

THE MIRROR

The Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

Issue 27

Collecting the Nectar of the Essence

by F. van den Berg and L. Jehes

On the morning of Friday July 1st 1994 a small crowd gathered at Merigar, Italy. There was a somewhat nervous atmosphere in the air, many were putting their heads in books, so it was obvious that something unusual was going to take place!

Around 10 o'clock our precious Master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, arrived to start the historical event of the first examinations on the Santi Maha Sangha study program on the veranda of the Yellow House.

The text "Santi Maha Sangha" (rDzogs-chen 'dus-sde), written in beautiful poetic verses by Rinpoche on the 25th Day of the 2nd month of the Wood Bull Year, gives the precise outline of the different stages on the journey towards total realization. With this text as the basis, Rinpoche started an advanced study program of nine stages of one year each, to enable his students to continue the lineage of teachings in the future. The foundation or the preparatory Base for this Santi Maha Sangha training is formed by the text "The Precious Vase" (rMang gZhi'i Khrid Rinchen Bum bZang) which Rinpoche wrote in 1992. This text is inspired by the four initial verses of the root text mentioned above.

In 1992 Rinpoche also wrote an abridged version of this text "The Wish Fulfilling Vase" ('Dod 'jo'i Bum bZang), which presents in a unified way the various doctrinal views of the whole Buddhist spectrum, dealing both with

fundamental concepts and the different approaches of each particular tradition.

On the basis of these two texts mentioned above, as well as other material such as "The Stairway to Liberation" (Thar Lam Them sKas) and Yantra Yoga, the Yoga of Movement" (Phrul 'khor Nyi Zia Kha sByor Gyi dGangs 'Grel Med Norbu'i Me Long), both also by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, an aspirant who wishes to enter the Santi Maha Sangha Training should prepare him/herself well. As Rinpoche precisely indicated, since a Vase is something that contains, these are different texts not only of fundamental importance for training aspirants, but also for anyone wanting to progress in knowledge and understanding of the Dzogchen teachings.

The basis for the examination is formed by the book "Examination Questions", written by Rinpoche in 1992, which contains 333 questions and the corresponding answers and references for answers. The aspirant should be a fully registered member of the Dzogchen Community and should be able to answer 10 of these questions at random during the examination.

Being two students who succeeded in passing the examination, we were asked by "The Mirror" to give our experiences. With this story we would like to inspire and help those who are still studying or who want to take up this important task.



The Wish Fulfilling Vase painted in the Merigar gonpa

Francoise: Loek, how did you get started with studying and when?

Loek: It started some time ago, that I had the strong feeling how irreplaceable and precious our Teacher is, and how important it is for us practitioners to continue the teachings, to make ourselves personally responsible for this

continuation. So I developed this motivation strongly. But I didn't have the slightest idea that I could ever reach the level of Rinpoche in only this life!

Francoise: Let's not even think about that.....!

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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu continues teaching worldwide in 1994-95 as well as holding exams and teaching on the Santi Maha Sangha training at the three main Dzogchen Gars. page 3

International cooperation

The Dzogchen Community has grown steadily over the years as the number of students participating in Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teaching has increased. In response to Rinpoche's vision, a network of linked Communities around the world has blossomed, and this newspaper was developed to serve those communities, attempting to provide access to teachings, news, information and comment.

In order to be able to better serve the Community, it has been decided that in the coming months the principal editorial activities of The Mirror will be transferred to the United States. While it is anticipated that a European office of The Mirror will continue to function at Merigar, its main office will move to the Conway school at Tsegylgar.

In the same spirit of international co-operation and development, the Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies will also be opening a US office at Tsegylgar which will be the base of a sister organisation of the Italian Institute in the United States. The inauguration of the US Institute will take place while Rinpoche is at Tsegylgar this autumn.

Knowledge of the three aspects of the base

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Part II

This transcription is the second part of a teaching given in Kathmandu, Nepal on the morning of December 27th, 1994. The first part was published in the last issue of *The Mirror* (no. 26).

Understanding the meaning of the *zhi*, or base, is of particular importance in the Dzogchen teaching. The base has three aspects: essence, nature and energy. Its essence is emptiness, its nature is clarity and its energy is without interruption. Through an understanding of what is meant in this context by 'energy', we can arrive at a definitive knowledge of the inherent potentiality of the individual, which manifests as sounds, lights and rays. This knowledge of the base and how to work with it is characteristic of the Dzogchen teaching.

Essence

When a teacher gives an introduction to the natural state, he or she brings the person receiving the introduction into a direct experience of the knowledge of the base. But how can one arrive at knowledge of this essence which is the first of the three aspects of the base? Essence is emptiness, and to discover it one must experience it for oneself, understanding what it means in terms of our real nature. When we observe our own minds, we notice that an infinite number of thoughts follow each other in continuous succession. If we give our full attention to each thought in turn; observing the first thought, the second thought, and so on, each one disappears of itself, and what we always find is emptiness, nothing concrete. The original texts of Dzogchen affirm in this regard that "finding nothing is the most you can find". Our real condition is emptiness, so what is there to find? Even if one believes there is something to find, there is in fact nothing there. And when you discover for yourself that there really is nothing, that is the greatest discovery.

Nature

The nature of this base is clarity. What does this mean? Though this is a very important point in both Dzogchen and Tantra, it is more difficult to understand in Tantra because no clear explanation of it is given there. Continuing with the example of how our own thoughts manifest, we can observe that we have an infinite number of thoughts, both good and bad; all these thoughts and all our experiences related to body, energy and mind are part of our clarity, our nature. This clarity is part of our real condition which is why we call it 'nature'. Essence and nature are not two separate things but are two different aspects of our real condition. Explanations such as this are not found at all in the *sutra*



teachings. The *sutras* only explain emptiness, and their final goal is the realisation of knowledge of emptiness. Thus explanations of emptiness are always given because it is regarded as the most important thing.

In the Dzogchen teachings emptiness is also considered to be important because it is the essence, but this essence is also understood to have its nature and its energy. Our real nature is not only emptiness. As Dzogchen practitioners we must understand this. So the essence has, then, this aspect of clarity, and we discover that clarity is part of our real nature.

In the *sutra* teachings explanations are given of the two truths, absolute and relative. The term 'absolute truth' refers to the state of emptiness. This is the same as what is meant in Dzogchen by the essence. But the term 'relative truth', which is also spoken of in the *sutras*, with its considerations of pure and impure vision, is regarded as being the cause or condition of *samsara*. It must therefore be renounced, while knowledge of the absolute truth, *omirvana* is regarded as being what one should develop. Thus, in the *sutras*, the relative condition is considered to be *samsara* which must be abandoned. This means that *samsara* and the relative condition are considered not to be of any value at all.

Kuntuzangpo

In the Dzogchen teaching, however, the relative condition is not considered to be wrong or without value. We use the expression *Samantabhadra* (Sanskrit), or *Kuntuzangpo* (Tibetan), in this context. *Kuntu* means everything, *zangpo* means fine. If you have knowledge, everything is fine. Then there is nothing to reject, nothing which you consider to be without value. Even if it is *samsara*, *samsara* is fine. *Samsara* presents no problems if you really have

understanding. *Samsara* only becomes a cause of sorrow and problems when you are conditioned by emotions and by everything else. When you don't have real knowledge, then one can no longer speak of *Samantabhadra*, of everything being fine.

In Dzogchen, *samsara*, the movement of thought in the mind, and everything that arises in the relative condition, are all considered to be part of clarity; it is not necessary that there should be the manifestation of a *mandala* or deity. Even karmic vision, which we normally consider a sorrowful condition, is considered to be part of our clarity.

Tantric methods, on the other hand, involve the transformation of impure vision into pure vision and then the integration of that pure vision into our real condition. The final arrival point of this method is that everything enters into the state of Mahamudra. This involves the idea of pure vision and impure vision, of an ordinary relative condition on one hand, and of a valuable relative condition on the other. The terms *yangdag kundzob* and *logpai kundzob* are used. *Yangdag* means the pure relative truth; *logpai* means the opposite, the impure relative condition, which produces negative *karma*. When you are in the process of realising Mahamudra in tantric style, even if you consider what you experience as pure vision, you cannot isolate yourself in the idea of pure vision alone, otherwise you will never realise yourself. This is the main point.

In the Dzogchen teaching, impure vision is regarded as part of our clarity. When we practise, our presence includes that knowledge. This means that we experience our real nature. We know that the essence is our real condition, so we are present in that state, and we know that clarity is our real condition, so we are present in that state. There is

no difference.

In the tantric teachings there are many transformation practices. These involve thinking, judging, creating *mandalas*, deities, and so on. How is this done? First of all we consider everything to be empty (of an inherent self-nature). Why? Because that is the base, the essence. And then we carry out the transformation practice. If there were no emptiness we could not transform in any way. So we start with this knowledge, imagining that everything is empty, void. Nothing concrete exists.

In *Yogatantra* style, all *dharmas* are considered to be empty and then the practitioner's idea of emptiness is empowered with *mantra* so that it becomes something real.

Practice in most traditions such as Sakyapa, Nyingmapa and Kagyupa is the same initially: all *dharmas* are considered to be empty. The *mantra* is used for empowerment, after which the energy of the elements such as Ram, Yam, Kham, Lam, etc. is put into action. Then one by one the seed syllables of the elements are visualised and through that the *mandala* of the elements is manifested. In the *mandala* they themselves manifest as deities. The *mandala* of the deities is not considered to be something material but is rather the imagination of the pure dimension with the essence of the five elements. That is how transformation is done.

This process involves thinking and judging, so a vision of this kind, an idea of this kind, is necessarily a construction of our mind. That is what is called the pure relative condition. Then at the end, everything is integrated, and we go beyond that concept. This is finally Mahamudra.

The methods of transformation practice used in the Gelugpa tradition are more or less the same, although some traditions of Gelugpa present the idea of emptiness through a

different way of thinking and judging. This is because these streams of the Gelugpa tradition consider that it is dangerous to affirm that everything is emptiness, since they consider that the concrete cannot be totally negated. They say, rather, that the nature of everything is emptiness. This is characteristic of the Gelugpa tradition. But in any case, the result is still the same. So you see how it works. This is working with clarity in the real sense.

"Same taste"

But in the Dzogchen teaching, the practitioner knows that all movements of the mind, all circumstances are part of our clarity. Thus it is not fundamental to the method of Dzogchen to transform bad into good, because in the state of contemplation we are really in the state in which there is no difference between good and bad. In the state of contemplation these 'opposites' have the same "taste". This is also true when the final goal of Mahamudra, of *Tantra*, is reached; good and bad then have the same flavour, just as they do in Dzogchen. Thus it can be seen that in Dzogchen no great importance is attached to the distinction between pure and impure vision. That is why the method that characterises the Dzogchen teaching is called self-liberation, and not transformation.

In tantrism there is the idea something is transformed into something else, and that concept is fundamental to tantric practice. For that reason in the tantric teaching there is always a very precise concept of pure vision and impure vision and the understanding that impure vision is being transformed into pure vision.

The idea of impure and pure vision is absent right from the beginning in the process of learning about Dzogchen. Of course the experience of the individual is nevertheless dualistically divided into pure and impure vision, through the infinite accumulation of *karma*. Impure vision arises as a consequence of negative *karma*.

The principle in Dzogchen is knowledge of the natural state. If one has this understanding, everything can be integrated into that state. For that reason when we do Dzogchen practice we always speak about 'integration'. Integration does not mean putting two things together or changing some aspects of something. We do not do anything at all. We are simply present in the state itself; simply remaining in that state. This is the characteristic method of the Dzogchen teaching, and the real sense of clarity.

In Dzogchen practice, it is not necessary to sit with closed eyes in a one-pointed way as is done in *sutra* practice. That is not the principle. We do not consider that contemplation or meditation means remaining in silence.

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Knowledge of the three aspects of the base

Continued from page 2

That attitude belongs to the *sutra* tradition which has developed very much everywhere. People have the idea that if someone sits without moving, perhaps with their eyes closed, then he or she is meditating. Moreover the person who is doing this also believes that he or she is meditating.

Many Westerners feel that the tantric teaching is very interesting but they do not like to practise it because it is not really doing meditation, but only involves chanting and rituals. Such people do not really know what contemplation is, and consider meditation to be sitting in silence without moving. But the real meaning of meditation or contemplation, as taught by Buddha Shakyamuni, is to dwell in our real nature.

How can we find ourselves in this real nature? Since our real nature is not just emptiness, but also includes clarity and energy, we must be in our energy and in our clarity, too. If the nature of our energy is movement, not silence, then how can we be in that nature without moving? You see this is the real sense.

Practising Dzogchen does not mean just remaining in silence but also involves moving, integrating with clarity, and integrating with the movement of energy. Thus you can easily understand why, in tantric practice, there is so much chanting, singing, moving about, and so on, because that involves integration with energy in movement. Sometimes you can find

explanations of this in tantric teachings, but generally it is only applied and not explained, although you can discover and understand the principle if you think about it. In the Dzogchen teachings these are things to be learned directly.

Energy

The last aspect of our base is energy, or *thugje* in Tibetan, the third aspect of our real condition. How does our energy manifest? It manifests without interruption. You can understand 'without interruption' by simply observing your own mind. You have a thought and immediately after that a second thought arises, then a third one, and so on; an infinity of thoughts, without any interruption at all. Our energy is in fact constantly in motion like a waterfall.

This continuation is related to our real condition, our inherent potentiality, which manifests as sounds, lights and rays. Through this inherent potentiality of ours - the sounds, lights and rays - we are able to connect with the transmission and the various methods, and the possibility of transforming into the deities and the *mandalas* is created. When you receive the transmission of a transformation practice during your lifetime, the teaching becomes linked to your real nature through the power of the transmission, through the *mantras*, etc. Then if you apply this practice, you will have the possibility of having certain meditative experiences as well as the possibility of total manifestation. If on the other hand you never receive

this kind of method or transmission during your lifetime, your capacity will remain limited to just the sounds, lights and rays.

To understand this we can consider the example of a mirror placed inside a box. A mirror has the potential capacity to reflect everything, but if there are no secondary causes, such as in the case of our example where the mirror is enclosed in the box, the many possible reflections do not manifest. If, on the other hand, we receive methods and apply them in our real condition, we are then like a mirror in an open place. When there are objects in front of such a mirror, reflections will arise in it. Receiving initiation thus means that we are given the possibility to realise certain results.

Our human condition includes many functions. If, through the power of the transmission, we can put these various functions to use in the practice of certain methods, we will then have the possibility to manifest specific results. This is why, for example, there are both wrathful and peaceful manifestations. The peaceful manifestations represent the inherent condition of our mind, in that if one is in a calm state, one can experience emptiness. The *mandala* of the peaceful manifestations are related to that aspect.

