped to India with her family in 1959, and today lives in Vancouver, Canada. Born a princess of the Khon dynasty which has ruled the Sakya clan for 1300 years, Jetsunma is the mother of five children.

While her teaching program at Merigar has not yet been announced, in Germany she is giving the Hevajra, Vajrayogini and Twenty-one Taras initiations, with the explanations of the *sadhanas*.

Her schedule in Europe is as follows:

Germany August 1-11 Pfauenhof (Space of the Peacock)  
France August 13-14 Kuttolsheim Sakya Tsechen Ling  
Spain August 16-21 Barcelona and Alicante  
Italy August 22-25 Merigar  
Germany September 5-7 Pfauenhof  
For further information on her teachings outside of Italy:  
Fax: Pfauenhof F.V. Germany 0203 3435 71

## E-Mail

John Bidleman

Twenty-five years ago the first electronic mail sparked the Internet, inaugurating what was to be a major leap in communication technology. This article is the first in a series concerning possible uses by the Community of this new resource.

While not everyone is enamoured of this new mode of communication, the phenomena of e-mail is here to stay, already entrenched in the American and European way of doing business, keeping touch and just plain having fun. Not only has e-mail brought people and their organisations closer but it has resulted in a certain amount of vertical "flattening", a lessening of hierarchy and corporate "caste". It is this democratic influence that e-mail brings to its users and their organisations that lends an air of familiar correspondence and an oral format that seems to dissolve barriers including that of distance.

It is no surprise that with twenty million persons using e-mail in such a pedestrian manner, it eventually would be implemented in the Community's way of carrying on its affairs. As of this writing, there are over thirty members on the e-mail posting list, comprising nearly every continent.

While it is not necessary for every community member to be online, it would be useful for someone in each Community group to gain this capacity. It is also important for everyone to understand the value of Internet to the Dzogchen Community, no matter how secondary it may seem.

Communication is the sole

importer of information in this or any society, structure or organization. While e-mail will never replace the fax, telephone or postal service for their characteristics (you cannot e-mail a melong for example), it is rapidly enlarging its own importance in the world of rapid transit messaging. The marriage of personal computer and instant messages opens up a whole new world of text building, editing and distribution.

Some of the more obvious advantages to communicating in this new way are speed and cost, faster than snail mail and much cheaper than a phone call. Internet connectivity via a personal shell is usually around \$19 per month. Depending on the service you choose, you may incur additional charges on a per hour basis.

To understand e-mail it is required to know a little about the addressing system. For instance: (chodpa@chanel.com). Where "chodpa" is the user name, "chanel" is the domain or the UNIX site where the user has his account and "com" is the type of site.

Com is short for communication, Edu for Educational, Org for organization, Mil for Military, and Gov for Government.

If all this is lost on you, don't be dismayed. It is not for everyone but in fact may benefit everyone. The ideal situation would be where at least one person in each area has online capabilities so that he/she may share the immediacy and accessibility of the system. Right now the technology is easily available for a live world-wide transmittal of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's talks via the Internet.

Let us say Rinpoche is teaching at Tashigar. Present is one of his students with a portable computer linked with a microphone via modem to anywhere in the world. This can be multiplied simply by a four line node in the United States branching to Merigar, Tsegyelgar, etc. In this example, one person could benefit many with his use of this technology.

The possibilities of online conferencing, a world-wide Gakyil meeting (with Rinpoche "present") and other advantages seem to shrink the world even more and bring corners of the far-flung Dzogchen Community just a little bit closer.

Any questions regarding e-mail, ftp or aspects of the Internet can be directed to John Bidleman (robbee@crl.com) or Mark Baraz (complady@netcom.com).

**The Dzogchen FTP site at crl.com**

For those who have Net capabilities and would like to access the ftp site at crl.com: Type (ftp crl.com) at the UNIX prompt

Then login as (anonymous)

Password is your e-mail address (example: yogi@yellowstone.edu)

Then type (cd users/ro/robbee/rDzogs-Chen)

The commands are as follows:

(cd) is the command to (c)hange (d)irectory

(ls) will show you all the files in the current directory

(get) will allow you to receive files. Example: (get Zhi-gNas.txt) will send the Zhi-gNas.txt to your home directory.

For general help, e-mail the site manager: (robbee@crl.com)

Next issue: Buddhist Bulletin Boards, Telnet and Coombspapers.

## Shang-Shung Editions



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by Giovanni Arca

From April 20th to 23rd I was in the United States to organize distribution of Shang-Shung publications in America.

After an intense exchange of letters and faxes I was able to meet Laurie Marder from Conway to settle (in person) those aspects which are difficult to clarify at a distance. Laurie accepted responsibility for coordinating distribution of our internal publications and developing new, original, publications.

Shang-Shung Editions is expanding its production. The goal is to produce every work in English and to start regularly sending these to the United States from where they will be distributed to the rest of the world.

In the near future we may have an American Shang-Shung as Laurie is interested in furthering the publication of titles on specific themes of the teachings.

This is one of our objectives held in common but is not easy to achieve since it requires research on texts already transcribed and on the recordings of Namkhai Norbu's teachings. It is not easy to find people who are willing and able to do this work as it has to be either voluntary or paid very little, but we feel it is very important and want to commit ourselves to getting it under way.

In the new seat of Tsegyalgar, the former Conway elementary school, there will be a small office for Community publications so we will have a Shang-Shung operational centre in North America too. We now feel that we have a Shang-Shung representative in America with whom to collaborate in publishing the texts of the teachings.

Plans to publish other titles for distribution are, as yet, less clearly defined. We confirmed our wish to preserve the trade name Shang-Shung in America. Certain financial aspects and questions regarding distribution are still to be clarified.

## Shading the Gonpa



Tsering Wangchuck, master painter

(photo F. Dowe)

### Martha Heinen

It is April now. The everchanging climate of spring has arrived and the clouds, trees and colorful flags around the gonpa are all in constant motion.

And by the wind of good karma, and, of course through the invitation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, we were able to welcome a well known Tibetan thanka painter from Tashi Jong, India, and his wife who is his very able assistant. Tsering Wangchuck and his wife, Sonam Palmo, have started a new era of painting in the gonpa.

Now, after only four weeks of their intensive work, you can see a beautiful panorama of Dzogchen masters from the Nyingma lineage.

In the center of the painted panel there is Guru Padmasambhava with Yeshe Tsogyal and Mandarava, and

the whole line of seventeen figures is guarded by Mahakala Mani and Ekajati.

It has been truly magical to watch the figures appearing out of nothingness through the hands of Tsering Wangchuck. In a very quiet and relaxed way with concentration and skillful knowledge, the artist gives every figure a vivid form.

Behind these figures your eyes can "walk" through a living landscape where running waters and snow capped mountains lead you to a clear sky with good weather clouds.

The Tibetan technique of shading gives the whole picture a dimension of depth. This delicate art of shading has to be done with great patience, since you build up, little by little, tiny spots of color which then give the illusion of a third dimension. Sonam Palmo is an expert in this art,

and with great kindness and humor has taught some of us, again and again, how to use this ancient technique.

In April the days can start with stormy rain, continue with sun, in between some snow or hail, all kinds of clouds appear, and then the day may end in the fire red beams of sunset.

Every working day in the gonpa is a bit like such an April day, bringing many different shades of energy inside. Sometimes the atmosphere is pleasing. Each person silently painting at his or her place while listening to music or the sounds of pujas brings a sense of joy and relaxation. Then a nice tea break, a bit of fooling around and neck massages for some stiff ones.

But where there is sun there is also shadow, and disagreements are sometimes unavoidable, even while working in such a sacred place as the gonpa. Yet by remembering the real sense of the teachings, we try to overcome our attachments and train in working together.

In moments of clarity, a deep appreciation arises; just that feeling of the good fortune to be here and to participate in such a great vision.

There is still much work to be done to complete the "Great Flower", "The Gonpa of Great Liberation Through Seeing". Practitioners skilled in the art of painting are welcome to collaborate. Please offer your services through the secretary of Merigar.

## Ontul Rinpoche teaches at Merigar

by Liz Granger

This Easter, Merigar was fortunate to host Ontul Rinpoche who led a teaching retreat for six days. He had been invited by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and gave a teaching by Patrul Rinpoche, "On the Mahayana View: Clarifying the two truths", an important contribution to the Santi Maha Sangha training.

Ontul Rinpoche, who holds transmissions of both the Drikung Kagyüpa and Nyingma traditions, has established the Ogmin Thubten Shedrub Ling Monastery in Rewalsar, Himachal Pradesh, traditionally called Tso Pema or "Lotus Lake" by Tibetans. On this trip he was accompanied by Tashi Dolma, his wife, and their lively six year old son, Konchog Akha, youngest of their three children. Tashi Dolma frequently translated and organised for Rinpoche.

The teaching started late in the afternoon of Friday, April 1st when Rinpoche began to explain this profound Mahayana text on the relative and absolute truth. For those present who had never studied Buddhist philosophy before, the teaching sessions became periods of deep concentration and continual attention in order to comprehend the concepts presented in the text. Nevertheless often the apparent difficulties of the Madhyamika philosophy melted into the intuitive light of the words of the great

Dzogchen master, Patrul Rinpoche. Listeners were fortunate to have the detailed and clear translations both in Italian and English given by Adriano Clemente, Chloe Anastasio and Elisa Copello. On a few occasions, the translators conferred over the precise rendering of some of the more complicated parts of the text. At the close of each of the teaching sessions, Ontul Rinpoche invited questions from those present in order to clarify any doubts or confusion.

An estimated one hundred to one hundred fifty people attended the retreat from all over Italy and abroad and the mandala hall was filled almost to its maximum seating capacity during the teaching sessions. Regular daily activities outside the times of the teaching sessions included sessions of Yantra Yoga led by Laura Evangelisti and the Om A Hum Dance taught by Adriana Dal Borgo on a mandala full of people.

On Sunday, Ontul Rinpoche gave the *Ngadän Tor Wang*, an initiation of Chakrasamvara whose origin goes back to Vajradhara. The essence of the practice is condensed into five sections. After the preliminaries which consisted of seven aspects Ontul Rinpoche gave four initiations: that of the body, through the vase and *torma*; the secret initiation; the initiation of wisdom; and the initiation of the word.

There was a pause from the

teaching sessions on Tuesday, April 5th which was *dakini* day. In the late afternoon, the many practitioners gathered to prepare the offerings for a Ganapuja after which twelve *pamo* and *pavo* danced the Dance of the Vajra for Ontul Rinpoche.

This retreat was an important and significant moment for Merigar. For the last two years Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has been spending less time at Merigar and dedicating more and more time to teaching around the world.