So one aspect of our condition is emptiness, but there are also infinite movements which are our energy. All these movements are related to our senses. For example with the eye we see objects, with the ear we

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The Preciousness of the Master

This brief talk was given by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu on May 14th, 1994 before teachings during an eight day retreat in Ulan Ude, Buryatia.

"Since 1992, up to the present, I have been travelling and teaching uninterruptedly. I usually live in Italy but I left there last April. I have been going to different countries, meeting different people and transmitting knowledge.

Of course when I arrive in a country, those people only think of themselves. They do not understand what kind of effort I have been making year after year, month after month. For that reason, when I arrived in India and Nepal (December '93 - January '94) I had a lot of problems with my blood pressure. Sometimes while I am teaching during retreats I feel very heavy.

Recently two Tibetan teachers died in India from problems of blood pressure, one of them while he was giving teaching. Why? Because teachers try to do their best. But many people do not understand that teachers

make a great deal of effort and accumulate that effort for months and months. That is why I try to be aware so that I can live longer and work longer with you. For that reason I must rest, otherwise I cannot do more.

Some years ago in New Zealand people made a very heavy schedule for me. When I told them that it was too heavy they said that a teacher never gets tired because he is a realised being and is beyond problems. Of course if I am a teacher like Guru Padmasambhava who has obtained the rainbow body then there is no problem. But you know that I am living in a physical body. Everyone who lives in a physical body eats, drinks, sleeps, and does many different activities. Why do we sleep? Because we need sleep to continue living. It is the same thing with resting, eating, drinking etc. If someone is physically dead then there is always a problem. You know that even Buddha Sakyamuni manifested death.

We must be concerned a little about these matters. So do not

think that I am not working or giving enough teachings. It is much better that you have contact with me in this life rather than the next life. This means that you, too, should be aware.

I am giving teachings for many days. The principle of the teaching is trying to understand and then applying that understanding. It is more than sufficient that I am giving teachings for seven or eight days. During this period of time there are possibilities to do many other things. For example, I can give some transmissions or *lung* of different practices for new people which they can learn to do with older students. For example, many people do not know how to do the *un* practice. So I can give a *lung* and a *trilung*, a kind of instruction, and then new students can learn the details with older students.

As you can see I am travelling with people who are helping to teach both Yantra Yoga and the Dance of the Vajra both of which you can learn when you have time. It is not always necessary to be with me."

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE Teaching Programme 1994

South Africa 26-28 August

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 3-6 September

Teaching Retreat

1 September Public Talk, London

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

Holland 9-11 September

Teaching Retreat

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

Germany 16-20 September

Teaching Retreat

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

Denmark 23-25 September

Seminar in Copenhagen

Contact: Dzogchen Community, Jørn Strufe, Norrebrogade 64/4, 2200 København N. Tel. 31 392530.

New York 30 September - 1 October

Teaching

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

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

Mexico 17-21 November

Seminary, Mexico City

Contact: Casa Amatlan 124, Colonia Condesa, Mexico. Tel: 2869524

Venezuela 2-8 December

Teaching Retreat

Contact: Pablo Lau Rivera, Lhundrubgar, PB. A. Res. Pedemales, Av. Paez Montalban II, 1021 Caracas. Tel. 2 442 1434.

Argentina Buenos Aires 16 - 18 December

Seminar

Contact: Nelida Saporiti, Virrey Loreto 3616, 1472 Buenos Aires. Tel 551 88 44, fax 325 9337.

Tashigar 26 Dec. - 4 Jan. 1995 Teaching Retreat

7 - 9 January Santi Maha Sangha Exam

13 - 19 January First Level Santi Maha Sangha Teaching

Contact: P. Feldman, Mariano Moreno 382, 5000 Cordoba. Tel. & fax 51 226845.

USA

New Mexico 2 - 6 February Seminar

10 - 12 February Seminar for Tibetans (N.M.)

Contact: Lidian King Watson, RT 4 Box 16 M, Santa Fe. Tel. 505 988 5995.

San Francisco 23 Feb. - 1 March

Teaching Retreat

Contact: C. Fields, 755 Euclid Ave. Berkeley, CA 94708. Tel. 510 5599753.

Tsegyalgar 9 - 15 March

Teaching Retreat

17 - 19 March

Seminar for Shang-Shung Institute at Conway

Merigar Easter 1995 Teaching retreat

Reviving religion in Buryatia



by L. Granger

After an hour's flight from the Mongolian capital, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was welcomed at the airport of Ulan Ude in Buryatia by retreat organisers Batodalay Dugarov and representatives of the Centre of Buryatian Culture of Ulan Ude. This was Rinpoche's second visit to Buryatia where he gave eight days of teaching.

The venue was a spacious sports auditorium in the city itself, easy to reach for the many local people who wished to receive teaching. The programme was drawn up so that Rinpoche gave a single evening session of teaching each day allowing those with day jobs to attend and avoiding an overly strenuous programme for Rinpoche himself whose teaching schedule of the last months has taken him through Singapore, Thailand, Australia and Mongolia. As in 1992, on Rinpoche's

first visit, Tatyana Naumenko from St. Petersburg translated for him from English to Russian.

The retreat began on the evening of May 13th when Rinpoche gave a general introduction to the teaching, explaining that there are three main kinds of teaching because there are three aspects of existence of an individual: body, voice and mind. Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen correspond to the Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya and Dharmakaya teachings respectively yet there should not be conflicts between these teachings. The principle of Dzogchen is knowledge and Dzogchen practice can make use of many different methods but first of all there must be a base, an understanding.

During the second evening session Rinpoche gave a full explanation and *lung* of the short *turn*.

On the third evening he spoke about the Six Liberations through the

senses elucidating particularly on the function of *mantra*. Since sound is the root of all manifestation, all *tantra* have their essential *mantra* which is a seed of potentiality. In Dzogchen, the most important *mantra* is the Six Syllables which is the natural sound of the Atibuddha and corresponds to the six *lokas*. Rinpoche then gave a transmission of a *lung* of the short *tadrol* "The Tantra of Unique Self-Arising". This was followed by a *lung* of 25 *mantras* of natural sound found in the *tadrol* which are related to the Song of the Vajra.

During the fourth session of teaching Rinpoche explained the Three Vajras, the state of all enlightened beings, which represent our real potentiality and govern all sounds. This was followed by an empowerment of the Three Vajras.

The following evening was dedicated to an explanation of the long-life practices of Amitayus, Guru Padmasambhava and Mandarava for which Rinpoche gave the *lung*. This was followed by the empowerment for the long-life practice of Amitayus. Rinpoche stressed that it is important not just to visualise the seed syllable such as that used in the Amitayus practice but to actually feel the sound, the vibration.

As on the preceding days, during the sixth session of teaching, Rinpoche gave many *lung* of various practices so that those who had received an introduction to the teaching, could start to actively

enter into practice: the *lung* of the main practice of Vajrapani according to the *terma* of Rinpoche's uncle, Green Tara, Garuda according to the *terma* of Adzom Drugpa, *Sanqod*, *Lunda*, *Namkhaand* Odser Chenma.

The day before the last day of teaching was a rather special occasion during which Rinpoche had already told us he would give an initiation of Guru Dragpo in a form which would give the possibility to do practice of Vajrakilaya, Garuda, Vajrapani and Hayagriva. That evening Rinpoche entered the hall dressed in a splendid Mongolian full-length brocade robe which had been presented to him. After an explanation of the visualisation, Rinpoche said the body initiation would give the possibility to practice the developing stage, the voice initiation the possibility to practice the accomplishing stage and the mind initiation the possibility to practice contemplation. The initiation lasted well into the late evening as the enormous crowd of people gradually filed past the Master to receive initiation with the *phurba* while he gently intoned the *mantra* for hours.

With the final session of the retreat, Rinpoche spoke about the importance of integrating the teaching into one's own condition and not remaining "like a stone in water". He said that intellectual knowledge is not enough and that one should be aware of time. He also stressed how essential it is to develop collaboration between practitioners of the Community and later that evening he met with people

interested in creating the Buryatian Dzogchen Community and formed a new Gakyil of nine people. The final evening session closed with a practice of *chöd*.

Well over 300 people attended the retreat, many of them from the Buryatian capital while others travelled great distances from areas as distant as Irkutsk, Vladivostok, Moscow, St. Petersburg, the Ukraine, Kalmikia, the Baltic States, Europe, America and Thailand. A dedicated group of practising Buryatian shamans also participated in the retreat and were actively involved in the organisation of Rinpoche's visit.

Since the collapse of the Communist regime in Buryatia all types of religious activity have been experiencing a revival including shamanism, which is experiencing a very strong revival here. Historically Buryatia has been divided between Buddhists of the Gelugpa tradition and the national pre-Buddhist faith, shamanism, which traditionally have often been opposed. Local Buryats felt that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's visit had been timely in order to prevent a serious split between Buddhism and shamanism which might have developed over the next two or three years in the context of the new religious revival there. It was also felt that through knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching, the Buryatian shamanistic tradition would be able to return to its ancient roots as it was at the time of Shenrab Miwoche in the Kingdom of Shang Shung.

Honouring the Lord of the Mountain

by L. Granger

The day after the teaching retreat in Ulan Ude, Buryatia drew to a close, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche travelled to a power place some distance outside the city to perform a ritual which had been requested by Batodalai Dugarov, one of the main retreat organisers. On behalf of the people of his village, Batodalai had asked Rinpoche to visit his native village, Kishingei, to perform a ritual honouring the guardians and spirits around the village, in particular the "Lord of the Mountain". This "Lord" is also called Begdze and is Lord of Chilsana mountain, one of the main mountains in the area. Since the trip would have been extremely long as Kishingei is quite distant from the Buryatian capital, it was decided to visit another sacred mountain at Dahita about halfway to Kishingei called Baherse Babhe or "Father of the Rock". In the Buryatian language "babhe" means father, "baherse" means rock. Here, too, at Baherse Babhe, Begdze, the Lord of Chilsana mountain, is said to frequently make his presence felt.

A cavalcade of cars set off early in the morning from Rinpoche's hotel in the Buryatian capital with Rinpoche's car in the lead. That



Chogyal Namkhai Norbu during the ritual at Dahita

day, Rinpoche had donned a bright yellow Mongolian brocade dress for the occasion and was resplendent, like the sun, as he stepped out of the hotel to lead us on this small pilgrimage. We were only a handful of Europeans participating in this local event and we watched intently as the line of cars jostled trying to keep up with the Master's.

After little more than an hour's drive through the strikingly spacious panorama of the Buryatian country-

side we arrived at the pine covered slopes of our destination where a large group of villagers from both Dahita and Kishingei were waiting for Rinpoche.

Here he was welcomed in traditional style with a cup of fermented mare's milk and excitedly greeted by villagers of all ages: shy bright-eyed children, sturdy women in coloured head scarves, round-faced, smiling, their men in suits or jeans, hat in hand,

the village elders in traditional coloured silk dresses men and women alike, malas wrapped around their wrists, all in awe and respect of their honoured visitor. The weather was hot with bright sun and mountain stillness and the woods smelled of springtime. There was the excitement and laughter of a Sunday picnic in the air and indeed, both the villagers and the participants who had arrived from Ulan Ude had packed quantities of food and vodka for the ritual and after. Some participants suggested that we continue

on foot up the mountain to do the ritual but Rinpoche felt that it was better to do it close by since there were many elderly people in the crowd who would not have been able to do the walk. It was Rinpoche himself who found a shady and open place under the trees and while an area was prepared for him with ritual instruments and a table and *lunda*, hung to be authenticated, we all arranged ourselves and our food around him under the trees.

Rinpoche had prepared a new text for the ritual. He began by inviting all the local spirits and all the spirits of the region including those of Kishingei, then he made a ritual offering to them. After doing a *turn* he made an offering to the eight classes by sprinkling vodka as is done traditionally in Buryatia.

It was a full and complete ritual for the eight classes. Following this he did a ritual for the guardian Begdze, the Lord of Kishingei who lives on Chilsana mountain. While Rinpoche intoned the ritual verses beating time with the clash of cymbals, he was accompanied by Batodalai sounding the large drum and the voices of those who knew parts of the ritual. It was a special moment for all those who were present - the foreigners struck by being part of the powerful and magical surroundings and vibrations, the villagers in awe of the presence of Rinpoche, yet joyful to be able to participate in this important ritual.

As Rinpoche finished, many of the villagers respectfully waited before him with bowed heads, asking for blessings. It was a scene which had repeated itself daily on Rinpoche's

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600 participate in Moscow retreat

by the Moscow Dzogchen Community

The retreat in Moscow under the guidance of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche started on May 27th with about 600 people participating from various parts of Russia, the Ukraine, Belorussia, the Baltic republics, west Europe and the USA. It took place in Kootchino, a picturesque area in the Moscow countryside, surrounded by ponds and woods.

Due to the generous help of sponsors, M. Krupp (Germany), R. Drury

(Thailand) and G. Kalmykov (Russia), it was possible for people from regions of Russia where the economic situation is very difficult to take part in the retreat.

In the two years which have passed since the first visit of the Master, Dzogchen communities have been organised in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Riga, Vilnius, Minsk, Ulan Ude and other places. Representatives of these communities together with people from other cities came to Moscow to participate in this retreat.

The programme was very rich with events in which the students participated with awareness and sincere interest. Besides the teaching given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, there were courses of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance as well as collective practice. For more than half of the



Group photo at the Moscow retreat

(photo Prima Mai)

students this retreat was their first meeting with the Teacher, so special training was organised for the newcomers by the more advanced disciples who had already acquired some experience of Dzogchen practice. All the beginners considered such preparation to be very helpful.

At the beginning of the retreat, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche said that he had already seen this place in his dreams in the 1970s when he began giving teachings in public.

The Yantra Yoga course was given by Fabio Andrico and the Om A Hum Dance was taught by Prima Mai. Everyone was very happy when quite unexpectedly the Teacher himself together with older students performed the Dance of the Vajra.

The profound teaching given by

the Master, the sincere interest of the students, the very high organisational level and the beautiful environment created a wonderful atmosphere at the retreat which will stay forever in the memory of all those who participated. Along with new possibilities for practice, the retreat also gave a precious experience of the unity of the Sangha. The organisational committee of the Moscow Dzogchen Community did their best to get things to run smoothly and easily and to eliminate all possible problems.

During the ten days of retreat, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave transmissions and instruction on the basis of the Santi Maha Sangha teachings.

Feeling deep gratitude to our Teacher, we look forward to our next meeting with him.