This has meant a period of transition and development at Merigar where, for years, we have had the almost continual physical presence and guidance of the Master.

Inspired by his example, more and more people are gradually assuming direct responsibility for the multitude of activities carried out at Merigar today, whether building, repairing, decorating, organising, carrying ahead projects, developing new ones, teaching, administering and carrying out the day to day daily jobs. The commitment of those who are active has brought about a subtle but decided change in the energy at Merigar.

This retreat was a manifestation of the combined collaboration of a dedicated group of practitioners in organising a successful teaching and practice retreat for the many old and new people who participated.

## Santi Maha Sangha Program

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
at Merigar

July 1st-2nd-3rd  
Santi Maha Sangha Base Level  
Examination

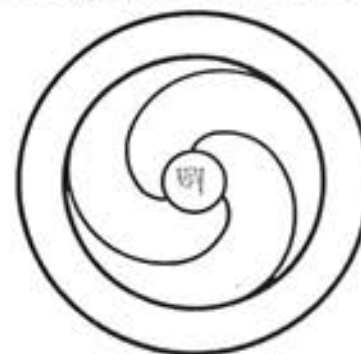
Registration can be made with the secretary at Merigar.  
Only members who have paid their 1994 dues will be admitted.

July 31st-August 7th  
Santi Maha Sangha  
First Level Teaching Retreat

The cost of the retreat is 120.000 lire (no discounts).  
Only members who have passed the Santi Maha Sangha base level examination may attend.

Babysitting service available. Small fee. Reservation required.

August 12th to 21st  
Teaching Retreat  
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance sessions are planned

The cost of the retreat is 350.000 lire or 40.000 lire per day. To benefit from Merigar membership discounts it is necessary to have paid your 1994 dues. Bring your membership card.

Babysitting service available. Small fee. Reservation required.

A great number of people will attend the August retreat. We are asking all of you to collaborate.

Register as soon as possible. Send a cheque or postal money order with the retreat fee specifying the cause. Bring your receipt. You will thus avoid long queues in the heat!

Given that the retreat will happen in August, height of the tourist season in Monte Amiata, it may be difficult to find lodgings. Hotels in the area are almost completely booked. Reserve directly, as quickly as possible. There are two camping grounds in the area with space for tents and caravans.

Merigar has accomodation for an extremely limited number of people. Distribution will be made giving priority to need.

The painting of the gonpa will be suspended between July 20th and August 31st.

## Courses at Merigar

Yantra Yoga  
July 15th to 17th

Vajra Dance  
July 4th to 10th  
July 18th to 24th

Kumar Kumari - Yantra Yoga for Children  
Course for adults  
August 9th to 11th

Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen, Merigar, 58031  
Arcidosso GR, Italy. Tel 564 966837, 966322. Fax 564 968110.

# On Collaboration in the Dzogchen Community

*continued from page 1*

Community, the teachings and the transmission without it. The continuation of the Dzogchen Community does not mean just groups of people in centres who meet together for a few days, and then everyone disappears. That is not the principle. The principle is the transmission. During a retreat I am explaining every day, transmitting mantras, methods, etc. Then what do you do? You practise these methods and you apply them. To use what you have learned, you also need the circumstances and possibilities. You cannot do all practices everywhere. A practise like the "Guru Yoga of the White A" you can do at any moment, going to work or in your house.

But for having realisation or a concrete benefit in our life, it is not sufficient to do the white "A" occasionally and remain in this presence a few minutes. You need to do more. Though maybe you do not have the opportunity at the moment, perhaps one day you will. If you have the possibility one day, what will you do? Where will you go? In which way will you practise and develop your knowledge and your understanding?

For this we need the right circumstances. That's why I am trying to create different Dzogchen Community gars. Gar means a main place for meetings, for applying practices. A number of Community gakyils and small gars already exist. But my idea is that we need four or five main gars in the world, because the world has many continents. In Europe we already have Merigar. There are many other small gakyils or gars. For example, in France they are trying to create something. In Europe the Community is organized in different places but the main gar is Merigar in Italy. In the same way in America we have Tsegyalgar in Massachusetts and also gakyils in California and Santa Fe, New Mexico, because America is a big country.

If we are not organised and someone wants to do, for example, a dark retreat, then that person cannot always go to very far places. We need facilities nearby where it is possible to practise. We need to create in this way. We also need a main gar for training, for developing our knowledge, our understanding and in the same way, it also means working with me, for example.

Now I am present in the Dzogchen Community as a teacher and I am transmitting, working with all students who are interested. But I cannot be everywhere so easily. I have to move on and I cannot manifest many Namkhai Norbus, otherwise I could transform into something like ten or twenty Namkhai Norbus and go everywhere and give teachings at the same moment and also training; but in

fact it is really hard for me.

For example, this year I have a very busy schedule and many people protested saying the load is too heavy and that I shouldn't do it. "We want you to live long", they say. I know this very well. Also sometimes when I am doing too much travelling and doing many things I feel very tired, of course. That is natural and sometimes it is not good for my health. I know this very well, but for example I promised to go many places and to do something. I realise I cannot do this for the rest of my life.

My intention is that at least I want to go to the main places, for example, the four or five principal gars. Already we have one in South America, Tashigar in Argentina. We also have gars in America and Europe. In this continent we need a gar, that is important. So I propose that people who are interested get a small piece of land for this gar. I asked many years ago and many people have gone searching.

I remember once when I went to Singapore I couldn't come here, but people from Australia came to me and brought two or three maps of places and information on land. Some places seemed nice, but I thought maybe a country like Australia could have a place near the ocean. In Argentina and Italy we have gars on a kind of mountain, and also in Tsegyelgar. So I thought at least one gar should be near the ocean. You see we have some very important practices like that of the sound of the elements. We need the presence of the elements to perform this practice. When we are near the ocean the contact with water is not only for enjoying and swimming, but also for practice. For that reason I asked for that kind of location.

Finally, last year I received from Australia information that a piece of land was found between Melbourne and Sydney. This I also suggested because otherwise it is not so easy for people; a central position is very good. Not only was this land centrally located, but also it was not very far from the ocean. So, I thought this land could be good. I also received information and photos. The only thing is that it seemed very big and expensive. It also depends if you can find land less expensive and more comfortable. If we have several alternatives, of course we can choose, but if we don't, what to do. On the first or second day after I arrived here, I went to see the land because for a long time I had been interested.

To tell you the truth, I'm very much aware of time, of impermanence. I feel impermanence

is something very concrete. Nobody knows for how many more years I will be alive. We don't know, so if we want to do something, we must do it quickly, when there are the circumstances, when there is the possibility. Some people think that one day there will be very nice land in Australia, maybe after two, five or ten years. But I don't know if after ten years the chance to do something will still exist, for

We decided to buy the land and I put down the ten million which was all we had and then I left for Tibet. When I came back we had no money, but after two months we had to give another thirty million lire. At the Christmas retreat I explained to our practitioners that we had finally found a wonderful piece of land, and how we needed the thirty million immediately. We tried to get the money here and there. Many of the

very rich family lived, offering soup to all the beggars. So he went there, sat down and got soup with the other beggars. In his soup he found a piece of meat which had fallen into his bowl. That is all. He did not receive anything else.

So he went back and did more pujas of Dorje Legpa. Dorje Legpa appeared again and asked "What do you want this time?" "I need your siddhi, your help" the old man said. Then Dorje Legpa said "I helped you already." "What did you do?" said the old man. "I gave you that big piece of meat. There was only that one piece and I gave it to you." "Oh, if this is your kind of siddhi, giving a bit of meat, I don't need that kind of siddhi. I hoped you could do more." Dorje Legpa said "I was not able to do more because you have no good causes. You must have a good cause for karma and then I can help."

I gave this example, to suggest that maybe we don't have a good cause. So, in this case, even if we do Dorje Legpa, Dorje Legpa doesn't know what to do. And then in Italy they asked what we could do to create a good cause.

I said that the most important thing for creating a good cause is doing a Ganapuja. We decided to do

a Ganapuja, day and night for many days without interruption and in the end we also did many Dorje Legpa pujas.

Before the time limit ended to pay the rest of the money, we had it all. We received many donations. That is an example. We didn't have any problem. Sometimes money is really relative, often, of course, we must do something.

In any case, I think it is important that people who are really interested in the teaching have a small piece of land. When there is land, we can have a gar, and that also means I can come and spend longer periods of time. We can also do things like Santi Maha Sangha training. I want to do that in all the gars and we can co-ordinate different kinds of retreat places, for example a dark retreat and for other types of practices.

The Community becomes something more alive and concrete. I think that it is important for everybody who is interested in the teaching. Of course, if someone listens a bit to the teaching, and then goes back home and lives only in a personal way with no wish for a continuing contact, such a person has too little commitment for a project of this kind. However, it is important for Community people to work in the direction of collaboration.



example. We should be concrete. There is now this land and I feel it is really wonderful. I do not know how you feel. In any case, even if we think it is expensive, sometimes it is relative, not really so heavy.

I remember in Italy, when we started thinking about the purchase of land, we had at that time only ten million lire. I sent people everywhere searching for a small piece of land. We needed it because otherwise we would have no place for meeting. For years we were looking for land. Then I proposed to people that if we found very expensive land, we could spend thirty million lire though we only had ten in hand. I was thinking that the twenty million lire we could find somehow, borrow from someone, something like that.

Before I went to Tibet in 1980, I went to the place that is now Merigar because a family who lived near the land invited me for a weekend. I didn't go to see land, I only went to visit the family and spend the weekend there. In the evening we said that for years we had been looking for land and still couldn't find anything. Then they told me that there was land for sale on the top of a hill which maybe I would like to see. I said yes, we will go tomorrow. So, the next day we went and it was wonderful land but it was very expensive.

people in the Dzogchen Community were interested and were offering and giving donations, so we put all the money together and after two months we had more than thirty million and we paid it.

But we still needed more money. In a few months time we had to give the rest, all the money, the total money. If we didn't have the money we would have a problem because we had made an agreement. People were very worried and there was only a short time left. We had no idea how we could find this money.

Some people suggested a puja of Dorje Legpa. I thought that is a solution, but may not be sufficient. I told them that Dorje Legpa alone probably could not solve the problem, and I told them the following story:

"Once there was an old man who always did pujas of Dorje Legpa. He was very poor and led a miserable life and he was practising in order to have more money. One day Dorje Legpa manifested to him, and the old man said 'Why haven't you appeared until now, I have been praying for years?' Dorje Legpa said 'What do you want?' The man said 'You see I'm very poor and have many problems. Please help me.' Then Dorje Legpa said 'I'll help you tomorrow.' The next day the poor man went to the countryside where a



## “Director meet Director”

An interview between Mario Maglietti, Director\* of Merigar and Woody Paparazzo, President\* of Tsegylgar, Merigar, March 13th, 1994

\*The difference in title is only verbal, the responsibility is identical.