The Master visits Switzerland

Report by Paolino Perrella and Phuntsok Tsalung

Once again Switzerland was blessed by the presence of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche who visited Zürich and the Tibetan Institute in Rikon between July 8th and 12th. The event was made possible thanks to the joint efforts of the Tibetan Community of Switzerland, the Dzogchen Community of Switzerland and the Sebil Centre of Zürich.

On the evening of July 8th, Norbu Rinpoche gave an introductory teaching, speaking in general on the Four Noble Truths and on Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen.

During the morning session of July 9th, Rinpoche gave the transmission (lung) and explanation of the Song of the Vajra followed by an explanation about the three qualifications of the three existences during which he gave several examples in order to explain the Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. After this he showed us an image of the tigre with a white A in the centre so that we would know how to visualise it and told us how, under certain circumstances, one could see tigre in the sky.

In the afternoon, Rinpoche explained the importance of the

teacher in the Dzogchen tradition after which he gave a very essential practice of Guruyoga, pointing out how essential this practice is for the transmission of the teaching. He then gave transmission and explanation of the short Tun.

During the morning session of July 10th, Rinpoche explained the Testament of Garab Dorje. In order to illustrate the first point, direct introduction into the state of contemplation, Rinpoche spoke first of all about the semzin to discover the state of shiné and lhundrub together and then the semzin of sounding the Phat according to an explanation of Patrul Rinpoche. He went on to explain the second point of the Testament, not to remain in doubt, giving many examples and much advice. Finally he gave instruction on the third and last point: how to continue in the presence of the state of contemplation and integrate it into everyday life. Rinpoche concluded the morning teaching by making a point of how important it is not to mistake any type of experience with the state of contemplation. During the afternoon teaching Rinpoche gave the transmission and explanation of the Ganapuja and the Naggon and we practised

together.

On the morning of July 11th, Rinpoche taught in Tibetan to about thirty Tibetan disciples living in Switzerland, giving transmission and a very comprehensive explanation of the Song of the Vajra. Rinpoche spoke about his Root Guru, Rigzin Chang Chub Dorje, and other teachers of his and then went on to explain the Dzogchen lineage. During the evening of the same day, Rinpoche held a conference on Tibetan history for an assembly of the Tibetan Youth Association, speaking on the 4,000 year old Bön tradition and the ancient kingdom of Shang-Shung.

The following day Rinpoche was welcome in Rikon by the Tibetan Institute and the official Representative of H. H. the Dalai Lama in Europe. Here Rinpoche gave a general introduction to the Dzogchen teaching.

The visit of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche provided a great opportunity for all of us to receive very precious teaching. We hope that next time Rinpoche comes he will be able to teach for a few more days so that people can practice the teachings they have received and become a little more confident in them.

Thank you Rinpoche!

Yantra Yoga Teachers

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has authorised Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico, to hold retreats of Yantra Yoga around the world. Any group wishing to organise Yantra Yoga retreats should do so through the Blue Gakyil of Merigar and should cover the travelling expenses of the teacher and provide him or her with an adequate recompense. Expert practitioners of Yantra Yoga can collaborate with those who are interested in practising Yantra Yoga on the local level under the supervision of their local Gakyil.

Prima Mai, Adriana Dal Borgo and Stoffelina Verdonk have been authorised to hold courses of the Dance of the Vajra internationally. Courses with these teachers should be organised through the local Gakyil and the Blue Gakyil of Merigar. The group inviting the Vajra Dance teacher should cover the travelling expenses and give them adequate recompense.

Meeting Rinpoche in Cracow

by Mateusz Wiszniewski & Cezary Wozniak

From June 8 - 16 Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche visited Poland. It was his second visit here, the first taking place in 1992 when Rinpoche taught in Lodz. This time teachings were given in Cracow, the old capital of Poland, which was the seat of Polish kings in the past. Situated upon the longest river in Poland, the Vistula, Cracow has many monuments and is a city full of cultural and spiritual life. Many people were waiting for Rinpoche when he arrived at Warsaw airport and they travelled with him to Cracovia. The day before the beginning of the retreat we did a Ganapuja together with Rinpoche near a place called "Kopiec Pilsudckiego", one of the manmade hills around Cracovia constructed to commemorate a national hero. Although it was raining before Rinpoche arrived, when he came the sun was shining.

The teachings in Cracovia were held in an old brick hall which held about four hundred people, both "old" students and "new" who were meeting Rinpoche for the first time. Besides housing the mandala for the Vajra Dance, the hall also provided an economical place to sleep for many of the retreat participants.

During the retreat, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche explained in a very essential way the principles of the paths of renunciation, transformation and self-liberation. He gave many empowerments and transmissions. Apart from the daily morning teaching sessions, Rinpoche also led the evening practices which had been previously explained by the "old" practitioners to the "new". Fabio Andrico taught Yantra yoga during the afternoon.

A new Gakyil was elected during the retreat and among other important things, the registration of the Dzogchen Community in Poland (which will probably take place shortly) and finding a place for the Community were discussed. After the election, Rinpoche talked to the new Gakyil and explained a few things about its work, the principles of co-operation and translations. The retreat finished on June 14th with a Ganapuja.

On the following day, Rinpoche visited Wawel-Polish Royal Castle in Cracow with its legendary Earth chakra and cave in which, according to an old tale, a dragon used to live. During the walk, while we rested, Rinpoche told us a story about collaboration between four animals that helped a country to flourish. This story about the power of collaboration which was spoken by the Buddha in the Sutra teachings was very inspiring for us in learning how to collaborate. On the evening of June 16th, about ten people went to Warsaw airport to say good-bye to Rinpoche and Fabio as they left for Greece.

For many of us this visit was a great event and possibility to learn and try to experience in everyday life that which Rinpoche teaches.

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All the kindness of the Master/ All the glories of France



Rinpoche with the founders of the Domaine du Vajra (photo P. Silverman)

by Michael Katz

In a city such as Paris which has become increasingly international due to immigration, it is still a jolting surprise, upon arriving directly from Charles de Gaulle airport, to find Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche teaching within a beautiful Pagoda. This Buddhist enclave situated within the Bois de Vincennes was donated by Paris mayor Chirac upon his daughter's recovery from a serious illness. It includes a large and exact pagoda style hall which houses an enormous gilded Buddha 50 feet high, as well as a Tibetan Buddhist style temple and extensive grounds. There is also a second smaller delicate pagoda overlooking a lake.

Norbu Rinpoche seemed *en forme* as he lectured a relatively small group owing to the timing of his visit during July when Paris is empty.

The French Dzogchen Community was well organised selling a wide selection of Rinpoche's books. They also unfurled a mandala and demonstrated the Vajra Dance.

After the day long seminar, I fortified myself with half a litre of strong French coffee and joined Rinpoche and other students for dinner. We met at one of Paris's three Tibetan restaurants. Amongst us were many members of the very nice French Community as well as an assortment of other people which typically lent an international flavor to the occasion. The moveable feast had landed again in France.

After one and a half years I was thrilled to see Rinpoche again. It was also a joy to integrate with the French and European members of the Community. I resist the temptation to mention names for fear of leaving someone out. Dinner concluded and we dispersed temporarily into the Paris night.

After teaching a well received one day workshop myself based on Jungian and other dreamwork traditions, it was time to leave Paris.

The retreat location, situated in the picturesque Loire River valley, was within a chateau nestled deep in

the woods 5 km from the small town of Chateau Neuf sur Loire, purchased and renovated by the Domaine du Vajra, a group which practices martial arts and generosity through service.

The large chateau was organised into dormitory style rooms. Camping was also available on the grounds and a large building served as the Gonpa. The Domaine du Vajra also operated a bar for the night owls.

One night in the dormitory was enough to have a direct experience of "ronfler" (English: snore). Not to be outdone by the French and Germans I confess I gave as good as I got. Collectively the international assortment of snorers drove a Yugoslavian diva out to the campgrounds.

She did however in a gesture of good sportsmanship and Bodhicitta purchase a box of ear plugs which she bestowed before she fled, thus easing the crisis.

From the beginning it was clear that this would be a special retreat. Being with the *maestro* and a small group of 100 students reminded me of early retreats in the old house in Conway.

The retreat was characterised by general calm punctuated by high drama. Perhaps describing the Loire River itself can give a sense of the retreat.

The Loire River although apparently quiet and calm is actually wild and unpredictable. Having grown up near the ocean I generally am not intimidated by water, however the Loire's current is extraordinary and not obvious from even a few feet away. Characterised by sudden whirlpools and shifting sand it is considered unnavigable.

Somehow many aspects of the retreat were like the Loire itself. Generally hot and turgidly humid, the weather periodically gave way from sunshine to crashing thunder and lightning storms which came and went within a matter of minutes. Coincidentally the storms seemed to occur whenever Rinpoche was presiding over protection practices

or conducting an empowerment ritual.

Even the couple who founded the Domaine du Vajra and so good naturedly served us all suddenly showed a wrathful aspect demonstrating a ferocious martial art called *kempa*.

The ambience seemed to agree with Rinpoche. He has been maintaining an unmerciful travel schedule but here in the French countryside he seemed to rejuvenate a bit. Initially severe he became increasingly good spirited, joking, playing and breaking out in unrestrained laughter on many occasions. This all culminated in a terrific party on the last night complete with improvisational antics, international singing and campy dramatics. In regards to the most important aspect of the retreat, the teachings, Rinpoche's first lecture was a glorious oral transmission regarding the state of contemplation.

I know everyone shared the feeling that we did not deserve Rinpoche's extraordinary kindness. Nevertheless we subsequently also received Dzogchen symbolic and direct transmissions as well as a formidable array of secondary practices for any contingency.

Between the morning teachings and the evening practice there were various classes including Yantra Yoga and Dancing on the mandala. Typically activities lasted until near midnight after which the always festive Community, led by the Parisians, took refuge at the bar until it closed.

One other aspect of the retreat was special. Rinpoche gave transmission of a prayer for the teacher's long life. He did this after explaining how he had previously resisted considering such prayers as links to the monastic hierarchical system.

Clearly Rinpoche's incredible

schedule and constant exertion on our behalf takes a daily toll. I know I will be reciting this prayer in the future so as to express some gratitude.

After the final Ganapuja, Rinpoche lingered in the Gonpa. The eight days had passed in the timeless time of Kairos. As if in a dream we threaded back through towns of the Loire and their spectacular floral displays and I found myself in Paris once again.

With one day left in France, Philippe and I visited the imperial city of Versailles. I looked out on the vast gardens and pools considering the impermanence of kings and empires.

On the palace itself near the statue of Louis IV was the inscription "Toutes les gloires de la France". All the glories of the world are nothing in comparison to the kindness of the Master.

A bientot France.

Long Life to the Precious Master

This year during his travels to many different places, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has taught a short verse dedicated to the long life of all precious masters. This verse can be integrated at the end of a session of practice. Many practitioners from all over the world have asked Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for a special practice in order to dedicate the wish for long life to their Master. Generally Rinpoche has always replied that if ones wishes him long life, the best way to do this is to apply what he is teaching. To maintain the presence of receiving the precious teachings transmitted through our compassionate Master, one can apply this invocation:

། དཔལ་ལྷན་རྒྱ་མའི་ལམ་ལ་བཞུགས་པ་དང་།
BALDÁN LÁMAI XÁBBAD DANBA DÁN,

May the lotus feet of the glorious gurus remain firm upon the earth

། མཐའ་མཉམ་ཡོངས་ལ་བདེ་སྲིད་འབྱུང་བ་དང་།
KĀÑĀM YOŃLA DÉGYID JYUNVA DÁN,

May all beings as vast as the sky have joy and happiness

། བདག་གཞན་མ་ལུས་ཚོགས་ཚྭ་སྤེལ་བའི་ལུས་།
DÁG XÁN MALUS COG ZÓG DRÍBJYĀN NĀS,

Purifying obscurations accomplishing merits for self and all others

། ལྷུ་དུ་སངས་བྱུང་ས་ལ་འགྲོད་པར་ཤོག །
NŪRDU SANĠGYĀS SALA GÓDBAR XOG,

May all swiftly obtain the state of enlightenment.

This verse can be used after the dedication of merit in the long *tun*, "Geva diyis nurdu dag ... dedag sala godbar-xog" and before the invocation "Gyalva gungisanqen zod ... gyalkam yonla dar gyas-xog".

3rd Tibetan Medicine Seminar



Participants in the medicine seminar

by Paolo Pappone

The course on Tibetan medicine continues. Participants met for the third time at Merigar with Dr. Pasang Yonten who continued this third eight day seminar with his intensive and clear explanations.

The course, organised by the Shang Shung Institute began in June 1993 and is made up of intensive seminars every six months. The first meeting led by Doctor Phuntshok Wangmo from the Medical University of Lhasa and Doctor Pasang Yonten Chief Pharmacist and former director of the Tibetan Medical Institute in Dharamsala was

followed by two others led by Dr. Pasang whose teaching programme has brought us into the mainstream of Tibetan medicine. Dr. Pasang, who teaches in English, uses teaching methods particularly adapted to the Western way of thought and of study.

The study programme, analogous to that which is being given at the same time at Kumpen Lama Ganchen in Milan by Dr. Pasang, is based on "The Four Medical Tantra".

The first two seminars covered the theoretical foundation of Tibetan medicine contained in the first two Tantra while the third seminar has

gradually brought the participants into the more concrete elements of diagnoses and prescription, behaviour and diet, all of which are related to health. It goes without saying that this medical teaching presents many points of great interest for those involved in the course and even though the lessons are strictly "limited" to medical theory, they are also full of interest and precious references to the daily culture and life of Tibetans.

However, the main point which has made this course particularly valuable, I feel, is the fact that the participants have been able to receive in a simple way medical instruction which has, until now, only been accessible to Westerners with difficulty and through an enormous commitment of time and energy. During this third seminar, the students' capacity to understand what had already been taught was tested in a written examination.

Under the patronage of the Shang Shung Institute, collaboration during the seminars was also offered by Prof. Adriano Clemente who kindly did his best to teach the rudiments of Tibetan language to course participants while Elisa Copello translated the teaching into Italian. Monica Gentile made a record of the transcriptions of the lessons.

The Night of Three Suns

by N. Zeitz

It was a bittersweet event as our friends Tsering Wangchuk and Sonam Palmo, the Tibetan thanka painters from Tashi Jong who have dedicated many weeks of their skills to decorating the Merigar Gonpa, began packing their paints and brushes in preparation to depart for France. On the other hand, we were in joyful anticipation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's visit to the Gonpa to say farewell to them.

Tsering Wangchuk and his wife will spend three months at the Karma Migyurling monastery in the south of France where they have been invited to decorate the gonpa after which they will return to Merigar to continue their work in the Gonpa here.