**Mario Maglietti:** First of all welcome to Merigar, Woody. It's a great pleasure and opportunity to have Barbara and you here for a few days.

I'd like to start with a personal question first. How did you meet Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche?

**Woody Paparazzo:** I was a student of Paul and Naomi Anderson who were teachers of the Gurdjieff teaching. We had a community in Conway, Massachusetts for about twelve years. Near the end of Mr. Anderson's life, he became interested in Buddhism and was introduced to the teachings of Norbu Rinpoche through transcriptions of his retreats. He wrote a letter to Rinpoche inviting him to come to our community. On his way to a retreat in California in the summer of 1982 Rinpoche stopped at Conway where he gave a retreat for about ten days during which we met him.

The connection was very strong, very immediate, between many people who were students of the Andersons, and Rinpoche. Many of the students became interested in Rinpoche's teaching and we formed the Dzogchen Community there in Conway.

**Mario:** Do you remember the first time you saw Norbu Rinpoche and the feeling you got?

**Woody:** When Rinpoche came, after some esitation and doubts, I went and listened to the teaching and I was very interested and by about the third day I was just amazed and I saw Rinpoche as an incredible teacher. I also saw how this teaching was very much in keeping with the real essence of the teachings which I had learned from the Andersons.

**Mario:** When did you become president of the Tsegylgar Gakyil and what do you consider to be the definition and actual commitment of this position?

**Woody:** That's an interesting question because I have the same question for you. I became president of the gakyil at the most recent retreat we had with Rinpoche, last summer.

Since I had some experience in that area because I am a lawyer, I think he felt it would be useful at this time for the activities of the Community for me to be in the red group.

What it means is not so easy to say. I think that each president tries to answer that question himself. We know that in Rinpoche's vision about how the Community is organised that the director or president directs the meetings of the gakyil, which of course I do.



Mario Maglietti and Woody Paparazzo

(photo Barbara Paparazzo)

I also think that the president has the responsibility to see that whatever projects the gakyil has undertaken continue to progress. So the president sometimes needs to encourage people or create circumstances so that projects don't get stalled and make no progress.

I also think that the president, in my experience, should try to facilitate communication within the gakyil and also can sometimes be the person to whom members of the Community can convey their ideas and make communication with the gakyil which I try to perform that function.

**Mario:** Personally I feel that, as the director, there are serious decisions to be taken in the everyday life of Merigar and since the activities are going so fast and are so intense I often have to face the necessity of making quick decisions. I have to assume some direct responsibility and sometimes I feel that I go around the gakyil because perhaps there is no time or further consultations it would confuse the situation even more. Do you sometimes have to face this type of problem?

**Woody:** I've noticed in this short time that I've been at Merigar that there are many projects proceeding a little bit independently and I think that that is very good. In Tsegylgar we are still a little over-cautious about that because we have more of a tendency not to make decisions without having sufficient discussion in the gakyil. But as more projects begin to be in full progress, I think we will find that we will be in the same situation as you are. I think that that is naturally the way that it would have to be and that is why it is important that the director and the people of the gakyil have the trust of the Community in order to make these kind of decisions. Obviously it is impossible at a certain point to be able to discuss and reach consensus on everything that has to

be done. I think that this is in a way a sign of maturity of the Community: that we can arrive at that point and can feel comfortable that decisions can be made, that projects can progress, that there is trust in the communication and sufficient communication so that people can feel comfortable that their ideas and opinions are heard and they have the ability to influence the way things are going but they can also feel comfortable with people making decisions and progress without always getting permission or a consensus from the gakyil or the Community at large each step of the way.

I just thought it would be useful, since we are on this topic, that I ask you essentially the same questions. I'd be interested to hear your idea of how the director functions in the framework of the Community as Rinpoche has envisioned it.

**Mario:** I think the Community in Italy and especially that part of it which is active here at Merigar is in a different situation compared to the Community at Tsegylgar. First of all, it is much larger. In all Italy there are close to 1,000 people who participate at Merigar and we have to take care of whatever is in their interests. Secondly, as far as I understand, the Tsegylgar Community consists of a compact group of people who come from a previous experience with the Gurdjieff teaching and they have known each other for a long time.

In our Community there is a much faster change or exchange of people. The people who have been here since the beginning of Rinpoche's teaching in Italy have been through all the changes of the Community and Rinpoche's approach to the teachings and his approach to the Community itself. There has been an incredible evolution from the beginning up to now. First we were very few people, maybe at the first retreat there were around twenty people.

Now retreats with Rinpoche are followed by 700 or 800 or 900

people, which gives an idea of the change in the dimension. Rinpoche has been changing his style, of course, according to the growing dimensions of the Community and according to the changing situations of people and this is part of his teachings. For many of us who have been here from the beginning, it has sometimes been a difficult process to adapt to the new situation. Some people got attached to the first style that Rinpoche showed in giving teachings and in relating to the Community. It was a very personal relationship for everybody. There was a warm feeling of being very close, which

I feel is still there. Some people think this has been lost because of the Community's growth in size.

So the people who have been following Rinpoche and who have been part of the Community for a very long time feel the burden in a positive and sometimes in a difficult way. Knowing all these experiences and trying to put them together in a way that will make it possible for other people to understand the whole process: how we got to this point of being much more organised, behaving in a much "straighter" way than we were before. This is a very particular point. I think all of us feel that this long experience has to be communicated to other people.

For me, for instance, it is not so easy to condense in one decision the many ways I see the decision could be taken, seen from different points of view. People whose experience is much shorter in the Community do not always realize how many factors must be considered in what might seem a simple matter. So being director implies some really deep responsibility, especially when Rinpoche is not here.

When he is here if something is to be discussed, we go to him and quickly and simply we get answers, or sometimes no answer, so we go ahead.

Now that he is away for longer periods of time because the Community has become so large in the world and his commitments are so many, there has also been this jump into more responsibility. Sometimes, people criticise those who have responsibility, the gakyil or the director, for deciding too much. That sometimes creates problems. There are so many feelings coming up in making decisions from your own point of view which might be a bit narrow. In a discussion, it often happens that we lose sight of the strict object of discussion in trying to make our point of view emerge. This happens sometimes at our meetings and we are trying to learn from that and check what is substantial and what

is not.

Also in the last two years there has been a reorganisation of the Community in Italy. Since Merigar is the main gar in Europe, this implies a lot of exchange of collaboration with the other gakyils which is not easy at all most of the time. Generally speaking I cannot say what a director could or should be. As you were saying it is very important to bring one's own contribution so that things start to move without necessarily the presence of one person or another. We are making the effort this year to have written directions based on our experience or past experience to give to new people when they form the new gakyil.

**Woody:** To respond to something you said before, I also find that whenever I feel very strongly about something it is usually an indication to me that it is because there is a personal attachment through ego and that I have a personal desire to have some control. When I see that, I try to just relax and I find that somehow a perspective arises on its own that is more rooted in my experience and understanding of the teaching. When I try to communicate that, it is communicated in a very different way and I think that people recognise that.

So part of the challenge of being the director, or the president, is to develop this skill which is very useful not only in the Community but in daily life as a way of applying the teaching.

**Mario:** Let's switch to another topic - collaboration. This is a key word that Rinpoche uses a lot. Last year we said here at Merigar that it would be the year of collaboration. I feel something has been done but maybe not enough especially in the collaboration between different communities in the world, different gakyils and gars. At least from our point of view, we didn't do enough to communicate with the rest of the Community. What do you think we could do in order to collaborate better and more profoundly?

**Woody:** I agree that it is becoming apparent that our communication needs to expand. It occurs to me that there is a parallel analogy between the way in which individuals in a Community collaborate and the way Communities collaborate. It has very much the same type of function but on a different level. And it seems to me that just as they deepen their transmission and connection with the teaching as individuals, that the possibility of collaborating with other individuals grows out of their understanding.

On a parallel at the level of the Community it is the same process. As each Community develops and

*continued on page 15*

# A Clarification of the Two Truths

An excerpt from the text with comment as taught by Ontul Rinpoche at Merigar, April 2nd, 1994.

Instructions on the Mahayana View (*Theg chen lta khrid bden gnyisrab tu gsal ba*) by Dza Paltrul Rinpoche

This text is a teaching on the two truths written by the great Dzogchen master, Patrul Rinpoche (1808-1887). It includes two principal aspects: the first is that of knowledge and the second concerns the practice. The aspect of knowledge can be subdivided into two aspects: knowledge of the external condition and knowledge of the nature of the individual.

Regarding knowledge of the external condition, even if we speak about the relative truth and of the absolute truth, the real condition of both is what is called *dharmadhatu*, the ultimate nature of all existence. As far as this ultimate real condition is concerned, one cannot speak of either absolute truth or relative truth as they are inseparable. Even in the state of illumination, the state of the final fruit, there is absolutely no base to define in terms of absolute or relative truth. As far as this ultimate real condition is concerned, one cannot speak of either absolute truth or relative truth because they are inseparable.

With regard to the appearances or illusory visions in which we live at the present moment, we cannot speak about the two truths of their real condition. The real condition of the illusory vision we perceive can be understood by the expression *nantong yermed* which means the non-duality or inseparability of appearances and emptiness. This refers particularly to the practice of *thögal*. One can also explain in terms of non-duality the inseparable state of the presence of *rigpa* and emptiness. This refers particularly to the practice of *trechöd*.

This recognition of the non-duality or inseparability of vision and emptiness or *rigpa* and emptiness, is itself the state of illumination, the inseparable or non-dual wisdom of the real condition of existence.

When, through awareness or recognition of the particular characteristics of either the relative or absolute truth, we realise the inseparability of the two truths, this understanding is called by different names: the "wisdom of inseparable union", or "non-dwelling *nirvana*" (a term which is used in the Mahayana and means *nirvana* which is beyond any consideration of either *samsara* or *nirvana*).

If we have this type of understanding only about external phenomena but not about the real condition of the individual, this knowledge remains something which refers to objects outside ourselves. If our knowledge remains at this conceptual level of a consideration of external phenomena, this type of knowledge cannot be an antidote to our passions



Ontul Rinpoche teaching at Merigar

and moreover it can develop our pride and sense of arrogance and our ego will become even stronger. Therefore we must also understand the real condition of the consciousness or mind of the perceiver of external phenomena.

We speak about two types of obstacles: those of the passions and those of knowledge. That which is called the obstacle of knowledge means attachment to a concept of independent existence of external phenomena. Believing in an "I" or in an independent substance of the individual corresponds to the obstacle of the passions. If we do not purify these two types of obstacles, we can never reach the state of illumination. For this reason we must reach a perfect understanding of both the nature of external phenomena and of the condition of the individual himself.

Concerning this point there are two aspects to consider. First of all we must understand the condition of the two truths. This type of understanding can only give a temporary knowledge. Even if it is only temporary, we must try to have this understanding of the relative truth and the absolute truth as separate aspects because the finality we must reach is the understanding of their non-duality or inseparability.

The first aspect still concerns the knowledge of the two truths as separate. First of all phenomena seem to exist at the relative level, but however they manifest they have no separate essence or substance. Therefore we arrive at an understanding that all which appears is only an illusion, like magic.

In reality we cannot define the absolute condition either in terms of being or in terms of non-being, that is, we cannot define that there is nor that there is not. This condition can be compared to space, to the sky. It is this understanding we should have.

The finality of this knowledge, the true nature of the inseparability of the two truths, is that which is called the *dharmadhatu*, the real condition of phenomena, of

existence. This condition is completely beyond any limits or concepts and for this reason is called the "great middle path". The same mind or consciousness that has this comprehension is itself relative because it has a concept. Holding a concept of the final condition indicates relative existence and not the real absolute condition.

A quotation from the "*Bodhisattvacaryavata*" by Shantideva says that the true meaning of the absolute truth is not within the sphere of the knowledge

our own condition, remains only something conditioned by our pride and sense of ego. A feeling of pride or arrogance indicates a typical activity of the demons which signifies that our knowledge is incorrect.

The sutra "The Sphere of Illumination Which Pervades Everything" says that a definition or concept of obtainment implies the movement of an illusory or deceiving thought. If one thinks that one has a real understanding (of the two truths and their inseparability), this is pride and the arrogance of the ego.

When there is an intention or a movement of thoughts and, at the same time, this feeling of pride, both are activities of the demons. A person who has this strong sense of pride or ego and who thinks that he has realised or obtained a clear understanding only remains in the conceptual. A type of mind which understands in that way has the characteristics of the relative. But that same condition is also the absolute. This is because when we are speaking of the mind that knows, that understands something, this nature of the mind is relative. But if we observe what we call mind or consciousness, we do not find anything concrete.

This essence of the mind or consciousness from its origin has

## In conversation with Ontul Rinpoche

"Whatever practices, whatever rituals, whatever one does at all, is for the purpose of recognizing and knowing the meaning of our Buddha nature. It is important to watch the mind, but only watching the mind is not enough. We must have very deep devotion to the Master. This great faith in the Guru will help realise the mind. Realization cannot be accomplished without this devotion.

Take the example of a person trying to hit a target. If his aim is good, he can hit the centre. In the same way deep faith in the Master will help the disciple to recognise and realise his Buddha nature.

Observing the mind is essential for people who live in the West or anywhere. Reflect on karma, cause and effect, and prepare for the next life. Do whatever you can and like to do in the way of practise, even for short periods. Who likes something will always find time for it, and, in the case of practise, should try to accomplish as much as possible."

of our mind. Everything which belongs to the mind is only relative. If we have an intellectual knowledge of the absolute condition of the inseparability of the two truths, this itself remains relative. Any type of knowledge that we may have is always intellectual. If it is through the mind, then it belongs to the relative. The real absolute condition is beyond the mind. This means that our mind cannot go beyond judging. The mind cannot know what is beyond the mind. Therefore everything which remains within the sphere of understanding of our mind is called relative.

Any type of understanding which we have about the real condition of phenomena, if it does not refer to

been free or empty of both concepts of there is or there is not. Thus it is empty of concepts of that which arises or finishes. Moreover we cannot say that it is something that comes or that disappears. It is empty and beyond all limits of something which has a permanent existence or definitions that nothing exists. One cannot define it in terms of a substance which exists forever nor can one say that nothing exists. It is between these two limits.

In this real essential condition there is absolutely nothing to define in terms of past, present, or future. For this reason this condition is called the absolute condition of the *dharmata*, or the nature of existence and phenomena.

The "Sutra Requested by Kasyapa" says that the mind cannot be found internally in some part of the body. Neither can it be found outside. But one does not even remain with the concept that it cannot be found either inside or outside the body.

Another *sutra* says that the mind does not have a form, nor a colour nor a place where it resides. It is like space. The example that the mind is like the sky means like an immense dimension without centre or limits. When we want to understand the real nature of the mind, the only thing that we can arrive at is the real final condition of the mind and this inseparability of the relative and the absolute truth. We cannot distinguish between them.

The nature of the mind is a single state, a single condition. Examining the nature of the mind, though we may talk about two truths, this division into two aspects is only verbal, a means to clarify our understanding.

Translated from the Tibetan by Adriano Clemente and Chloe Anastasio, revised and edited by Adriano Clemente and Liz Granger.

**Biographical note:** Dza Paltrul Rinpoche was an enlightened master, a wandering yogi and erudite scholar, revered by all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. An emanation of Shantideva and thought to be the speech incarnation of Jigme Lingpa, he became a leader in the nonsectarian *rismed* movement. Paltrul Rinpoche's root guru was Jigme Gyalwai Nyugu, a remarkable master, who was a chief disciple of Jigme Lingpa.

Particularly treasured among Paltrul Rinpoche's numerous and profound writings, later gathered into six volumes, is "The Words of My Perfect Teacher" (*Kunzang lams shelung*), an introduction in simple and direct style to the fundamental practices of the Vajrayana and a summary of the Dzogchen Nyingthig as taught by his heart guru, Jigme Gyalwai Nyugu.

Rinpoche was a unique holder of the Nyingthig oral explanation lineage, in particular the *Yeshe lama*, a summary of Longchenpa's teachings written by Jigme Lingpa. He was also possessor of the precious Tsalung oral transmission lineage, which descends from Kamaripa, the blacksmith, one of the eightyfour Mahasiddhas.

When Paltrul's mother was old, he asked Adzam Drugpa to care for her during his absence. In return for this kindness, he wished to give Adzam Drugpa a present. Having no material possessions, Paltrul Rinpoche offered a much more precious gift, the *Yeshe lama* and Tsalung oral teachings.

He was known to say to everyone he met, "Have a good heart, and act with kindness; nothing is more important."

# Health, a Practitioner's Perspective

by Elio Guarisco

The premise for any discussion on health is that it belongs to the realm of duality. We can speak of a relative health and an ultimate health. Ultimate health is within the domain of the "spirit" and unfolds when one's natural state has been fully realized, in the dimension of enlightenment. Thus in a true sense a "healthy person" is only one who has realized his full potential, the "optimum of being". One who has not realized that can never be truly healthy. On the other hand, relative health is concerned with an embodied existence, with life in the world, and is therefore within time. The awareness of the impermanence of life is the balancing factor which puts into perspective any concern we may have for our health or that of others.

For a practitioner of the Teaching such awareness is essential, as it gives the stimuli to extract the essence of human life. As it is said: "Every morning in which imminence of death is not recollected brings a wasted day". If such awareness is lacking, our concern for our health, let alone that of others, just becomes an extension of grasping at permanence. Our longing for ultimate health will be overshadowed, a mere dream, if health becomes our main concern in life. Most so-called "health freaks," like anyone else involved in limited self-concern, make of their view and their lifestyle an absolute reality. This reinforces cage-like concepts, isolating them from meaningful relation with others. For a practitioner, even the highest concept, style of life, or spiritual practice is only a relative factor in a contingent situation, in the end to be discarded like a raft after crossing the river.

It is often asserted that health is important because it permits us to live longer and thus engage in protracted spiritual practice to attain eventual results. This idea is often nothing but a shield to protect one's obsessive self concern from criticism, because those who are really focused single-mindedly on the "inner quest" are free of excessive concern for their health. We should also remember that length of life is connected to many factors, not only to our wishes, but to our health, food, diet, medicines, habits, and so on. A major factor which determines lifespan is the "cosmic age," with lifespan shortening or lengthening according to the upward or downward movements of time cycles. Another factor is that our present embodiment is a "result of our past deeds," to which the length of life is directly linked.

Moreover good health does not necessarily guarantee good spiritual practice, and bad health does not necessarily close the door to inner development. Shantideva said that suffering (i.e., the unhealthy state) also brings benefit, since it gives stimuli to practice and helps us

understand the suffering of others. Techniques are given to transform bad conditions, including illness, into the path for awakening.

That a saint or accomplished master must be a healthy human being is a recurrent and common misconception of those who view the "inner quest" as an outer enterprise. Krisnamurti, for example, reckoned by many to have been a liberated being, was always on the razor's edge between life and death. The health of the late sixteenth Karmapa, an exemplary master, in

sufficiently healthy to help others. On the other hand, since the bodhisattva has to realize the benefit of others through knowledge and activities useful in this world, he learns the various human sciences, such as linguistics, logic, arts, the art of healing included. We find that many great figures of Buddhism in India and Tibet were at the same time doctors and alchemists, such as Nagarjuna, Nalina, Asanga (in India), and in Tibet, Rinchen Zangpo, Vairocana, Gampopa, Yutog Yonten Gonpo, Mipham Rinpoche, Kontrul

emotions, problems and so on. In the present society this would imply investigation of social factors and environment.

Modern society takes a reductive approach to health. Time consuming diagnoses, such as inquiries into eating habits, are often not feasible in our society. Diet, for example, has been for millennia the front-line against disease in all traditional medicines, though conspicuously absent from western medicine up to very recent times. Unfortunately also traditional medicines, preoccupied with herbal formulas to give relief from symptoms, have lost contact with dietary advice. Despite theoretically propounding a holistic approach to health, in practice they ignore diet. This is true also for Tibetan medicine. Though Tibetan medicine has a rich pharmacopoeia that uses more than two thousand herbs, far surpassing the knowledge of other traditional systems of medicine, diet nowadays is almost absent from Tibetan diagnoses and treatment. This is true not only for diet but for other therapies, including massage, hydrotherapy, fumigation, etc., which, although described in Tibetan medical texts, are almost never practised. Only direct therapy involving oral medications and moxibustion is used nowadays.

Another example from Tibetan medicine: the longevity preparations, not one of which is made on a regular basis in any Tibetan pharmacy around the world. To have them prepared, one must place a special order. These substances are important, and not to be understood merely as life-prolonging recipes, but rather as preventive medicines which balance the elements and energies of body and mind. Hopefully Tibetan doctors will revive the wealth of techniques lying in ancient libraries.

It is common to meet people who believe and affirm that their system of medicine (be it homeopathy, acupuncture, allopathy, Chinese medicine, Tao, herbology) can cure any disease. Tibetan doctors, in this respect more clever, generally abstain from such claims. In any case, the claim is hardly true, and making it reflects childish and narrow-minded clinging to one's system. I often heard such claims when I was translator for Tibetan doctors on visits to western health centers. Privately, however, the health workers of these centres came to seek advice from the Tibetan doctor as to their own ailments which they could not eliminate. To see the limits of one's medical system is important for any health operator. A doctor who does not see the shortcomings of his system and blindly believes in it can be very

harmful for a patient, unable to find the right treatment for his problem.