We have all grown very fond of and very used to the presence of our Tibetan friends in the Gonpa at Merigar, with their calm and warm countenance. It certainly filled the many hours of work with laughter and fun and an opportunity to learn about simple dedication and diligence. By their example of patience and kindness we all came to some small awareness of our own potentiality. In the expectation that Rinpoche would join us in our farewell, we prepared our space and ourselves for his arrival.

Besides the regular Gonpa crew, many others drifted in either with or



Sonam Palmo and Tsering Wangchuk

(photo R. Bizzotto)

without knowledge of the Master's arrival. After a few cups of tea and longing looks down the road to his house, Rinpoche arrived.

It was a beautiful Tuscan summer evening. A night of three suns. Songbirds and golden light surrounded the Gonpa.

Rinpoche entered with many greetings and circled the Gonpa, carefully examining the paintings of the three lineages, Nyingmapa, Kagyupa and Gelugpa (the latter not quite completed) which adorn the long panels over the windows.

Rinpoche began reading and

singing the mantras inscribed on the ceiling and said it was not a difficult script to learn. He told us how it was developed by a Sakyapa Rinpoche who lived in Mongolia and that it was a combination of Tibetan and Mongolian script used to transmit the teachings in Mongolia.

Rinpoche also made note of the blossoming flowers on the large beams and, in general, seemed pleased with the work to date.

The sun setting behind him, Rinpoche sat down among us and began to talk about his recent travels in Russia, Mongolia and Buryatia.

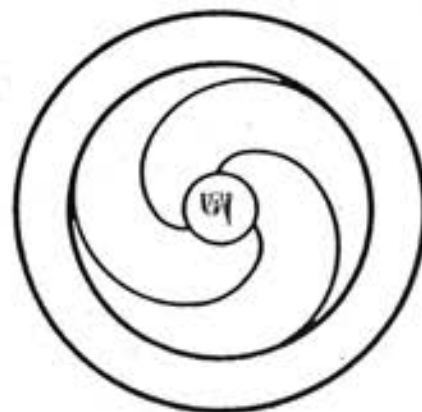
At one point he noticed a reflection of the sun reflected into three in the window of the Gonpa and invited some of us to see it from his vantage point.

Then the inevitable issue of the Santi Maha Sangha examination arose; as it was the night before the exam, Rinpoche asked a few courageous students some questions and then told a story of his own experience as a young man when he had to participate, at the request of his teacher, in a scholarly all night debate session with only a few days to prepare.

After some time, Rinpoche and the Gonpa workers moved up to the veranda of the yellow house for a

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



During the retreat Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give a general overview of the teachings and focus on specific topics relating to Dzogchen including a particular tradition of chülden as taught by Nyala Pema Dundul, the Master of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's root Master, Rigzin Chang Chub Dorje. Rinpoche will also give the empowerment of Drago Kilaya.

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.

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

August 23rd & 24th

Initiations for the 21 forms of Tara
with the explanations of the sadhanas.

(During this period those participating should not consume meat, fish or eggs until the evening meal.)

August 25th

Initiation of Vajrayogini with teachings.

Invited by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Sakya Jetsun Chimed Luding Rinpoche will teach at Merigar from August 23 to 25. Sister of Sakya Tenzin, 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 teaching 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 practice 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, the Jetsunma is the mother of five children.

The cost of the retreat is Lit. 120.000 or Lit. 50.000 per day. Babysitting service is available for a small fee. Reservation required.

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

New Gakyils

Buryatia

Blue - Batodalai Dougarov, Nicolai Dudka, Puposheva Natalia
 Yellow - Victor Tarmaev, Sodnom Badmacerenov, Zoric Dougarov
 Red - Petr Shablin, Nadegda Stepanova, Ida Shabanova

Byelorussia

The official address for correspondence with the Gakyil of Byelorussia is: Malakhouski Rouslan, Ul. Odintsova 29, ap. 35, Minsk, Byelorussia.

Estonia

Blue - Maret Kark; Red - Andres Zelmin; Yellow - Maaia Oun

Kalmykia - Namgyalling

Blue: Dorjeanov Aleksey; Red: Badmaeva Lakisa; Yellow: Mandjiev Naran.
 Official contact address: Elista, Ul. Lermontova 83, Kalmykia 358000, Russia. Tel. 84722 2 89 69.

Latvia - Padmaling

Blue: S. Uspenski, I. Pustovit, V. Stepanov; Red: G. Kuznecova, I. Baltgalve; Yellow: G. Plastun.
 New contact address: Galina Kuznecova, Maskavas 287 - 36, Riga, Latvia LV 1060.

Ukraine

Blue: Oganesev Vladimir, Kharkov 310127 Geroev Trudo St. 32-86
 Yellow: Pronin Andrey, Kharkov, 310118, 50 Let Ulksm St., 70-119.
 Tel. 0572 63 02 42
 Red: Nazarova Elena, Kharkov, Sverdlova St. 41-20. Tel. 0572 234455

Poland

Blue: Artur Skura, Aleksander Skwara, Zbigniew Zagajewski (Vice Director)
 Red: Kazimierz Ignaczak, Krystyna Kijania, Adam Was
 Yellow: Stanislaw Jagielski, Jaroslaw Pawlowski, Cezary Wozniak (Director)

Switzerland

Blue: Paolo Perella, Phuntsok Tsalung
 Red: Jocelyne Carasso, Max Roth
 Yellow: Christina von Geispitzheim, Karl Beer
 Secretary: Christina von Geispitzheim, Haus Fontana 12, 3920 Zermatt.
 Tel. 28 664641 or 28 673826.

Vajra Dancing in New Mexico

by Lidian King

The New Mexico Community was fortunate to have Adriana Dal Borgo teach us the Vajra Dance this past June. Some of us remembered (more or less) the steps taught to us by Prima Mai in the spring of 1993. However, we had not had a place to dance for almost a year, so it was a special opportunity indeed to once again learn the movements of this profound practice.

Very much at the "last minute" I made a final decision to have a community platform built on my property. The platform was hurriedly completed with the cheerful help of six Tibetan refugees now settled in the Santa Fe area. It sits in a secluded spot surrounded by shady trees with an apple orchard to the south. Meanwhile, a few of us also finished painting a portable canvas mandala, based on the design kindly sent to us by the Dzogchen Community in Venezuela.

For the Dance retreat, six out-of-state Community members came and camped near the mandala or stayed dormitory-style in the art studio. A small contingent of local members arrived daily for one or both of the Dance sessions. Adriana's patient and gently manner made us all feel very relaxed, even when we couldn't distinguish right limb from left!

In between sessions, there was time for swimming in the pool, shopping or dining excursions into Santa Fe, and even a few Indian dances at local pueblos. We ate as guests in the home of a pueblo woman and later, as we watched the Corn Dancer's bare feet striking the earth in time with the drum beat and men's chorus, the rain began to fall. Traditionally this Dance is performed as an invocation to the rain spirits to nourish the young corn crop. Needless to say, our own Dance session got "rained out" that afternoon! While the mandala dried, we harmonised our energies at a Ganapuja celebrated in the home of Steve and Nissia Landsberg.

The retreat drew to a close all too quickly. Although we didn't quite complete the Dance movements, what we learned is thoroughly imprinted in our minds. We look forward to another similar retreat next year, if all goes well!

Conway school: fulfilling the promise



by Lauri Marder

For some months the Tsegylgar school, that place of much potential, has been relatively quiet. The planning and designing and re-designing have gone on, meetings have been held on alternate Thursdays among the carpenters and other interested community members, but for the most part, the building has been standing there, full of promise and almost empty.

With some direction and support from the Gakyil several skilled carpenters in the community made a start at renovating the school this spring. They assumed a lot of people would come to help out. However, most people were busy, and very few actually came on weekends to work. The Gakyil began to have to plan how it all could happen without much help from community members. The prospect was fairly gloomy. It seemed as if we had no need of such a large building if so few were interested.

However, life has its rhythms, and on a day-to-day basis our secretary (Jim Valby) always spends a lot of time in the office answering mail, phone calls, faxes and keeping track of memberships and many other aspects of worldwide community life. Kathy McGrane prepares newsletters and fliers. An ongoing schedule of tasks is kept ready for the stray voluntary worker who may come along to help this school business get going. It's posted on the bulletin board, full of tasks, from mowing the lawn to putting in bathrooms, with contact people and details when needed. Glen Eddy has made a practice of preparing Tyvek mandalas and sending them to communities who order them. Many others spend a lot of their time working on the important decisions

we need to make on a weekly basis, and doing many small and large things that will make this school ready in October.

The weeks move by, each with practices to do, and Santi Maha Sangha to study. On Tuesday evenings and Sunday afternoons we dance, on Wednesdays we study together, and on Saturday mornings we practise. Up by the pond, people have been making individual retreats of varying lengths. And the cabin is often used for the dark practice.

The school has life, and when Rinpoche inaugurates the Shang-Shung Institute, and The Mirror begins to be published here, it will be a very active place.

We have had two marvellous Dance retreats with Stoffelina Verdonk, whose skill, patience, reverence for the Dance, gentleness and humor made a very welcome addition to our community for the two months she was here. Seeing people from further away than down the road was a good tonic for the end of a long winter. Dancing for several hours each day created an energy which brought us all forward into the space of the teachings, and made it seem quite sensible again to have a big, old school building to come to. So it's not that nothing had been happening, it's just that nothing very dynamic had been happening with the school, and we began to get quite nervous. How could we even prepare for the retreat in October if so few come to help?

On June 18th, a practitioner from Canada came here to work with her brother visiting from Holland. Though they found a silent building and only one community member there to greet them and work along with them, they left behind a gift of many walls ready to paint from their

labor of sanding.

On the weekend of June 24th, a long-awaited visit from the New York community finally occurred, and we local people experienced the revitalization of our energies we so badly needed. So much seemed to be possible with a few more people. "They won't really come," some had said. "I'll believe it when I see it!" But sure enough when Saturday came, so did five precious community members, ready to work, to practise, to laugh, to eat, to dance, to sleep, all of which happened in due time. Our local Sangha rubbed the doubt out of its eyes and enjoyed to the full the glorious sensation of collaboration in the realization of Rinpoche's vision of the school.

Some workers experienced the "joy of demolition". Some got to know the qualities of sheetrock, particularly its weight, as they carted massive sheets of it to the huge waste container outside. Sharing the job of window frame priming seemed to produce a pleasant environment for anecdotal recitals, while a solitary slicer of sheetrock bemoaned the neurosis she felt before making the first cut into an unspoiled new piece. One local member single-handedly gutted all the walls of the main floor toilet, soon to be a handicapped bathroom. One worked for awhile alongside a visiting community member, and wore a relaxed aura like a new suit. On Sunday, someone mowed the whole lawn, though it was hot, knowing he was joined in his efforts by a school full of people working hard, too.

What an immeasurable difference they make, these efforts of people to get here, to work hard all day, to get to know the community as it manifests in each other, and to practise together! Those who have worked alone or in small groups in the school have not had the immediate reward of the energy of others helping them, the companionship of fellow practitioners, the responsiveness of others, but their efforts have laid a good foundation. It always does seem to come back to the individual, and the capability of each person to change things through the power of his or her commitment and understanding, no matter if the situation seems bleak or impossible, no matter if others appreciate or understand.

All the individuals whose valuation of the precious Dzogchen teachings has led them to come and make a contribution here have given a great gift.

We humans on this plane depend a lot on such things, to our occasional joy. In this happy instance, we came into a way of experiencing something positive in this realm. For those of you who have the means to come here and participate, this is a very good time to come. Come and see what is here, what is possible, and what part you can play. Tsegylgar belongs to the Dzogchen Community, and you are it!

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Collecting the Nectar of the Essence

continued from page 1

Loek: No, but it's good to do your best just to try to make a beginning with that. When I first saw the book with questions in Austria last year I thought: this is far too difficult for me, how advanced! And then I put it back. But immediately a vajrabrother picked it up and gave it back to me, indicating that I should do this! Then Shaloo kindly gave me a copy of the abbreviated text and this connected very much with my study at that moment. But I experienced a big resistance against having to study in a scholastic sense again! Yet in one way or another the material fascinated me tremendously, and also the idea of picking up this study so I quickly overcame these obstacles. So I experienced this motivation, to be able to continue the teachings forever in the future, as a very important force.

Francoise: Can you tell us how you took up your study?

Loek: When I look back at my study, I can discover different stages of study:

First stage: the gathering and collecting of the answers on the different questions. I noticed that everybody has a different system for that! But doing this, I think, you make a kind of offering to these teachings of Rinpoche, which I consider as extremely precious, because he puts on paper his heart essence!

Francoise: So you think it is important that you don't let another person do this job?

Loek: Yes, I consider this an important point.

Second stage: you try to understand in a bigger outline the meaning of the text. At this stage I underlined with a yellow marker pencil the important points, but sometimes the whole page became yellow!

Francoise: Other people make cards and so on....

Loek: Yes and with these answers you go ahead to try to understand the meaning of it. But that doesn't

work out in only one time. Because certain aspects are not so easy to understand at all! The answers are very concise, sometimes really hidden, sometimes even not present at all in the different books!

Francoise: Yes, there are people who say: I just read the book once and now I understand it. But this is not possible, because only by reflecting on the questions and answers can understanding develop. It took me at least eight months to integrate something of it!

Loek: Indeed! By studying in different books and especially by meditating and reflecting, the different answers emerge out of your *rigpa*, your wisdom mind. This is the *Third Stage*, of repeating again and again the different questions, deepening your understanding, taking it up as a daily practice, as a kind of *Tun*. Then you are going to discover that more and more knowledge comes to you. This meditation aspect was very important to me, especially to invoke the wisdom of Rinpoche, to offer prayers to him directly. I did prayers of Manjushri for this purpose. So it is also a practice of **devotion**, praying to enable you to succeed in understanding and studying, since this material is sometimes so difficult to understand!

The *Fourth Stage* I discovered was that you sort out the questions that you know already a bit and those you find difficult. Then I underlined those questions in the book so I could give them more attention. The *Fifth Stage* is the stage before the examination. Then you really are going to prepare and learn the answers by heart, starting with the questions you consider the most difficult. At a certain moment you'll have to repeat again and again all the questions for yourself. Because then you notice that there are different aspects of the questions you thought you knew well, but in reality you don't know!

Concerning studying and listening to teachings, there is different advice to be followed. As it is said in "The Precious Vase", it is like "pouring from one Vase into another". So to be able to receive the Wisdom Mind in your own disposition, there are certain factors that are necessary:

Number one, the Vase should not be upside down, that is to say: when somebody is not open, not receptive; but maybe also that the proper motivation is lacking.

Number two, the Vase has to be perfectly clean. I noticed myself that obstacles that can arise with study



and understanding can indicate a need for purification practice.

If the Vase is not clean inside, then the nectar becomes contaminated. That also indicates that you should not impute your own limited understanding onto the teachings.