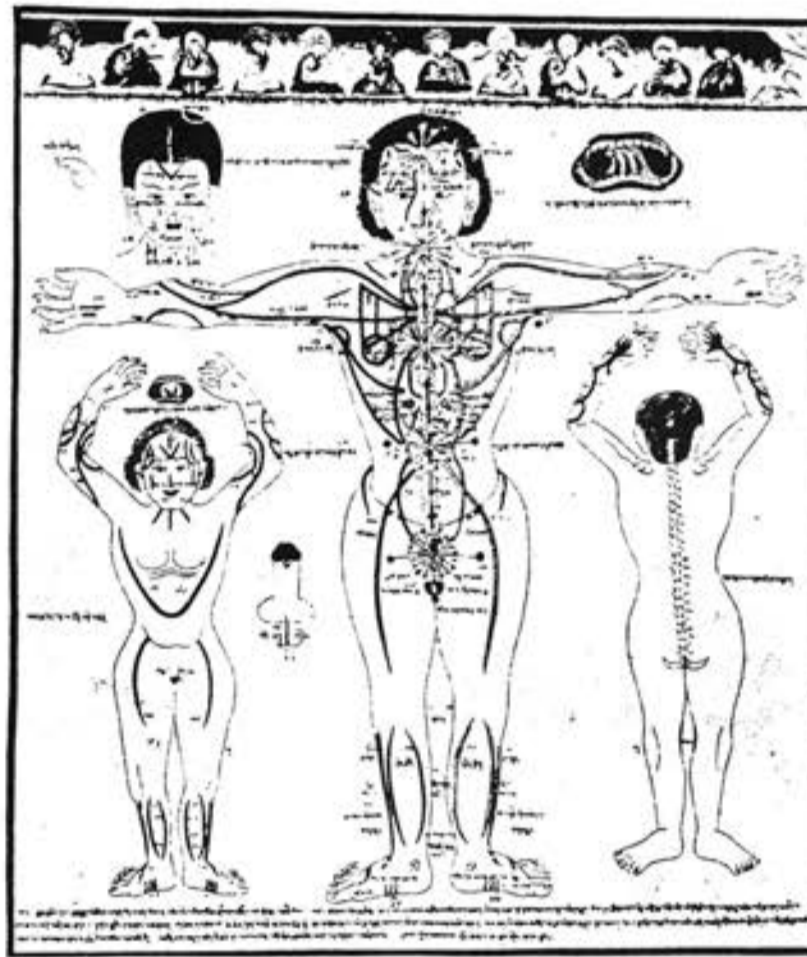
It is clear that a single system of medicine cannot solve all problems. Should one blend all systems? A certain measure of exchange is certainly advisable among medical systems, provided that there is no mindless merging of concepts and therapies. Although it is reasonable to present traditional or eastern medicine in a way that can be understood in the west, nonetheless we should realize that medical concepts and theories do not necessarily find matching terms and parallels. For example, calling the prana or lung concept of energy "negative ions," or "bioelectricity," could prove absurd when western science comes up with new discoveries and abandons the old concepts. This does not however exclude that modern systems adopt traditional methods or vice versa, as if often done nowadays, frequently with excellent results.

## Health as Personal Responsibility

To take health as a personal responsibility means to rely on one's own sensitivity, and to experiment. It involves knowledge of the properties of foods indicated by their flavors, and by their hot or cool natures. Properly balanced, a diet should also follow the seasonal rhythms, with fresh and unadulterated products. Foods are also deprived of certain minerals and substances they used to have; for this reason it is advisable to use various nutritional supports which give a stable metabolic rate. As diet alone is not sufficient to keep the balance of health, it has to be supplemented by regular physical exercise that stimulates the production of hormones and other healthy chemicals which the body produces naturally.

Body is inextricably related to mind, and it is obvious that this relation affects one's health. Violent emotions are direct agents of imbalance in the body. First they disturb the energy with which they intrinsically work, and in turn the energy contributes to the provocation of disease at an organic level. No real health can ever be experienced if we are not able to work with our emotions, and that is why contemplative disciplines are indispensable, not only for those who aim at higher goals, but also for better living. But meditation taken out of its context and aimed exclusively at health and well-being (rather than awareness) may not work as one expects.

Among the deepest, most complex, and most varied methods are those found in the Tibetan tradition. Some of these are sealed with secrecy and revealed only to adepts, and others present problems of accessibility. Therefore one should refer to a competent spiritual master, and not rely simply on book information.



later life was ridden with disease, which however did not impede his profuse selfless activities. He died devoured by cancer, impressing his doctors, who had never seen a human responding with such ease to suffering and death. Thus health and longevity are not to be seen as an end in themselves, but as means for one's own accomplishment and for helping others.

We do not mean to assert that one must disregard one's health. The Buddha himself, within the context of the way of renunciation (where the body is seen as a sore and excessive care is not to be given it), prescribed to the monks a quantity of remedies against various illnesses and to maintain good health, which are still used in Ayurvedic and Tibetan medicine. He preached subtle details about hygiene which would make any doctor blush.

In the Dharma, where the emphasis is wholehearted dedication to others, the approach to health care is twofold. On the one hand, to discard attachment for self and to give up his body to others, the bodhisattva regards his body as a mere phantom, to be cared for just enough to keep it alive and

Lodro Taye. A series of treasure discoverers also promulgated the art of healing, among them Rinchen Lingpa, Sangye Lingpa, Pema Lingpa, Tangton Gyalpo, and Mingyur Dorje. It is not exaggerated to say that each of the great sages in Dharma was expert in the art of healing.

## The Institutions of Health

More and more, in the western allopathic approach, health means only to get rid of a disease and its symptoms. Modern medicine has developed that way, and today faces collapse. Antibiotics, the so-called "wonder drugs", are proving no longer effective (besides having been clearly immuno-suppressive) even in removing common colds of which one soon may die. Health should rightly take into consideration both body and mind, as well as their relations by means of energy ("chi", bioenergetic forces). This, at the level of diagnosis, would involve first of all the investigation of the living patterns of the person, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, and daily activities. That would also involve exploration of his mental set,

# An Interview with Khandro Rinpoche

Khandro Rinpoche is a woman master, 28 years old, of the Kagyudpa and Nyingmapa traditions. A reincarnation of the Great Dakini of Tsurphu, who was the spiritual consort of the fifteenth Karmapa, Khakhyab Dorje (1871-1922), and an emanation of Yeshe Tsogyal, Rinpoche lives mainly in Northern India where she oversees a nunnery. Rinpoche gave her first teachings in Europe, in Germany and Austria, during summer, 1993.

The transmission Khandro Rinpoche bestowed last year was a teaching of Yeshe Tsogyal entitled "The Queen of Great Bliss" (*Yumka Dechen Gyalma*). In this practice, the experience of bliss (*dewa*) and of emptiness (*tongpa*) are unified (*detong yerme*). This term teaching was discovered by Jigme Lingpa, the 18th century master and founder of the Longchen Nyinthig tradition, and by Tertön Dechen Lingpa, whose version, entitled "De Karchensa", was the one transmitted by Rinpoche.

Khandro Rinpoche was recognised by the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, who subsequently became one of her principal teachers. She is the daughter of Mindroling Trichen Rinpoche, a major lineage holder of the Dzogchen transmission, and the ninth reincarnation of Rigzin Terdag Lingpa.

Rinpoche was interviewed on June 12th, 1993, during a short retreat in the mountains near Salzburg, by Gerd Manusch.

**GM:** Rinpoche, will you tell us about your background and education?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** This question is often asked. When I was very young my three root-gurus, Gyalwa Karmapa, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and Mindroling Trichen Rinpoche, decided that in order for me to learn English, the usefulness of which was already clear, I should be sent to a Western school for some time. Therefore, in my earliest years I alternated between school attendance and concentration on spiritual training; later I pursued both simultaneously, receiving religious instruction from my teachers and a Western education through upper secondary school. Then I studied a bit of medicine, after which I did *shedra* training, and then needed to devote myself to practice. Time did not permit further Western schooling; so I returned to Buddhist training.

In this way, I have been to Western school and received spiritual knowledge, studying texts in the monastery. In the period I did both, from 6 A.M. to noon I would study at St. Mary's convent, a Catholic school, and in the afternoon from 1 o'clock to 9 P.M. I would study at the monastery, a half day at each institution.

**GM:** Can you recall your past life as the Dakini of Tsurphu?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** This depends on what you would call



Khandro Rinpoche giving initiation

remembering. When one talks about knowledge of previous incarnations one does not necessarily mean flashbacks. But it is definitely something that one can feel or sense.

**GM:** Who are your principal masters and what are your personal lineages? How is your relationship to your father Mindroling Trichen Rinpoche?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** My root-gurus are Gyalwa Karmapa, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and of course, Mindroling Rinpoche, who have all been very kind. Concerning my father, more than seeing him as a father, I have always seen him as my root-guru, and I believe that, as many different teachers have said, he is the direct emanation of Padmasambhava. These three masters have been the most important in my life, as most of my *wangs*, the lineage itself and all the transmissions, come from them. Besides these teachers, I have studied with eleven *khenpos*, so there is a long list.

**GM:** What is your main personal practice regarding lineage and tradition?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** Personal practice in general, the yidam and different personal practices— is something you do rather than talk about. Concerning lineage and tradition, the precious Khandro was born in the Tsurphu tradition and so I have always maintained this Kamsung Kagyu lineage. Since I was also born in the Mindroling lineage— Mindroling being in my opinion the most important of the six Dzogchen lineages—I maintain this tradition as well. So I try to practice both the Dzogchen lineage of Mindroling, especially that based on the "Four Ters" of Mindroling, and the Mahamudra lineage of Kamsung Kagyu. Let us see what happens!

**GM:** How do you see the role of female masters, particularly in Tibetan Buddhism, and what are your personal aims and wishes in this regard?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** Of course, we cannot say that there are many Tibetan female teachers today, although if you include the past, there have been a lot of women teachers in Tibetan Buddhism. There are few now for a number of reasons, that we live in a patriarchal society for one. Also, many exceptional women in Tibet chose to practice individually in caves and remain unknown.

It is true in the present situation we have very few women teachers. I think the only way we can have more women teachers is to have more women practitioners. When we have more women practitioners then these practitioners are going to develop into teachers. Without having practitioners we cannot have teachers. It is up to the present generation of women to practise.

My wish is that the *dharma* education system for women be improved. Though we might think that in Buddhism no difference exists on the higher level, when it comes to practising and learning about the texts, women still do not have the facilities that are available to men, and to monks especially.

My personal aim would be to establish possibilities for women to have places or just facilities to go for in-depth studies, and have time to practise. That would be something. These would be open for nuns as well as lay women.

One of the biggest obstacles women have to overcome is their emotional involvements, and trying to do all things at the same time. If you are going to be a great woman practitioner you have to give up certain things. You cannot have your cake and eat it too, so to speak. But I think this kind of progress will come slowly.

**GM:** Can you tell us about great women masters in the tradition of Mahamudra and Dzogchen, such as Thrinley Chödrön (*rJe btsun phrin las chos sgron*)?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** In both the Mahamudra and the Dzogchen traditions, we have had many women

masters. In the Mahamudra lineage, more information is available about the women masters, such as Gelongma Palmo, Sukha Siddhi, Niguma and other great teachers like the previous Khandro of Tsurphu, for example.

In the Dzogchen tradition the lineage descends from Aryatara, Yeshe Tsogyal, Mandarava, to women masters such as Jetsun Mingyur Paldron, Thrinley Chödrön and Cangcup Jetsun. In the Mindroling tradition, all the women have been masters so the title of Jetsunma has been present continuously.

For example, Jetsun Mingyur Paldron (*rJe btsun Mi'gyur d fal gyi s gronma*, 1699-?) was largely responsible for the restoration of the Mindroling monastery and lineage after the Dzung gar invasion of 1717. A brilliant teacher, she authored several important meditation manuals like *rDgogs pa chen po a ti zab don snying po'i khrid dmrigs zin bris su spel ba kun bzang dgon rgyan*.

About a hundred years ago the senior Dzogchen masters had passed away and the reincarnations were all very young and the Dzogchen lineage had become very narrow. When it was examined who would carry on the Dzogchen lineage, it emerged that Thrinley Chödrön was the only person who had the complete transmission. Thrinley Chödrön was the great aunt of the present Mindroling Trichen Rinpoche and most of the senior Rinpoches, such as Khensur Rinpoche, Dzongsar Khyentse and Sechen Kongtrul, all received their Dzogchen transmission from her. That is why she is considered one of the greatest holders of the Dzogchen lineage. Thrinley Chödrön passed away at the age of 29. Her biography was never written.

**GM:** What is the role of the *dakinis* especially in regard to transmission?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** Ekacati or Nacigma is generally regarded as the protector of all the Tantric teachings and especially the Dzogchen teachings. We believe that all transmissions, above all treasure teachings, have to be safeguarded, and that protection of the lineage is through the *dakinis*. That is the activity of the *dakini*. Also at certain time *dharma* will face many obstacles, and overcoming of obstacles is also the activity of the *dakinis*. In the Dzogchen teaching it is said that Garab Dorje spent twenty-six years teaching the *dakinis* and they are also destined to safeguard the teachings, particularly Ekacati. But also the Bodhisattvas have to work in all ways, so I think that protection is not a speciality or

department only of the *dakinis*.

**GM:** The Dzogchen root tantra *sgra thal-'gyur* states that twice as many female practitioners as male will gain liberation through this teaching. Can you tell something from your experience?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** I don't know about twice as many female practitioners gaining liberation as men. It all depends on effort. If women make more effort, of course more women will attain liberation. Attaining liberation is there. It has always been said that if women practise diligently, they can attain enlightenment more quickly because of the strong wisdom aspect within themselves. But this does not mean that men do not have wisdom. Both the wisdom aspect and the aspiration aspect exist in both sexes.

Mostly, liberation will depend on how much effort you put in. Women do have a very strong wisdom aspect, but they also have strong emotions, strong sentiments. If they can overcome that, wisdom will arise. And if you have wisdom, no one can stop you from being liberated. According to that tantra and many other texts, with diligence and effort liberation is very much easier for women. So one should draw inspiration from that and with this encouragement work harder. However if this gives rise to ego and one thinks, "Well, since we are women we don't need to work so hard," then it could take a very long time. Probably that is one reason why we don't have many women teachers.

**GM:** Can you give some advice for practising in general and especially being a woman in a male-dominated world?

**Khandro Rinpoche:** I don't know whether it is a male-dominated world. We often believe in different stories such as ours is a patriarchal society, or the world is dominated by men, or that Tibetan society is ruled by men. Many also ask the question why most of the powerful positions are held by men. It depends on the way you look at it.

My view is that when something good has to be done, it does not matter to me who does it. What matters is that it must be done. If a man does it, it is very good. If a woman does it, it is very good. So in that way I do not believe in a "male-dominated society".

For each society to exist, for each wheel of the *dharma* to turn, there has to be equal participation from both men and women. In every project, one has to have two different ways of working.

If you have two hands, you are stronger than you can be with one hand. Some work more with the right hand, some more with the left, but to lift anything properly you need both hands. You cannot say that one hand is less important than the other.

*continued on page 15*

# BOOK REVIEWS

**Ancient Wisdom**  
**Nyingma Teachings on Dream**  
**Yoga, Meditation, and**  
**Transformation**  
 by Venerable Gyatrul  
 Rinpoche  
 Translations by B. Alan  
 Wallace and Sangye Khandro  
 Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca,  
 New York, 1993. 174 pages

## Ancient Wisdom

Nyingma Teachings on  
 Dream Yoga, Meditation,  
 and Transformation



by Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche  
 Translations by B. Alan Wallace and Sangye Khandro

Ven. Gyatrul Rinpoche has for many years represented the late Dudjom Rinpoche spiritually in America, where he founded the Pacific Region Yeshe Nyingpo Centers. Here, extracted from his oral teachings, we have precious and beautiful commentaries on three rather different texts, along with eminently clear translations of the root texts themselves, provided by B. Alan Wallace.

Any genuine spiritual pathway, whatever its cultural background, while aiming at dissolving the ego, encourages an outlook of warm thankfulness towards the source of life rather than the discouraging feeling of being a victim of circumstance. The first part of this book gives us really valuable advice on how to turn all our day to day roller-coaster circumstances into spiritually beneficial experiences. As the pace of modern life tends to be so rapid and the number of daily pressures so great and often potentially dehumanising, this sort of approach is surely more essential now than ever.

The root text (another translation of which can be found in Tulku Thondup's similarly helpful and delightful collection, *Enlightened Living*, published by Shambhala) is entitled "Transforming Felicity and Adversity into the Spiritual Path", and was the work of Jigme Tenpe Nyima (1865-1926), the third Dodrup Chen Rinpoche. Alan B. Wallace's translation brings out the quiet poetry that runs through the kind, practical advice.

"To sum up: In order not only to

prevent all unfavorable circumstances and adversity from afflicting your mind, but to cause them to elicit a sense of good cheer, you should put a stop to experiences of aversion towards both inner and outer obstacles ... Practice seeing everything solely in an agreeable way. For that to happen, you should stop seeing those harmful situations as something wrong, but give all your effort to seeing them as valuable. For it is the way our minds apprehend situations that makes them agreeable or disagreeable...

"By training in this way you will become gentle-minded, easy going and courageous; there will be no obstacles to your spiritual practice; all unfavorable circumstances will arise as splendid and auspicious; and your mind will continually be content with the joy of serenity. To follow a spiritual path in a degenerate era such as this is indispensable.

"Then, since you are free of the suffering of anxiety, other types of misery also vanish, like weapons falling from the hands of soldiers..."

This measured confidence is also lovingly reflected in Ven. Gyatrul Rinpoche's oral commentaries, translated here by Sangye Khandro. Although the transcription is presented in stylistically normal written English, when reading these pages it is easy to have the impression of hearing the "good cheer" of the Lama's voice actually speaking to you.

"The main point to bring out is that it is vital that you cultivate this strong and continuous sense of gratitude. It is through gratitude that even severe suffering will be extremely agreeable. This is how it is that practitioners achieve enlightenment in one body and in one lifetime. There's no other way because they have the ultimate goal in mind. If you dwell only on the temporary hardships which is where you get caught up and where you stop, how can you proceed? You must understand that temporary hardships are part of the path. This is what leads to the ultimate state of liberation. If you look at Milarepa, Longchenpa, all of the great masters of the past who are your examples, you can clearly determine that there's no other way. You must face up to this and develop this sense of good cheer and gratitude when you have temporary difficulties, knowing that they will change. They are a part of what leads all of you to ultimate bliss.

"Suffering is very kind to you..."

But maybe just in case any of us were entertaining thoughts of constructing personal towers in the air, Rinpoche reminds us to take the mental training easily, in our stride. "Initially you must practice with some minor adversity", he warns us. "That's a very important point.

Gradually it will become easier, until finally you will be able to practice in the face of great adversity". Certainly, modern life seems to provide us with a wealth of such opportunities if we care to treat them as such.

In the section on "Transforming felicity", we are reminded of the dangers of becoming swallowed up by ego gratification from any happiness or success we may encounter ("happiness on the path is the most difficult thing to handle"). Rinpoche again explains the need to keep a balanced attitude. "Giving up happiness is not the practice", of course "The main point is not to become mesmerized by happiness as the end result".

Actually, it seems to me that on all sides, like it or not, the hypnotic instruments of our rampant society aim to mesmerize us pretty constantly anyway. The advice contained in these pages seems so relevant to our modern circumstances. However we may feel about the myriad of potential distractions of our times, we still have the chance to turn our situation into a garden of golden opportunities, without necessarily getting gobbled up by delicious but temporary fruits.

Daytime always passes to night, and so to the opportunities provided by our awareness of the dreaming state. The second selection, which Sangye Khandro describes as "one of the most direct and useful dream yoga accomplishment manuals available", is *Releasing Oneself from Essential Delusion* by the seventeenth century Lama Lochan Dharma Shri.

Lucid explanations are given on how in an "unhurried and calm" way to make the very most of one's dreams, recognising, expanding them and directing them to gain the maximum spiritual benefit. Sleeping practice is closely related to daytime Guru yoga practice and the appreciation of phenomena as being dreamlike.

"During the day, direct your attention to the various realms and to whatever spiritual teachings you wish to hear; and at night know that you can apprehend your dreams and are able to do anything with them. By this practice, if you effortlessly and spontaneously see whatever you wish to observe, and hear the spiritual teachings and prophetic indications you desire, this is excellent.

Although this volume is clearly directed primarily at readers with experience of Tibetan teachings, there is something here for all of us, at all times, day or night, in or out of a specific tan. Indeed the book seems designed to respond to the spiritual needs brought about by our contemporary circumstances. It is justly entitled 'Ancient Wisdom', but its advice is completely in tune with the present.