Number three, the Vase must not be leaking, there should be no hole in the bottom. This means that you should be able to maintain the wisdom knowledge in a precise way. But also that has to do with your condition of Body, Speech and Mind, that has to be maintained in a perfect state.

Number four, the Vase must not have too small a neck, otherwise no nectar can go into it. The bigger the

opening, the more nectar gets in. That has to do with devotion to the Master, I think, that is number ONE!

Francoise: And also, like we learned in the text, the Vase of the one who teaches never becomes empty. That has to do with selflessness.

Loek: How did you start your study, did you also start immediately like me?

Francoise: No, I didn't because I didn't see myself in the first place as a teacher. And then, because of clear moments and dreams, I developed a strong desire to deepen my knowledge. But indeed I had to cope with some obstacles also!

Loek: One day you can not study at all, when you intended to! You wanted to study for five hours, but you can simply forget it.

Francoise: Not that there is something special, but the circumstances just do not allow it.

Loek: Then the next day the circumstances do allow it, but you absolutely don't feel like studying at all! Or you cannot concentrate at all.

Francoise: The next moment you don't have any time and then, finally, you do study!

Loek: Or you really would like to study but you cannot read one letter. But then suddenly things go well and those moments you'll have to use beyond limits! When the examination approached, I repeated again and again all the questions.

Francoise: I think it is very interesting to discover that there are more approaches to study. Your approach can be considered more the "masculine" method or study approach, whereas in my situation the biggest understanding of the study material came out of the contact with the experiences of daily life, the more "prajna" or experiential approach.

Loek: Can you explain a bit further what you mean with "experiential approach"?

Francoise: I found it very difficult to study some hours every day. Remembering the practice retreat we did last year in Merigar, I did several small retreats on Santi Maha Sangha in the same way as we did then. I started in the morning with Garab Dorje. Studying became a practice, exchanged with practices from the Santi Maha Sangha books, like Yantra Yoga, Semzin exercises and the practices belonging to the specific parts of the book. In this way I could understand things better. Then, on an experiential level, what you read in the text becomes alive in your daily situation, manifests itself directly to you.

I started with the seven mind

trainings. The chapter on *boddhicitta* took me quite a long time. You meet yourself there. I started to realize how I had made a defence in myself not to feel the suffering of the world. I sat for hours watching the poor dog of the neighbours who had been on a chain his whole life and who is always hungry. Then I tried to feel his suffering and I couldn't! It was shocking for me! Then one night I saw a movie in which a woman was raped and tortured in prison and my defence suddenly broke and I could really experience the suffering of those who suffer in prison. Slowly I felt I had entered the Santi Maha Sangha study, loving to study (I am not a very studious person).

I went through both of the books twice and then started to repeat and try to memorize the questions, with the great advantage of being at Merigar for a longer period of time and thus being able to assist in the study weekends led by Adriano Clemente, Enzo Terzano and others who gave explanations on the more difficult questions with the kind help of Liz Granger and Maria Simmons as translators. Sometimes the English speaking people studied together, which was very useful. Also my resistance against doing Yantra Yoga finally disappeared thanks to the inspiring lessons by Laura Evangelisti.

Loek: Whether you study more with an experiential or study approach, I think it is very important to be sure that you really **can** succeed in passing this examination. That you have studied well enough so that you do not spoil Rinpoche's precious time and your own! And to realize that at the examination you are going to be asked at random ten questions out of the book, so you must know how to answer all the questions in random order!

Francoise: How did you feel after doing the examination?

Loek: Studying the Santi Maha Sangha texts has had an influence on me, it changed me! Now I consider it even more important to always try to continue the state of mind of the Master as the most important practice.

Francoise: I not only feel very happy now, but also I feel a great responsibility!

Loek: I have a great feeling of admiration and gratitude towards our Master who continuously invests so much effort and work in us! Thanks also to Adriano Clemente, John Shane and all the others who cooperated with this work!

By the continuous Rubbing between the Warm Hands of our Loving Master, May the Vases of our Three Existences, blackened by the Sulphuric Water of Ignorance and Wrong Views, be turned into Gold.

SANTI MAHA SANGHA "The Precious Vase"

This text called *Rin chen bum bzang*, originally written in Tibetan in 1992 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and recently translated into English by John Shane, is the preparatory Base or foundation for the *Santi Maha Sangha* training and is inspired by the four verses of the *Santi Maha Sangha* root text which present the preparatory Base and the way in which it should be applied.

A shorter version has also been translated by John Shane and published by Shang-Shung Editions with the title "The Wish Fulfilling Vase".

Cost of each text plus air mail postage - Europe Lire 30.000 Shang-Shung Edizioni, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

Distribution in the U.S. through Shang-Shung Edizioni at Tsegylgar P.O. Box 277, Conway MASS 01341. USA and overseas \$22, Australia and New Zealand \$24.

An Introduction to Tibetan Astrology

Pasang Yonten Arya

There are three different astrological systems which are commonly used in Tibet. The first system is called the "Kalachakra" or "Great" astrological system and is mainly practised by intellectuals and by astrologers who create the calendar. The second astrological system is called "Svorodaya" and is quite similar to the Western system based on the zodiac. It is a very accurate and secret practice, calculating the subtle energy represented in the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm. It is practised by high intellectuals. The third system is the elemental system called "Gyunzis" or "black" astrology which is generally very popular with the common people such as nomads and farmers. But whether people are common or not, whether they are intellectual or not, they all believe in all three astrological systems because the great astrologers of Tibet combined them within the same calendar.

Ethnic system

Before these three systems were introduced into Tibet there was an ethnic astrological system which greatly corresponded to the Bönpo system. In my astrological research, I have tried to find out if there was a standard Bönpo text on astrology in existence prior to the seventh century and although I haven't found a standard text, I can say with precision that there was a distinct ethnic astrological system in use. I cannot verify whether this system was taught by Shenrab Miwoche or one of his disciples but it definitely existed.

Elemental system

In the seventh century Buddhism was introduced into Tibet and the first astrological system, the I Ching or elemental astrology system was brought from China. The Chinese I Ching system corresponded with the ethnic system in the fact that they were both based on the five ordinary elements.

During this period the first translation of the Chinese astrological system was made into Tibetan. In the eighth century the second or "middle" translation was made under king Trisong Detsen while the third and last translation was made between the 11th and 12th centuries and is called the "last" translation. There are many differences between these three translations due to changes in the concepts of the astrological system arising with the change of dynasties in China, and after several centuries the last translation into Tibetan was quite different from the first one.

This system became highly developed in Tibet and was practised and taught at the Minling monastery of the 'southern' Nyingmapa school.

Philosophy

The elemental astrological



The positions of the 12 animals and the 9 mewa

(illustrations by Paola Minelli)

system is explained in a relative rather than an absolute way. The Dharmadhatu or the Nirmanakaya form of Manjusri is emptiness or space and his consort is his mind perception (*nam-tog*). The union of the energy of Manjusri and his consort produces the pure essence of the five elements which exists in space as well as two *parkha* (trigrams) which in turn produce six, making a total of eight *parkha* from which nine *mewa* are derived. This union also produces the twelve animal signs of the year with Lord Manjusri transforming the twelve inauspicious animals into the auspicious form of measurement of the year.

What is the nature or the energy of the elements? The nature of these five elements continually flows in our global earth and can be classified according to three different types: internal, external and secret elements. The external elements, which are those found on this earth, are fire, earth, wood, metal and water. Related to the seasons the wood element corresponds to the spring, the fire element to the summer, the metal element to the autumn, the water element to the winter while the four periods between the seasons correspond to the earth element.

Considering the five internal elements which correspond to the organs, the fire element corresponds to the heart, the wood element to the liver, the metal element to the lungs, the earth element to the spleen and the water element to the kidneys.

The five secret elements are our five sense consciousnesses or the five colours which are forms of the elements.

If the energy which flows between these three forms of the elements is harmonious, a person will enjoy good health. If, however, there is a

disharmony between them, then disturbances arise.

Calculation

To provide a clear explanation of this energy and how it flows in the world Buddha Manjusri manifested a tortoise illustrating these correspondences. The same correspondences can also be shown on the hand. In the turtle (or on our hand) we can find all eight *parkha*, nine *mewa*, the twelve animals, the 28 constellations and the position of the elements.

In the Tibetan tradition, a good astrologer does not require any instruments because he can make all

calculations on his hands (see illustrations). The points of the two joints on the index finger of the left hand correspond to the wood element and the direction east, the tip of the middle finger corresponds to the element fire and the direction south, the points of the two joints on the ring finger correspond to the element metal and the direction west while the junction at the base of the middle finger corresponds to the element water and the direction north. The points at the base of the index and ring fingers and the tips of the same two fingers correspond to the earth element. We can also count the twelve animals on our fingers.

We start counting with the Tiger because everything begins with the spring which coincides with the Tiger. The sun rises in the east giving life to all beings so the east represents the beginning of everything. Spring brings out the greenness in nature and causes the circulation of new energy not only in nature but also in the human being. This outer manifestation of change also manifests at the inner level with this new flux of energy. This is the wood element because nature becomes green again. It corresponds to the east direction and the function of the liver which also becomes more active at this time of the year. So the wood element, the liver and the east direction all have the same position, the same function.

According to the law of nature, the law of the function of energy, in the springtime energy starts to grow, in the summertime it is at its maximum, in autumn it becomes concentrated while in winter it decreases. This is the circular movement of energy through the seasons. This same cycle exists in the life of man: birth corresponds to the spring, puberty and young adulthood to the summer, maturity

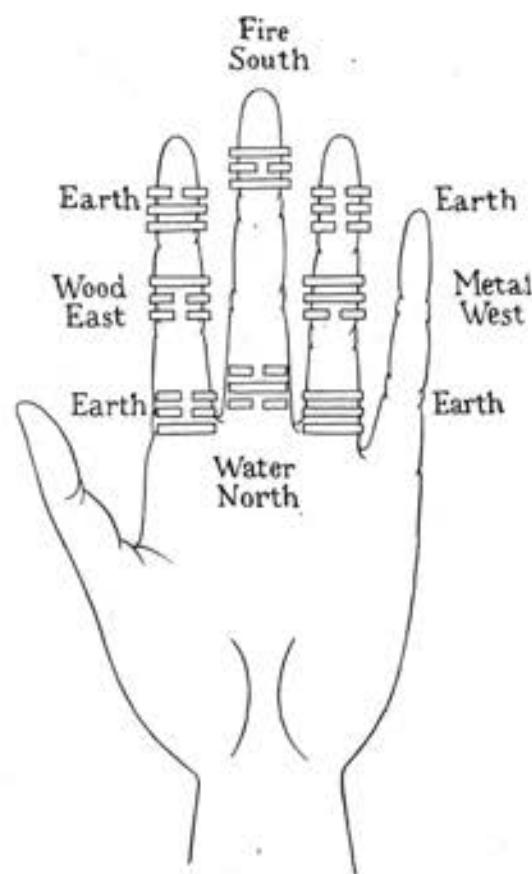
to the autumn and old age to the winter. This is the way of nature.

There is always a predominant energy or element in all the combinations of energies which are manifested in the forms of the *parkha*, the animals, the *mewa*, the constellations, etc. When we are born the combination of elements is different for each one of us and that is why we make a calculation or horoscope according to the calculation of these elements at the time of birth. Using these calculations we can make various kinds of horoscopes, for the year, the month, the day, and the hour of birth. This is called "Gyunzis" or "black astrology" in which we calculate the elements of life, body, fortune and capacity. In fact there are 130 calculations that can be made.

Kalachakra system

Then there is the "Great" astrological system, the Kalachakra. This system is not merely astrology, it is a method which is also a path to realisation. On the request of the king of Shambala, Dawa Sangpo, the Buddha transmitted the Kalachakra teaching in South India in a place called Dhana Cota or "Mound of rice grains".

This tradition spread in Shambala and between the 10th and 11th centuries the practice of this special astrological system was brought to



The positions of the eight *parkha* (trigrams), the elements and directions

India by an Indian mahasiddha. Then gradually it was translated into Tibetan by Ralotsawa and other translators and became widespread.

Three sections

The Kalachakra system has three different sections: external, internal and secret. The external Kalachakra regards astronomy, the solar system and planets and the constellations.

All Tibetan calendars are based on these calculations.

The principle is that in order to understand the internal system we must understand the energy which regards the solar and lunar rotation. To understand what is external, we must understand that which is internal. In the external Kalachakra there are the continual movements of the planets, the constellations and many other factors which correspond to the internal movements of the tissues and the cells in a particular moment of time. *Roma* or the right channel corresponds to the solar system while the left channel, *kyangma*, corresponds to the lunar system so the movement of energy in these two channels corresponds to the energy of the respective systems. A good practitioner will always refer to the astrological calendar because he or she can observe the change in energy day by day and as a consequence how his or her internal energy moves.

Wisdom breath

Everything which manifests is a projection of our mind, thus outer rotation is caused by inner rotation which in turn arises from our breathing. Breathing is differentiated into karmic breathing which is a biological breathing and wisdom breathing which is a very subtle, life-sustaining wind energy which comes from the neutral central

channel. The more we consume this wisdom breath, the more we consume our lives. The karmic breath passes through the right and left channels while the wisdom breath passes through the central channel. As a consequence a practitioner who can control his karmic energy through his wisdom energy, or who can control the wisdom energy through practice will manifest beyond the dualistic state.

Secret system

The relationship between the external and internal Kalachakra is the basis for all calculations in the Kalachakra. Understanding this relationship between the external and

internal systems and having the capacity to translate it into practice is what is considered the secret system of Kalachakra. This system allows the practitioner to obtain realisation through the practice of Kalachakra.

Kalachakra Buddha

If you see a *thangka* representing
continued on page 15

The Lady Chöd Master Doljin Khandro

A brief autobiography

Compiled by N. Dudka, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, March 1994.
Translated from Mongolian into Russian by her disciple Burjilhamo and from Russian into English by Carol Ermakova.

During Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's recent visit to Mongolia, he visited the Lady Master Doljin Khandro, a well-known and revered 84 year old chöd master with numerous disciples, both monks and lay people, in Mongolia and Buryatia. Several people from the Dzogchen Community also had the opportunity to meet her and receive transmission from her.

At the beginning of May she travelled to the Mongolian capital, Ulaanbaatar, from her gher (yurt) in the country village of Partigian for the long awaited visit of Rinpoche. On our first visit to her she greeted us warmly, touching our foreheads to hers in Mongolian style and openly offered to share her teaching with us, inviting us to stay for chöd practice.

She spends her days and nights practising, giving transmissions and teachings, blessings and advice to all who call on her.

Her sparkling and lively character, her devotion and her warmth and spontaneity made a deep impression on all of us who met her.

I was born in the year of the Wood Tiger (1914). My parents were believers, my father a well-known practitioner of chöd who had done many personal retreats. My mother was a simple and warm woman, loved and respected by all. She read texts such as the "White Umbrella Tara", "Green Tara" etc.

I had two fathers - the first was my mother's husband and my natural father, a famous chöd practitioner. As he grew older, he told my mother that she should marry his disciple while he would continue to live with her doing personal retreat and she would assist him. I was three or four years old at that time and got a new father who was a student of my natural father. So we began to live together, practising and carrying out all the rituals.

After the great fortune of a human birth, the most important thing in a sentient being's life is meeting the Three Jewels - Guru, Deva, Dakini. I am very glad to have had this possibility. I consider a practitioner to be a person who lives among other people and prays for them in order to save them from suffering. I always remember my mother and father and my teachers especially my root teacher and all the gods who have helped me to reach my level of attainment.

Early training

At the age of nine, I took the initiation of Vajrayogini from my root teacher, Yestse Adia, a chöd lama. This transmission was that of



Doljin Khandro with her assistant Burjilhamo

(photo Fabio Andrico)

Nayon Hutorhte who was a great teacher in Mongolia during the last century. After I had received this transmission, I left for a month's retreat devoted to the practice of Vajrayogini.

When I was thirteen, I completed my first retreat of chöd in the central aimak (region) of Mongolia, called Hushot. Thirteen people participated in the retreat and we stayed in four gher (yurt): one for men and three for women. We did four *tun* each day and one *cho* which consists of two great and two small *tun*. The retreat lasted for 120 days. We constructed four stone circles called *srumkha* which formed a kind of defence and put up a tent within each circle.

During a long retreat such as this, no practitioner was permitted to use any form of transportation, not even a horse, and could only travel on foot. In the morning we had a glass of tea and a small biscuit with a bit of cheese or butter. During the day we would have a small bowl of rice. We rarely ate meat.

During the first and third week we remained in the same place but the rest of the time we visited different places to do practice. We could not stay more than one night in the same place because according to tradition, practice should be done in different places, moving from one to another. Our food was modest and included such things as *kefir* (a type of yoghurt) and *tvorog* (cottage cheese). People very generously gave us food but we always gave most of it back. Our teacher stayed at home and did not travel with us, however we knew that he was praying for us.

Chöd retreat

In the chöd lineage of Nayon Hutorhte, the most important practice is called "Shumak Chardsa" which is the fullest practice. When one does a retreat of chöd, one must

find a suitable place called *nyamba*. In order to get to that place one must travel there like a snake, zig-zagging, not walking in a straight line.

Once the practitioner arrives there he or she should do the Dance of the Dakinis on one leg, facing North. After the offering dance, the practitioner should face South, East and then West, reciting prayers and calling on the gods of the four directions asking for their blessings and permission to spend a night there to do practice. In the morning, one should leave like a snake, moving from side to side rather than going in a straight line.

During a retreat of 120 days, practitioners should cross 120 rivers, taking a stone from each river with which, at the end of the retreat, they build a cairn called *abon*, near a holy place. The location of these places is only known to special, extraordinary people.

In order to pitch a tent for night practice there are certain rules to observe. There must be three large stones on three sides of the tent to support it.

Protection

A few years ago, I travelled to a place in the central aimak of Mongolia where I had once done a retreat and I saw the stones I had left. During that retreat as we were doing chöd practice, a huge grey wolf came to meet us. He was completely grey and circled around the tents.

The night before while I had been making tea, I had heard strange wild noises from the north and had been afraid. Many people had heard the noise but nobody knew what it was. Then a silhouette appeared, the size of a Mongolian horse and I realised it was the wolf. It was a huge grey mad wolf which ran around the tents. We were very afraid. At dawn, we heard a woman calling, "Teacher, help us". Then the wolf gradually dissolved and disappeared.

The next day, our teacher appeared. He had travelled a long way by horse to reach us after receiving signs that something serious was going to happen. He had warned us that we should build defence circles and that day a group of practitioners recited defence mantras and built ritual circles for protection.

That night we sat back to back facing the four directions for practising chöd. After practising for many hours we saw a huge wolf who was unable to enter the protective circle. He growled, threatened and bared his teeth then ran off towards the east. Later we discovered that a few miles from the camp there was a place where a lone nomad lived. The wolf had tried to rip his gher (yurt) and the nomad had shot him. The nomad made an offering of the skin to our teacher who always sat on it when he taught.

Soviet Mongolia

When the revolution took place in Mongolia, one of my cousins who served in the Mongolian KGB warned me that it would be a difficult time for believers. He told us it would be better to hide our faith and put away all ritual objects. Even though we were not allowed to perform rituals, and nor could lamas wear their robes, the Communists could not see into our souls. They tried to stop us believing but they could not change our souls, the true nature of real believers. Even though we hid our bells and *damarus* every night I did chöd and other practices according to the tradition of my teachers.

In 1933, following the advice of my cousin in the KGB I got married because it was a better way to hide my belief. I married another chöd practitioner who was 20 years older than me. We married to practice together and support each other. After a time my husband said to me the same thing that my father had said to my mother. He suggested

that I marry his student and that we live and practice together and that he would teach us. Some years later I had three children.

Soviet Mongolia was like Soviet Russia. It was very hard to practise under the Soviet regime and we had to do it in secret. I worked for ten years as a chef in a sanatorium. It was a lot of hard work and I was very tired at the end of the day but each night I did practice. I never missed a day.

Mongolia today

Today much has changed in Mongolia. Believers have a great deal more freedom. New *datsans* (monasteries) are being built and many old ones are being restored. Many young people are turning to their roots, to the ancient Buddhism not only of India and Tibet, but to that of Mongolia and Buryatia. There is a great turning to the teachings of the Buddha. Nowadays it is much easier to practise.

In the last seven or eight years, many students have come to me not only from Mongolia but also from Buryatia and Russia. The colour of skin or nationality is not important, the soul is always the same. Everyone is seeking liberation. I always repeat to them that they should remember that the teacher is on the crown of their head and that their mother and father are on each shoulder. One should remain in that presence and knowledge.

I practise every day and I receive many people. I do chöd to heal them. More and more students come to me in order to learn how to practice.

A few years ago I went to Buryatia and here too I have a big group of students and followers. I often tell them they should remember and appreciate the value of human birth and the great chance it offers to attain enlightenment in this life. Nobody knows what will happen in the future so we need to use each minute of this precious life to practise. And it is especially important to have contact with one's teacher who represents the lineage of transmission, so it is important to practice Guruyoga.

I was happy to meet Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and his students. When I met them I transmitted many *lung* such as that of Vajrayogini, Tara, Padmasambhava. All the women practitioners are manifestations of Tara and all the men are manifestation of the gods. I am glad to see such a group of holy people at my house. Bless them all. I was glad to show them the place where I have lived for so long and we did a huge *Ganapuja* before they left.

I send greetings to all students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. I wish you all blessings as you continue on the path. May you all obtain realisation. I promise that those whom I have met, I will meet again and again until we obtain full realisation together.

Sprinkling to the gods: an interview with a shaman

Vera Gregorevna Naguslaeva is a shaman and Buddhist practitioner living in ex-soviet Buryatia. Mother of four, one time surgeon and healer, Vera Gregorevna met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and the Dzogchen teachings for the first time two years ago. She talks to The Mirror about shamanism and her feeling of the inseparability of both traditions.

The Mirror: Could you explain what a shaman is?

Vera Gregorevna: In Buryatia each family or clan has its own shaman. There are many clans and each person knows which clan they belong to although nowadays some of them have forgotten. The shaman is the person in the clan who communicates with the ancestors, the local gods and gods from further afield. The Buryatian word for shaman is "bo". The man is called "bo" and the woman "udagan".

The shaman is usually told in a dream by the gods or the family ancestors that he will become the shaman. Then the other members of the clan come and make offerings to him sacrificing such things as a ram. When a person becomes a shaman, the shaman's mother's clan also comes and makes offerings as well praying to their gods and ancestors saying this is going to be a new shaman. And that he is also going to be sprinkling.

The Mirror: What do you mean by "sprinkling"?

Vera Gregorevna: You can sprinkle with vodka, tea or milk and it is a means to call the gods and the ancestors and it is also an offering to them.

When a person becomes a shaman they receive what is called a "san" which is like a commitment and this is what happens in the dream. Either a shaman has a dream in which his ancestors come or the shaman flies to a meeting of the ancestors or the gods in his dream.

The Mirror: Does only one person in each clan have the function of shaman?

Vera Gregorevna: Because the clans are so big they extend all over the republic so there can be several shamans for each clan. There might even be one or two in each village from the same clan. For example, my colleague Nadia and I are both shamans from the same clan. Nadia was born in Kishingei and I was born near Baikal.

A long time ago in my clan there used to be a shaman called Dagde. When I was six years old, this shaman did a special ritual for which he made a huge fire. He put an iron plough on the fire and when it was red hot he danced barefoot on it. In his hand he held another hot iron rod, a sort of blacksmith's tool, and he licked it. Then dancing along he licked the iron rod and blew on my grandmother and healed her. He was virtually standing in the fire! At the time I was only six years old and I

did not know what was wrong with my grandmother but when I became a doctor I understood that it was probably her kidneys because of the marks on her skin. When this shaman died he said he would fly back to the clan as a bee.

are not allowed to marry from the same clan for seven generations. This "grandmother" seven generations ago was the same blood mix as I am. Her father was a prince at the time of Peter the First.

The actual formal ritual I only

doing the rituals.

I have been healing for more than twenty years but I didn't fulfil the rituals very much until an older shaman suggested that I should. Since the gods had favoured me he advised me to do the rituals in order



Vera Gregorevna making ritual offerings with other shamans

(photo Liz Granger)

Last year I travelled with various shamans around Lake Baikal performing rituals and 'sprinkling', making offerings to the gods. Just before I set off, a bee came and stung me five times! I think that this gave me some energy because I hadn't been too well just before this. The first time it was three o'clock in the morning and it was pitch black and the window was only open a little bit. This bee came in and stung me on the shoulder. I woke up and I didn't know what was happening. I threw the covers off and under the blankets I heard this buzzing sound and when I put on the light, there was this bee. The first time I was very surprised because the window was only open a little and as soon as I put the light on the bee flew out through this tiny crack. Then I realised that it was probably my ancestor coming and when it happened more often I knew that as soon as this bee came it would sting me and then fly straight out of the window.

The Mirror: So being a shaman is a tradition that runs in the family. How did you receive your "calling"?

Vera Gregorevna: This is a tradition which comes either from the father's or the mother's line. An ancestor on one side must have been a shaman. But occasionally a person is born and the shaman's calling comes from the sky, from the gods.

I believe that I received my calling or authentication to be a shaman from my grandmother, Odamsa. This "grandmother" lived seven generations ago. In Buryatia, people

performed two years ago but this "grandmother" came to me when I was thirty-five. In my childhood I was very good at healing people and I was also sometimes able to tell the future. When I was younger I was very active and always running around helping other people. Everyone thought I was an excellent Communist because I was so active though in actual fact I never joined the party.

The Mirror: Do shamans operate only in the field of healing or in other fields?

Vera Gregorevna: Healing is traditional for shamans and they deal mainly with illnesses that are to do with imbalances in energy. But they also fulfil rituals because when they are in contact with the gods, if the gods are not pleased with something, then they tell the shaman who performs a ritual for this. Shamans are also clairvoyant and can see the future and advise you what to do.

The Mirror: Is being a healer something intuitive or is something that can be learned from another shaman?

Vera Gregorevna: It is a gift. I think it must be intuitive because you have to have a certain bio-field around you. Usually it is this way around - you don't become a shaman and start healing. Usually you have been healing for a long time and then as your sensitivity develops or as people ask more and more from you, you realise that you need the help of the gods and so you starting

to please them.

Then when I was thirty-five years old my "grandmother" came to me in a dream and gave me a shaman's certificate.

The Mirror: You have been a practising surgeon since you were eighteen. Were you also healing at the same time?

Vera Gregorevna: Yes, though it wasn't very easy because I was trying to keep on my state job and heal people at the same time. At that time it wasn't common to take money for healing people and I would heal people in the mornings, have a quick forty winks and then go to the surgery at the hospital.

The Mirror: Are shamanistic healing practices used in the state hospital?

Vera Gregorevna: The Buryatian doctors are not against working with the shamans but it is not actually integrated into the system. However, a doctor may recommend you to a shaman and suggest that you do certain rituals before an operation.

The Mirror: Can you see any possibility of shamanistic healing being integrated with western medicine in the future?

Vera Gregorevna: I do not know to what extent it can become integrated but I think that at some stage, it may be a long long time, that official medicine will learn to tell the difference between physical illnesses and those of energy.

The Mirror: I understand that last year a group of shamans made a trip around Lake Baikal. Was there a particular reason for the trip and is it an annual event?

Vera Gregorevna: Shamans used to do the trip around Lake Baikal every year or every three years but under Communism it hadn't been done for seventy years. Last year was the first time since the beginning of Communism. We visited all the holy places there where the "Guardians" or "Owners" of the mountains and especially the island, Arhon, reside. Shamans from all the different clans participated.

The "Owner" of Arhon is the main god of Asia and is very powerful, then there is a type of royal bird and a smaller "Owner". We prayed to all three and asked them for help. Not only people from around Lake Baikal pray to Arhon, but also people from Mongolia and even Australia pray to him as the main god. Since he is the god or "Owner" of this land which is a volcanic area with frequent earthquakes and floods, this year we asked his forgiveness for the wrong things we had done to the lake in general.

The Mirror: Do you feel that shamanistic rituals such as those at Baikal can have a beneficial effect on the environment?

Vera Gregorevna: Yes. I asked a young clairvoyant lady I have worked with to come with us on the trip around Baikal to pray to Arhon. She said she had already been there and that she had seen a huge patch of dirty water there at Baikal lake and as we were praying she saw that the dirty patch gradually decreased until it disappeared.

Another lady had a dream while we were doing the tour around Baikal that there were piles of black dirt piled up around the lake as the result of the work of black shamans. She dreamed that we collected all this dirt together into a big heap and stuck a piece of paper on it on which was written "clean" and off it went.

The Mirror: You attended Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's recent teachings in Buryatia and received many transmissions and explanations, do you think that it is possible for a shaman to integrate his or her practice with that of Dzogchen?

Vera Gregorevna: Since the day that Rinpoche gave me the *tun* practice two years ago on his first visit to Buryatia, I have done it every day. It is not a case of integrating it with shaman's practice. I simply cannot separate them.