Robin Cooke

## The Meaning of Life from a Buddhist Perspective

Tenzin Gyatso the 14th Dalai Lama  
 Translated and edited by Jeffrey Hopkins  
 Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1992, 111 pages, \$12.50/8.50 pounds



This beautiful one hundred eleven page book is a translation of a series of lectures in Tibetan given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Camden Hall, London, in spring of 1984. It includes a foreword by Richard Gere, a preface by Jeffrey Hopkins, seven color plates, twelve line drawings by Gina Halpern, a glossary, bibliography, and an index. The clear translation by Jeffrey Hopkins is transparent to the reader, and only serves to emphasize the Dalai Lama's teachings.

Students who are studying the Santi Maha Sangha course prepared by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will be very pleased to study this detailed answer to examination question no. 146, "What are the twelve links in the chain of interdependent causation? What is the meaning of each of them?"

Here are some different translations I have seen for the name for the process of these twelve links: dependent arising, interdependent causation, interdependent origination, functional correlation, functional dependence, mutual relationship, interrelation, relativity, relational existence, causal nexus, interconnection, conditioned co-production.

Here are some different translations of each of the twelve links:

1. ignorance, unknowing, lack of instant presence
2. karmic formations, conditioned impulses, compositional action, compositional factors, motivation-configuration, intellectual operations, projecting activity, reaction associations
3. consciousness, perceptive functions, noetic capacity, modes of awareness, sensory perception, conscious activity
4. name and form, entire external world, embryonic development
5. interactional fields, operational fields, sense fields, psychological action fields, interactional bases,

localized fields of sensations, sense bases

6. contact, rapport, connection
7. feelings, physiological tones, sensations, judgements of feeling, sensory perception
8. desire, craving, attachment
9. grasping, conflicting emotions, intense craving, appropriation
10. life, existence, transmigratory existence, existential phenomena, world
11. birth, origination, production, becoming, being, coming into existence
12. decay and death, ageing and death

Gina Halpern's exquisite line drawings may communicate more clearly than many of the above words.

The Dalai Lama explains that different interpretations of this process of dependent arising each teach how all things arise in dependence upon conditions and are empty of inherent existence. Slowly and precisely, he describes the functioning of each of the twelve links throughout the first four lectures entitled "The Buddhist World View", "Life Impelled by Ignorance", "Levels of the Path", and "The Value of Altruism". Each lecture except the first begins with questions from the audience. The perceptive answers dissolve many confusions, provide more detail, and prepare the way for the next lecture.

Understanding the basic life situation described by these twelve interdependent links provides a solid basis for practising the six perfections.

The fifth talk on "Compassion and Wisdom Combined" is a short summary of the tantric approach which uses this process of interdependent arising to help all sentient beings become liberated from it.

Any practitioner will benefit from a thorough study of this concise teaching.

Jim Valby

# Reflections Reflections Reflections

## "Monasteries in Tibet" Fund

M.I.T. fund is happy to report that we were able to make two cash deliveries of the funds you have kindly contributed into Tibet during 1993. The first donation was delivered by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to the following monasteries in Eastern Kham: Galen Gonpa, Khamdo Gar, Namdrak Gonpa and Ralung Gonpa.

Ralung Monastery was founded in 1193 by the famous master Drubchen Tsampa Gyare (1161 - 1211), and was completely destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Funds necessary for the reconstruction are estimated at \$30,000 US. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's project "A.S.I.A." has started the rehabilitation of this important monastic center and M.I.T. Fund was happy to help too.

Rinpoche also delivered M.I.T. funds to Dzogchen Monastery, one of the most important and influential monastic universities in Tibet. Lama Tulku Kalzang Rinpoche, who was one of two survivors of the tragedy of Dzogchen, has been rebuilding the Study College and Monastery in an urgent effort to keep its unique tradition of wisdom alive.

Last year, I had the good fortune of seeing Lama Tulku Kalzang Rinpoche again (I was a guest at Dzogchen Monastery in Kham in 1992) at Sogyal Rinpoche's retreat place Lerab Ling in France. I promised him that we would allocate more money to Dzogchen Monastery in 1994.

The second donation of \$4,000 was divided among Drikung Til Monastery, Garden Monastery, Nechung Monastery and the Ani Tsengku Gonpa (Nunnery).

I would like to thank all of you for making this possible.

Since our raffle was established in the beginning of 1993, only 147 raffle tickets were sold.

Since our goal is to sell 1000 raffle tickets to make a substantial difference in aiding the monasteries in Tibet, it looks like we have a long way to go, unless we get your immediate assistance. Please help us to achieve our goal. Many raffle prizes have been contributed by our spiritual masters to our already long list of raffle items.

Please send your check for \$50 made out to:

Rena Kuhn/M.I.T. Fund, 256 S. Robertson Blvd., Suite 9379, Beverly Hills, CA 90211, USA.

The monasteries and nunneries of Tibet are counting on your help. Please don't disappoint them.

*Billy, Christie and Bridget Rose joyfully announce the birth of Madelaine Tara Svane O'Haire born at home, March 1, 1994 in Amsterdam, Holland*



*Lorena Walker of the English Community died on Saturday April 16th at the age of 42 years after a long illness. All our sympathy to Tim, her husband, and their two children Trinkle and Skye.*

### Tibetan Astrology

A four year course on Tibetan Astrology will be given by Dr. Pasang Yonten at the Kunpen Lama Gancen Institute for the Propagation of the Tibetan Medical Tradition, in Milan. The course is divided into six annual weekend courses which will be spread through the spring and autumn. Course dates for spring 1994 are May 21-22 and June 18-19. Full information from K. L. G., Via Marco Polo, 13, 20124 Milan, Italy. Tel. 02 6597458.

## Helping from Afar

*John B. LaFrance*

When I first encountered Buddhist teachings a few years ago, one of the metaphors that resonated for me was the one about being in a boat crossing the river to the other side. I saw a medium sized flat-bottomed boat with a handful of people and a wise boatman, on a wide, gentle river..... a wonderfully peaceful journey to enlightenment. One might say I wasn't in touch with the truth of samsara.

Since then I've met our wonderful boatman and have been trying to figure out how to join the others in the boat.

To me, being with others in the boat meant being actively involved with a Sangha. After participating in a retreat at Tsegylgar I knew I'd found the Sangha... it was a matter of climbing in.

The question became "how to participate while living 300 miles away?" The first step, which seemed mostly symbolic, was to become a member of Tsegylgar. Even though the money for membership wasn't easy to come by, I felt that it was the most readily available vehicle to show my intention to participate. Interestingly, the act of becoming a member turned out to be more than symbolic; I felt joined to the Community.

I now see that these two actions, becoming a member and thinking about the Community, created a process for being in the boat.

Thinking about the Community, I began to try to make connections with other members who live in the Conway area.

An important element in my

being able to participate in any group is having a feeling that I'm valued and welcomed by the existing members. Fortunately for me the



people I contacted at Tsegylgar were welcoming, enthusiastic, encouraging and cheerful. They broke through my fears about being "an outsider" and being rejected. These connections cemented my feelings of being in the boat with others.

Since then I've tried to keep in touch with members, attend occasional gakyil meetings and look for ways to help from afar.

What I found at Tsegylgar is a small group of people trying to carry a big load, that's getting bigger. There is no full time staff to shepherd things along. And, with the advent of the new school project and the vast renovations required, arranging for the transition of various international projects like A.S.I.A., Shang Shung Institute and The Mirror, scheduling practices and preparing for retreats, there's an

enormous amount of work to do. Everyone wants to do a good job, but more help is needed.

Attending occasional gakyil meetings has become an important way for me to find ways to help. Sitting through the discussions, hearing the issues, feeling the struggles, it becomes difficult not to want to contribute. When I can't attend, reading the minutes of the meetings at least gives a flavor of what's happening. I'm realizing that the struggles and frustrations of working together is part of the river to be crossed... learning to listen, trying to be in another's place, giving up self interest.

Another way to keep involved is to have telephone contact with local members. While this has mostly a means of maintaining contact with friends, it also keeps me abreast of what's happening. In the process, the needs of the Community become more apparent. Now that periodic work weekends are planned at the school there is even more possibility for concrete participation.

Hopefully, someday, I might be able to live closer to the Conway Community. In the meantime, the process I've found to participate involves becoming a member, thinking about the Community, connecting with local members, attending occasional gakyil meetings, keeping informed and scheduling periodic visits for work weekends.

The river, it turns out, is anything but gentle.... it's rough and dangerous. What a gift, to share the journey.

## Christmas '83

*In memory of my first retreat  
with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche  
in Merigar, 10 years ago.*

Under the snow-silvered cold  
many bodies packed together  
just one sunlike gaze  
toward the same sun

Creaking knees fought  
for a comfortable mat  
neck often longed  
for a motherly pillow  
or a warm lap

Even so  
the glowing rays of that voice  
patiently blanketed me  
over the rough barbs of my doubts

Even so  
I retained something in my breast  
a gleam of mirror

where a mountain bigger  
than Mt Amiata was reflected

Even so  
confused ideas  
- for the first time -  
were giving themselves names

Even so  
a stream of light  
was bringing me back to myself  
like clear running water

Meeting after meeting  
that warm intense voice  
sowed more words and flowers  
like a peasant in his field

In spite of that light

that nameless space  
that ocean without storms,  
I still shy away from the golden  
roads  
and the nectar in the diamond cup,  
the hours still drag me  
toward old habits

although I really long to know  
if these days between joy and  
weeping  
are really a dream  
- intense and painful -  
but  
after all  
a dream

*Paola Civile, December 1993.  
Translated from Spanish by Rowena Hill*

## Director meet ...

*continued from page 9*

stabilises its functioning as an autonomous Community, then at the same time it begins to see how it can collaborate with other communities.

As far as how we do that it's not so simple to say. But I think there are concrete ways to work on it by increasing our capacity for communication. We have all of these means of communicating and we need to make the best use of them to make our communication between Communities quicker as certain things are developing in parallel in other Communities instead of each Community developing along a certain line while another develops differently. Instead they develop in parallel.

I have gotten the sense from my experience at Merigar that here and at Tsegylgar there is this interesting situation where they seem to have developed in very different ways from very different starting points but they are now converging to a point where they are very much parallel. We need to learn from the different experiences that each has had arriving there. This will be very useful.

One of the things that I've found coming here is a very deep sense of the history of the Dzogchen Community and Rinpoche's teaching, because this is where the Community started. And just being around, one gets a sense of this history. I think this is very important and will become more and more important even after we're gone, for future generations. This place will have a special significance because of that history.

I guess my question is how do you see meeting your responsibility of communicating that sense for people who are coming to the teaching at a place like Merigar for the first time?

**Mario:** Merigar is, as you know, the first place where the Community settled down. This happened about five years after the Community started to be formed. The first retreat was in 1976 and before that the first nucleus of the Community was formed around Rinpoche in Naples. The presence of the teachings was his own presence. But he didn't teach actually in words until 1976. We were five years after that looking for a stable place where the Community could develop. During those five years, wherever possible we met in people's houses, in the country side, in institutions, in small groups, then larger ones, so the history of the Community goes back before the time of Merigar.

What you can see at Merigar is its history which is recorded in space, in buildings, an evolution in a material way. This is also very important because, as you know, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche considers this place to be sacred, as he considers Tsegylgar and other places in the world. So when a place is sacred from the origin, it becomes more and more sacred through practice, the presence of the Master and the teachings. This is a heavy

responsibility for all of us who continue to collaborate and "write" the history of the Community through our practise and behaviour, and so keep alive the spirit of the teachings.

A more practical or outer way of writing the history of the Community is the way in which the preservation of the teachings is organised on a material level: books, the Gonpa, all the facilities on which the spirit of the teaching is based on a material level. And that is also a big responsibility because we have treasures such as books, paintings and *termas* belonging to Rinpoche that we try to safeguard in the best way. This implies a lot of work to avoid the possibility of those getting lost.

We are now trying to organise the library which contains many unique volumes which Rinpoche has brought or received from Tibet in the safest possible way using advanced technology.

There is also a tape library at Merigar and now we are trying to organise it along with a video library with sophisticated safeguards in order to preserve tapes and videos.

At the moment we are setting up a specific place where the tapes can be reproduced and stored. This will provide an opportunity to activate groups of the Community all over the world to exchange recordings of the teachings and to have a few places such as the tape library at Merigar, at Tsegylgar or other Gars or places where copies of all the tapes can be kept. In this way there will always be a safe place for them and they will be available at any time. This is one way in which we are going to ask collaboration from everybody.

Then the history of the Community is written day by day. It is made up of positive and less positive happenings.

**Woody:** Though I have been at Merigar a very short time, I have discovered through participating in some of the practices and activities, there is a very strong sense of the presence of the teachings and the Master here. I think this is a very important way in which the other Gars can function now and in the future: that one can come, even when the Master is not present, and refresh one's transmission and have the sense that one has accomplished the same kind of thing that we could only do at a retreat.

**Mario:** When we consider the future of the Community, will the growth in the number of people related to the teachings be an obstacle to the growth of the quality of people's development or not. Many, many more people getting involved with the teaching is a very positive thing, but sometimes it can turn into being very difficult to foster in the right way.

**Woody:** It seems to me that during the development of the Community which you have just touched on, Rinpoche has prepared very carefully for many years and it has been of utmost importance to him that people understand and be able to separate (distinguish) what

is truly the teaching in one's inner experience of the teaching from what is external teaching. For example in the beginning, he did not want to have a big organisation but now, as more and more students come, it has been necessary to organise because the Community necessarily functions in a different way.

At the same time I see many individuals who have spent years preparing, working and developing their understanding of the teaching and developing their capacity which is shown by the example of their behaviour and by the way they show an understanding of the teaching. For this reason the danger of the Community becoming just an empty organisation that is only an outward symbol of a teaching which once existed is very much less than in some other organisations which have come and gone in our culture.

Even though the Community is growing very fast, and now, at least in America, Dzogchen is fashionable and popular which always presents a sort of danger. I think that at the same time the individuals connected with the Community who have worked all these years with Rinpoche, have achieved a kind of stability and understanding of the teachings. If someone is truly interested in the teachings and comes and sees these individuals functioning in the Community trying their best to apply the teaching in their lives, then one will understand that the teaching is something real which can be preserved.

So I am optimistic that the real meaning and the real sense of the teaching will be preserved. I see indications of this already.

## Khandro Rinpoche

*continued from page 12*

There has to be equal participation. Being Buddhist practitioners if we fall into the concept of my being a woman and you being a man, this is one big obstacle. The more obstacles you create, the more differences you will find. When there are no differences in my mind, I find no difference in the society either.

My way of seeing it would be that we do a lot of complaining; today we complain there are not many women teachers; probably tomorrow men will complain there are not enough male teachers. In that way we keep on complaining, but a sensible person with common sense would see that we have done enough complaining, now we should work. If women think there are not many women teachers, they need to practise; overcome the source of their attachments and practise. If you sincerely believe there should be more women teachers, become one yourself. It is a possibility. Why don't you do what is necessary?

**GM:** Rinpoche, thank you for the interview.

(Khandro Rinpoche will be teaching July 6-10 at Dhagpo-Kagyü-ling (near the village "Le Moustier"), B.P. 2, 24290 St. Leon sur Vézère, France, tel: 53507075, fax: 53508054.)

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by Nancy Simmons

Once in a while phenomena are reported in the press which not only provoke one's imagination and a sense of wonder, but also shed light on or confirm (see "Preventive Medicine: The Third Eye", "The Mirror", June 1991, issue 9, pg.15) what one has learned elsewhere, in the temples of wisdom. I came across two such sources recently, both having to do with water, and slight though they are, I would like to share them.

The first was an article on "rivers" published in "Discovery" magazine and reprinted by "Panorama", a weekly Italian news magazine. Essentially the story is this: "Some are rivers thousands of miles long, each one with tonnage equal to that of the Amazon, others are smaller, similar to torrents, manifesting erratically. These streams, forming an immense network of branches, tributaries, and basins, flow neither on the earth's surface nor beneath it like normal rivers, but overhead at an altitude of 10,000 feet. These celestial rivers are formed of vapour and are only slightly less stable than their earth-bound counterparts.

This discovery was made by Reginald Newell, a climatologist, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Several years ago it occurred to Newell while he was studying an anomalous concentration of carbon oxide in Australia, that the oxide might have come from afar, brought by the winds. He thus began to study air currents with balloons and satellites, discovering that the cause of the manifestation was a small air-borne river of vapour laden with carbon oxide whose origin was in Africa.

Today after years of research, Newell is able to describe in its essential lines the water map of the heavens. Each hemisphere, he

explained, has always at least five enormous rivers of vapour, some nearly 5000 miles long, and with a flow of two hundred tons of vapour per second. His discovery is considered of great use in weather-forecasting".



Naga Kanya, the Newari Buddhist rain goddess, courtesy of Ratna Jyoti Shakya, master statue-maker at Mahabuddha in Patan, Nepal.

Apropos of these aerial rivers, I visited Patan, noted as a city of statue-makers, while I was in Nepal for Rinpoche's retreat last winter. I saw many statues, some giant, others tiny, of Naga Kanya, a rain goddess, in the Newari Buddhist tradition, with her human face and snake tail, rather like a winged mermaid. Having read that article, I find her wings have become, for me, a symbol of soaring among those watering places in space, as well as of the rain which descends.

Another bit of suggestive water poetry appeared in "La Nazione," a daily Florentine newspaper, on August 21, 1993, under the headline, "Pyrenees: Not Withstanding the Drought, a Sarcophagus Distills Pure

Water." The article reads like this: "Arles- Despite the extreme drought which has afflicted the Vallespir countryside in the eastern Pyrenees, the "Holy Tomb" located in a tiny Romanesque church in the town of Arles-sur-Tech continues to produce liters and liters of highly pure sweet water. The marble sarcophagus, famous for this mysterious quality for more than one thousand years, is considered "miraculous" since no explanation for the abundant outpour has been found, despite recent studies by a team of scientists and hydraulic engineers. The tomb, in fact, is raised about a foot off the ground, resting, as it does, on two slabs of stone."

Besides the natural delight I think we all take in a happening free from the claims of reason, I remember a clarification made by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche one day, that objects can be *Nirmanakaya* manifestations, as for example, an essential bridge, especially helpful to a continuing stream of mankind. Here I think the "help" given at a distance by that stream of crystalline water is a reminder of how things really are, of *dharma*, of void, and it is a relief; not to mention, close up, the actual water in a traditionally arid place.

I am also reminded of one of those spontaneous question (by Rinpoche) and answer (from the rest of us) sessions long ago when the three hundred thirtythree questions of the *Santi Maha Sangha* were still a dream. Rinpoche asked why Padmasambhava, drinking at a wayside inn, had stopped the sun from setting for seven days (he had said he would pay as soon as the sun down). The answer was that the amazement of Vinasa, the woman wine seller, at an impossible happening was the only way to open her mind, fixed on the mundane, to the freedom of her true reality.

## Practices for special days

4th Month, 10th day Fri. 20th May 1994  
This is a special day of **Guru Padmasambhava**. If you can, do a Ganapuja, otherwise you can do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

4th Month, 15th day Wed. 25th May 1994  
**FULL MOON**. This is the anniversary of the Parinirvana of Buddha Sakyamuni, as well as an important day for the Long-life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Therefore do this practice early in the morning, and in the afternoon or evening do a Ganapuja.

4th Month, 25th day Fri. 3rd June 1994  
**Dakini day**. This is the anniversary of Ngor Chen (a great Master of the Shakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the Guruyoga Agar Lamai Naljyor, collectively if possible or otherwise alone.

4th Month, 30th day Thu. 9th June 1994  
**NEW MOON**. This day is the anniversary of Nyagla Padma Duddul (1816-1872). He was one of the Masters of Chang-chub Dorje, the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma "Tsedrub Gongdus" which two of his disciples, Ayu Khadro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Therefore you should do this Long-life practice, "Tsedrub Gongdus", "Union of Primordial Essences", if possible in the early morning. Later in the day or in the evening you can do the Guruyoga of the White A, Agar Lamai Naljyor".

5th Month, 1st day Fri. 10th June 1994  
This is the anniversary of Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1870) a Nyingmapa Master of Dzogchen, one of the most important Rimed masters of the XIX Century. Do a practice of Akar Lamai Naljyor.

5th Month, 9th day Sat 18th June 1993  
This is a special day of **Padmasambhava** so if you have the possibility, it is beneficial to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters. If not you can practise Guruyoga with Padmasambhava and the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union".

5th Month, 15th day Thu. 23rd June 1994  
**FULL MOON**. This is a special day for the Long-life practice of Amitayus, so you can do the Long-life practice "Union of Primordial Essences" early in the morning. If you cannot do it at that time, it is still good to do it later in the day.

5th Month, 25th day Sun. 3rd July 1994  
This is a **Dakini day** and an important day for the practice of Ekajati. Therefore, according to your circumstances, do the long Tun collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or the medium Tun if you are practising on your own. In either case, repeat the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as you can.

5th Month, 30th day Fri. 8th July 1994  
**NEW MOON**. This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the Purification of the Six Lokas either collectively or alone, preferably in the early morning. Otherwise you can do a medium or short Tun.

## THE MIRROR

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