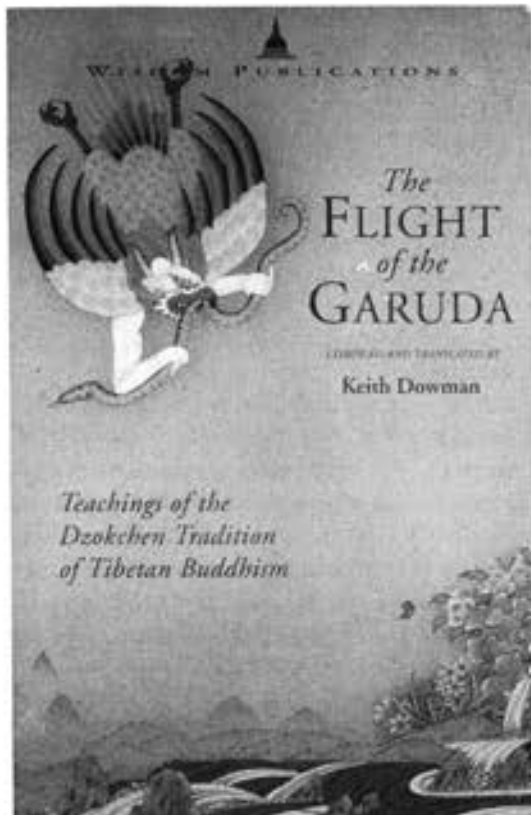
The Mirror: What do the other shamans think about your 'Buddhism'?

Vera Gregorevna: Shamanism came from my mother's side of the family but on my father's side, my grandfather was a lama and so I grew up in the Gelugpa tradition.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Flight of the Garuda
compiled and translated by Keith Dowman
Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1994
225 pages, \$15 (paperback)



This collection will no doubt attract the immediate attention of many readers, as it includes four shiningly clear and starkly beautiful Dzogchen texts. Their common denominator in fact is the soaring freedom of the Dzogchen viewpoint as symbolised by the Garuda — the divine eagle without limitations that is said to be able to fly as soon as it breaks from its egg.

The longest of the four translations presented here by Keith Dowman is *The Flight of the Garuda* by Lama Shakbar Tsokdruk Rangdrol. The work is a rich storehouse of succinct explanations and advice on *Trechod* (translated here as "cutting through") poetically offered by a "vagrant minstrel", as Lama Shakbar affectionately describes himself. The compendium of advice is based, he says, on the "scriptural treasures" of Padmasambhava and Longchenpa, while the "secret instruction of my Lamas and my own meditation

experience decorate its margins".

The text has actually already been published in an English language translation by Erik Pema Kunsang, but the present edition, beautifully presented by Wisdom Publishing — with a delightful cover painting by Terris Temple — will certainly have much wider distribution. Keith Dowman sensibly opts to avoid any attempt to imitate the Tibetan verse structure, allowing a lyrical tone to emerge from the prose translation. Here is a taste:

"Then all you lovers, think of the beautiful man or woman in your heart. You gluttons, consider the food you crave — meat, cake or fruit ... Carefully considering these matters, allow desire to arise, and when it arises look directly at its essence, at the greedy and lustful self. Then discover firstly where it comes from, secondly where it is now, and finally where it goes to ..."

The vision of your desire is ultimately empty and ungraspable. Do not reject it! It is discriminating awareness."

These pieces of advice and clarification would originally have been sung by Tibetan practitioners to support their practice on retreat. The Western reader can digest them by gently pondering the sense.

Another brief text included in the volume is a sort of confessional litany with a Dzogchen viewpoint. What is being atoned for are not

moral misdemeanours or errors, but our fundamental failure to recognise the all encompassing, self-liberating state:

"How foolish to project concepts of concrete form or substance upon the cosmic seed that has no corners or edges!"

What boredom lies in the limitations of squares and rectangles!

Attone in the spaciousness of the all-embracing spherical nucleus."

The remedy is to relax in the primordial state, "in the spaciousness of formless, concept-free pleasure ... Kunzang's pure pleasure". Entitled *Emptying the Depths of Hell*, this brief composition is based on a treasure text by the thirteenth century Terton Guru Rinpoche Choki Wongchuk, and in its present form was compiled by the great nineteenth century Lama scholar Jamgong Kongtrul Rinpoche.

When gently absorbed, verses like these can have profound mnemonic effects amid the many vicissitudes of daily life. No doubt originally intended to be lovingly chanted in the Tibetan, even in translation this sort of text may have the power to touch secret, unheard melodies concealed within us.

Likewise, *The Wish-Granting Prayer of Kuntu Zangpo* by the fourteenth century Rigzin Godemchan, also included here:

"Through this, the Buddha's wish-granting prayer,

May all beings prone to inflated confidence,

At its onset, relax, releasing the stress in perception,

Allowing Knowledge to resume its natural primacy

Attaining the Awareness of Sameness."

Although when translated into a Western language, the terminology may not sound especially poetic, the feeling-tone of this precisely expressed wish remains deeply resonant. Here as elsewhere in the

book, it is not difficult for the reader who has received some transmission to feel the message.

The remaining work in the volume is Guru Rinpoche's classic concise exposition of the different paths, *Secret Instruction in a Garland of Vision*, subtitled "A Special Condensed Memory Aid to Vision and Vehicle". Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche makes special reference to this work at the start of the *Santi Maha Sangha*. A translation by Giuseppe Barozzo has been published in Italy by Shang Shung. In the present translation, text and notes are kept separate, which helps to give a clearer overall picture of this concentrated explanation.

As in some of his previous translations, most notably *The Sky Dancer* and *Masters of Mahamudra*, Keith Dowman provides lengthy introductions, often from a personalised stance. Much of what he has to say is very interesting, and he certainly avoids being "a parrot". But there does seem to be a vein of polemic in his declared intention to be "non-dogmatic, less abstract and more human". "Than what?" one is left to ask. For how can any genuine transmission of Dzogchen be in itself dogmatic? If it were, it would surely not be Dzogchen.

But no doubt I am misinterpreting what he is trying to say.

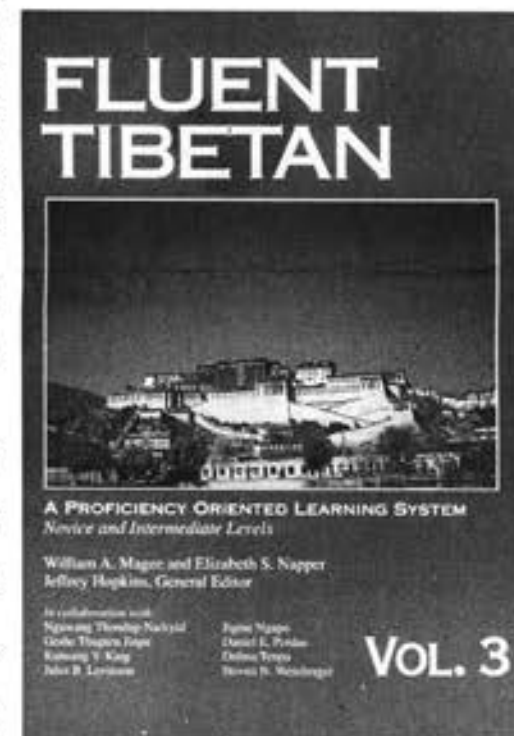
Robin Cooke

Fluent Tibetan

A Proficiency Oriented Learning System
Novice and Intermediate Levels

William A. Magee & Elizabeth S. Napper
Jeffrey Hopkins, General Editor

Snow Lion, Ithica NY, USA, 1027pp, 3 volumes, 18 cassettes



This new three-volume, 1027 page textbook with 26 hours of cassette tapes is an extensive course system in spoken Tibetan developed by a team of language experts working in conjunction with indigenous speakers at the University of Virginia.

The course consists of a text book and a set of tape recordings, arranged in fifteen units.

The first three units are devoted to recognition and pronunciation of the Tibetan alphabet and its combinations in syllables and words.

Beginning with unit four, vocabulary and grammatical patterns are introduced in the form of situational dialogues. Each dialogue is followed by extensive drills which repeat the vocabulary and grammatical patterns in different contexts.

All the voices in the dialogues and drills are those of indigenous Tibetan speakers and the material is given by both male and female voices alternately.

The end of text glossary is both Tibetan-English and English-Tibetan.

Audiotapes of Kathmandu retreat

Audiotapes of the teachings given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Kathmandu, Nepal, from December 24th, 1993 to January 3rd, 1994 are now available. The tapes were made by Dick Drury from the Dzogchen Community of Thailand who has already provided sets of the 16 tapes to the following local communities:

USA - Tsegyalgar Dzogchen Community, the secretary, PO box 277, Conway MA 01341 USA.

Great Britain - Richard Dixey, London tel. 071 373 7301 and

Geoffrey Blundell

Lithuania - Ernestus Lapinskas tel. 463496

Australia - Margaret Fair tel. 048 422 023

Nepal - Jean in Kathmandu tel. 414917

Singapore - Keng Lek tel. 535 7118

Holland - Annalen Gall, Amsterdam tel. 020 6424 325

During the retreat in Kathmandu, Dick lost track of the list of people who wanted to have a set of the tapes

after the retreat. Those who are interested in receiving them can contact the nearest Dzogchen Community who has a set and can provide copies, or Dick Drury directly in Thailand.

Dick is asking \$20 US for the tapes and \$30 US mailing to Europe, \$35 to the Americas and \$20 to Asia. He can be contacted at:

P. O. Box 80, Phanom Sarakharn, Chachoengsao 24120, Thailand, tel. 661 213 6736, fax 6638 551061.

To be published shortly in
Czech language

The Crystal and the Way of Light

by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Compiled and edited by John Shane

The Mirror

Advice on Presence and Awareness

by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Translated by Margit Martinu

Available from Dharmagaia, Uhelny Trh 1, Prague 1, Czechoslovakia

Reflections Reflections Reflections

Tell Us Again and Again

(Thoughts during Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's lecture about Dzogchen)

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche
Came to our sunny Buryatia
Spreading light and knowledge
All around him.

He blessed, ennobled and sanctified
My native land and all its beings
With the great Dzogchen Teaching.

Our most venerable Teacher!
Listening to your wise Teaching
Is like swimming in the sea,
Like flying high in the sky.

Guru, pronouncing OM
You spread white rays
Which cut through dense air and
vibrate
Bringing knowledge and light.

Teaching, pronouncing A
You spread red rays
Which give birth to hope
Warming our hearts.

Guru, pronouncing HUM
You spread blue rays
Which fill the emptiness with blue
colour
And sing a hymn to life.

Teacher, the words you spoke
Give birth to the rainbows
Of endless thoughts

Tell us again and again
How can we learn
To perceive your great Teaching?

Written by Mary Khamgushkeeva, Ulan Ude, 19th May, 1994 translated by Tatyana Naumenko

Bush Retreat

by Laurence Mills

All around, covering high hills and gullies, tall straight eucalypts grow up around this small house and its garden. This was the site from Friday the 10th of June until the afternoon of the 13th for a Dzogchen retreat attended by six practitioners from this area. The house is in the extensive grounds of Vajradhara Gonpa, a Sakya-lineage place, though the actual gonpa and its attendant buildings are half a mile away up a very steep hill. We had therefore a very quiet and secluded spot for our practice and apart from the local birds and occasional car going up to the gonpa we had only a short burst of chainsaw activity to remind us of the noisy world.

We tried to organize six or seven Turns of practice each day: one before breakfast (but after a cup of tea!); three during the morning, the last of these being devoted to Yantra Yoga;

one outside during the afternoon and another before dinner, while a last period was devoted to evening practice. However, it was not as organized as it sounds as we were quite spontaneous about our choice of practices. Of course, we did Guardians practice in the Medium Tun but besides such well-known practices we did Guruyoga with Ngonzö Xerbo and on another occasion Kunjye Gyalpo.

During the afternoons as the weather was so fine and warm we practised outside, one day climbing up to the gonpa and practising a Tun in the woods nearby, and on the next driving up there to a point where much sky was visible and doing some Longde practice. That same afternoon my woodpile was much increased by a foraging expedition for firewood. Another afternoon featured a Gakyil meeting in which our future direction was discussed

as well as our plans for the newly arrived paper mandala purchased from Tsegylgar. As it is not yet coloured we have to find a place big enough to spread it out - probably the gonpa floor - and funds to buy the paint. This retreat raised enough to pay half of the mandala's cost to Tsegylgar.

Before dinner we did short practices, such as a U.P.E. one evening and later after the meal, celebrated with Chöd. On our last evening we had a particularly harmonious Ganapuja.

Everyone enjoyed our short retreat and wishes were heard that it would continue. There was a great deal of good humour combined with enthusiasm for the rich store of practices which we have inherited from our Master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Our next retreat is likely to be painting-the-mandala exercise, perhaps next month.

THE LONG JOURNEY a game for when there's nothing to do

- * The game should be played by as many players as possible
- * Players throw the dice to decide the order of play. Highest number starts
- * Proceed according to your experience in the game along the path. If you land on a KARMA square, pick a card and see what's in store!
- * You must throw the correct number to land on Stream Enterer. You must begin your battle with Mara as a Stream Enterer.
- * Then you must throw 3 consecutive numbers of 1 to become an Arahant. This constitutes your triumph over Mara.
- * In order to attain the Rainbow Body and achieve Complete Enlightenment, you must answer the Three Vajra Questions. To answer each question you must throw and land on the corresponding Syllable and do so in the correct sequence of OM A HUM.



Three Vajra Questions

འཇུག

What are the 4 requirements for the generation of Karma?

ལཱ་ཏུ་ལྟོགས་པའི་སྐད་ཀྱི་འདུན་པ་

What did the Buddha have to say about Right Speech?

འོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

How is it that the True Nature of the mind is described as being like the sky?

This game was the idea of Max Bamford.

It was made by Max with some help from his dad, Alan.

(See sheet enclosed for KARMA cards and answers to the Three Vajra Questions. Cut up cards, shuffle and place face down.)

Knowledge of...

continued from page 3

hearsounds, and so on, which means that through our sense organs we have contact with objects. When we have those contacts we immediately enter into judgement, and thoughts and then movement arise. These movements receive information through the consciousnesses of our senses, which information is finally received by our mind. This movement represents the manifestation of the wrathful aspect.

Peaceful and wrathful manifestations in the *bardo*, can only be experienced by people who have received the teaching, who have at least a minimal connection with the transmission. Individuals with that history can have these types of visions in the *bardo* because they have obtained that capacity and created that possibility. If you have never received this information, never received a teaching of that kind, then, after death, you will only experience the sounds, lights and rays, which is in fact the nature, the inherent potentiality, of all sentient beings, that is one part of our energy.

The energy of the base manifests as *tsal*, *rolpa* and *dang* (Tib.). Why does this energy have these three aspects? Because in relation to realisation we talk about the three *kayas*, the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya and the Nirmanakaya. These three are related to the three aspects of our condition: essence, nature and energy.

The essence is emptiness: and knowledge of that is the Dharmakaya of the base. Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya are not only qualities of the Buddha, they are also the potentiality of every individual. How can we discover and understand this for ourselves? By observing ourselves. When you discover your essence it means you discover the Dharmakaya of your base. When you discover your nature, your clarity, then you discover the Sambhogakaya of your base. When you discover the continuation of your energy without interruption, you discover the Nirmanakaya of your base. We have these attributes.

Energy manifests in three different ways as Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. The Dharmakaya aspect is called the *dang* energy. *Dang* means that in the state of contemplation, our real condition of the base, our energy manifests in the way a crystal ball does: if a crystal ball is placed on a red surface, it appears red, while on a green surface, it appears to be green, and so on, but in fact its basic condition never changes. That is how the energy called *dang* manifests. When we are in a state of contemplation, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, we are integrated into the state of contemplation. We do not remain apart thinking that we are in contemplation and that we do not care about circumstances. Circumstances are integrated, like the example of the crystal ball. That is how *dang* energy manifests.

The example of a mirror is used to explain the aspect of energy called *rolpa*. Whatever is in front of a mirror, whether good or bad, is immediately reflected in it. But a practitioner is not conditioned by what appears in the mirror because he or she understands that whatever appears are only reflections. Whether the reflections are good or bad is not important because, at the level of the profound meaning, there is no difference between good and bad. And the reflections only manifest because of the natural capacity of our condition to reflect. Everything manifests just as it is: colour, form, shape, size: anything can appear. That is the characteristic manifestation of the aspect of energy called *rolpa*.

Another manifestation of energy is called *tsal* which is related to the Nirmanakaya condition. The example used in this case is a piece of rock crystal which is struck by the sun's rays. Infinite rainbow colours emanate from such a rock crystal onto the walls of a room in which it is placed, but if you look into the rock crystal you cannot see these rainbows inside it; they are only visible outside. This is the aspect of energy called *tsal*.

It is through this *tsal* energy that our manifestation of pure and impure vision, and our particular karmic vision, arises. We are now human beings and we have human vision. We perceive our environment dualistically, splitting it into an apparent reality of a perceiving subject separated from a world of external objects.

But in fact everything we perceive is like the rainbow lights which have their source in the rock crystal when it is struck by the sun's rays. If we see a five coloured rainbow, this means we are perceiving the pure dimension, pure vision. But when the essence of the elements combines together with our *karma*, then the elements manifest on the material level, creating impure vision. Thus the source of karmic vision is this aspect of energy known as *astsa*; but this *sametsal* energy, through certain practices particular to the Dzogchen teaching, such as *thödgäl* and *yangtig*, gives us the possibility, of reintegrating our material existence and of finally realising the Rainbow Body.

This is how the three aspects of energy *dang*, *rolpa*, and *tsal*, are explained.

(edited by John Shane)

Honouring the ...

continued from page 4

trip through Mongolia and Buryatia with particularly the youngest and the oldest of the faithful asking a blessing from Rinpoche through his touching their heads with either a ritual text or object.

At long last it was picnic time with plenty of meat, sweets, tea and vodka, the foodstuffs most easy to obtain and most commonly consumed in that part of the world. In Buryatian style there were mounds

of boiled meat on the bone, heaped plates of Russian boiled sweets, tall Chinese thermoses full of hot light milky tea, trays of boiled potatoes and eggs, and the never ending rows of small vodka bottles with which the Buryats make their toasts. There were many toasts and much food offered from group to group as all those present gradually introduced themselves to each other in spite of language difficulties which were frequently overcome with a smile and an offering of hot tea or vodka. Offerings of vodka were also sprinkled in the traditional way to the local guardians by a group of shamans.

The outing drew to a close later in the afternoon with many goodbyes and the expressed desire of the villagers that perhaps on a third visit to Buryatia in the future Rinpoche would be able to complete the trip to Kishingei.

The line of cars gradually wended its way back to the modern Buryatian capital after an afternoon that seemed to belong to another time and space, perhaps that of a Buryatia that only lives on in the memories of the village elders.

The Night of...

continued from page 7

dinner of soup and moments of pleasure as Rinpoche told many different animal stories from around the world.

There was one particular story of a baby camel whose mother had died and how a Mongolian woman began to sing, talk and caress another grown female until this female camel wept and cried and finally, it seemed, acquiesced to help the abandoned baby camel.

The evening finished with a great sense of happiness. We needed it as we were not gleefully anticipating the departure of our dear Tibetan friends.

But, as always, Rinpoche elevated

the level of the mundane into his radiant mandala, and everyone felt content and filled as they left the circle of the Master.

... Tibetan Astrology

continued from page 10

the Kalachakra you will see that the Kalachakra divinity is blue which is a symbol of emptiness, of space. His consort is yellow, symbolising the earth element.

The divinity has three faces which represents the transmutation of the three poisons. He has twenty-four arms, sixteen legs, each finger is a different colour associated with the great elements, there are twenty-eight vertebrae which correspond to the twenty-eight constellations, the orifices of the head such as the eyes, nose etc., represent the seven planets and the five organs represent the five elements.

If you observe all the aspects (in the *thangka*) of Kalachakra Buddha, you will find all the aspects of the universe.

In the Tibetan calendar there are 360 days in a year which are represented by the 360 divinities which are present in the small joints of the bones in the body of the Kalachakra deity. All the cycles of the years, of the centuries etc., all that which is external, can be found represented in the body of Kalachakra.

Kaliyuga

This Kalachakra teaching is something very special and very important in these degenerate times of the Kaliyuga because through our increasing mental negativity we manifest a world which becomes more and more negative. To overcome these negativities, the Kalachakra teachings are becoming increasingly important.

This is why the Dalai Lama is giving so many Kalachakra initiations.

In fact in many different religions it is believed that we are moving to such a point of degeneration that there will be a confrontation between the forces of good and evil represented, for the Buddhists, by the barbarians, or those without religious beliefs and the inhabitants of Shambala.

It is also believed that this confrontation will take place within 330 or 340 years. Christians talk about the Judgement Day.

The Hindus say that during the last incarnation of Vishnu this conflict will occur. In Buddhism, the Kalachakra teaching is a preparation to overcome the negative energies of this era.

Dr. Pasang Yonten Arya is the former Principal of the Tibetan Medical Institute in Dharamsala, India and at present gives extensive teaching on Tibetan medicine, astrology and healing practices all over Europe.

This article is a transcription of a talk given by Dr. Pasang at Merigar on June 4th, 1994.

Sprinkling to ...

continued from page 12

and people thought that I was a Buddhist.

But even when I was as young as twenty-seven I was "sprinkling", doing shamanistic rites and healing while doing Buddhist prayers and rituals at the same time.

My husband and other people said to me that "a Buddhist is a Buddhist and a shaman is a shaman" and that I should decide to be one or the other.

But I have always done both and it has not been a problem for me.

When Dzogchen came along with its two kinds of roots, those of the ancient Bonpo origin and those of Buddhist origin, I was delighted. I really grabbed hold of it.

Translated by Carol Ermakova

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Buddhist BBS's

by John Bidleman

It is early afternoon. You are sitting at your computer and decide you would like to read the latest news on the situation in Tibet. Since the media is not currently covering this in detail, you decide to access a new Buddhist resource you have just heard about... a "bulletin board" otherwise known as a BBS. You add their phone number to your computer's communication menu and have it call. A connection is made and you are soon browsing the files which are easily copied or "downloaded" to your home computer.

This scenario is being repeated millions of times every day and in nearly every corner of the world. Persons who don't have Internet access are relying on local Buddhist community resources to fill their needs and stay abreast of current events. The call is usually a local one and the computer running the BBS may be an unsophisticated, older model as it is not a complicated job.

Unlike the Internet local BBSs are a *cul de sac* rather than a "highway" that connects to the rest of the world's electronic libraries but these private little "ponds" are rich with information, files and news. They sometimes specialise in areas of interest. Buddhism is one area of interest that is available online for those with modern-equipped computers.

In the San Francisco Bay Area two rather large Buddhist bulletin boards have started their own small network of bulletin boards around the globe to reflect or "mirror" the same files locally in different areas. This means people in New York can access the same information/files/etc that are in a BBS in San Francisco by calling up a BBS locally that is associated with it. These networks are BodhiNet and DharmaNet with a third, newer one, BuddhaNet soon to be announced. I will cover the two "Nets" as well as the BBSs that created them.

TIGER TEAM

Berkeley, CA (510) 268 0102
BodhiNet info@tigerteam.org

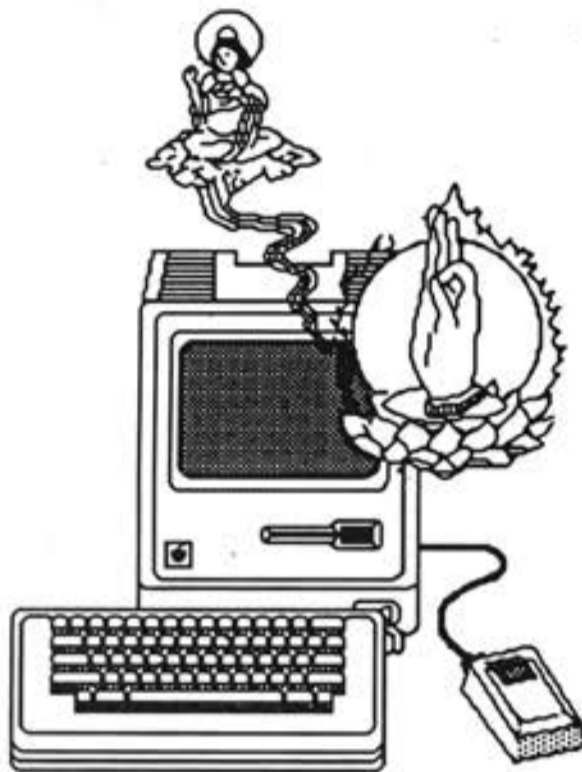
Gary Ray created Tiget Team and has expanded continually resulting in probably the best source of Buddhist information/files/etc in the world. It is currently free to users but accepts donations and grants access privileges in return. There is a Tibetan Bon and Tibetan Buddhist conference "area of discussion" as well as Zen and other related areas. Many of the files are graphics depicting religious leaders and boasts a picture of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche "norbu.gif". The CanTibet

newsletter is also available and is the foremost source of information from Tibet. Jeffrey Macko is co-creator and sysop *extraordinaire* at Tiger Team.

BODY DHARMA

Berkely, CA (510) 836 4717
DharmaNet dharma@netcom.com

Barry Kapke is the sysop



"systems operator" at Body Dharma. There are many files at this BBS which may not be found at Tiger Team, although they tend to have similar Buddhist agendas and therefore similar content. Body Dharma like Tiger Team has a strong Zen flavor as both sysops are Zen practitioners. Body Dharma contains a lot of useful medical and health files as it was originally created to serve the needs of the health and body work community in the Bay area. It soon added Buddhism to its agenda hence the name.

There are also large commercial BBSs that are more global. Compuserve is one. As many persons in the Community are using Compuserve it is also possible to access each other (and our files) via the various conferences such as the area called "Religion" which contains "eastern Religion". Files accessed this way are very public and may be read by anyone so the obvious disclaimer applies here. Also the cost of systems like Compuserve are usually high and don't include access to the Internet.

For those accessing the Internet, the CoombsPapers in Australia are the world's largest depository of electronic Buddhist texts in the world. It is accessed by anonymous ftp at (cooms.anu.edu.au). The directory is large and contains many other areas so it would be wise to "get" the INDEX first.

Another great resource for Netters is the Mage's Guide to the Internet. It is available at the community ftp site at (crl.com). It outlines many Buddhist resources in the Internet

including Buddha-L, a discussion group for Buddhists and several Buddhist newsgroups. It is in: (users/ro/robbee/Resources)

Also in this area "resources" is (tigerfaq.txt) a file that explains more about Tiger Team and bulletin boards in general look for other files as well.

The list below is a partial list of international BBSs which reflect the files at Tiger Team and Body Dharma. It needs to be updated so if you find a number is defunct please let me know. In the same respect if you have knowledge of a BBS that carries Buddhist files anywhere in the world please send me the details.

Next time: WWW/GOPHER/LYNX and Getting started on the Net.

NOTE: We need contact from more people in Australia/Argentina/Asia, if you are online in these countries contact me at address below.

As always, if you need help or information connecting to any resources please e-mail: (robbee@crl.com)

BBS LIST

USA-CA
Tiger Team (510)268-0102
Berkeley
Body Dharma (510) 836-4717
Berkeley
Mysteria (818) 353-8891 L.A.
MA
Insight (508) 433-5847 Pepperell
CT
Cuckoo Nest (203) 677-7077 Avon
VA
Arena of Anon (703) 904-9969
Herndon
MI
Ast Services (816) 931-2064
Kansas City
WA
AsiaNet (206) 527-6533 Seattle
CANADA QC
Dharmagate (514) 278-8766
Montreal
UK
Raunds
Converse 44-933-46-07-44
ASIA
Singapore
Depeche 65-283-4010
AUSTRALIA
NSW
DoJo 61-2-416-35 Lindfield

The above list includes BBSs which were free of charge as of this writing. They are all Buddhist based, some more than others. Or a more complete list ftp (crl.com) /users/ro/robbee/Resources.

John Bidleman, Box 721,
Healdsburg, CA 95448, USA.

Practices for special days

7th Month, 25th day Wed. 31st August 1994

This is a **Dakini day** and also the anniversary of Pagmo Drugpa (1110-1170), the chief disciple of Gampopa. Try to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby, you can do a medium Tun on your own.

In either case, when you transform yourself into the Dakini Simhamuka, recite her heart mantra as much as possible and then do an intensive practice of Ekajati.

7th Month, 30th day Mon. 5th Sept. 1994

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

8th Month, 10th day Wed. 14th Sept. 1994

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

8th Month, 15th day Mon. 19th Sept. 1994

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

8th Month, 25th day Fri. 30th Sept. 1994

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

8th Month, 30th day Wed. 5th Oct. 1994

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

THERE ARE TWO TIBETAN EIGHTH MONTHS THIS YEAR and the practices suggested are the same as those for the first eighth month.

2nd 8th Month, 10th day Fri. 14th Oct. 1994

Day of Guru Padmasambhava

2nd 8th Month, 15th day Wed. 19th Oct. 1994

Full moon

2nd 8th Month, 25th day Sat. 29th Oct. 1994

Dakini day

2nd 8th Month, 30th day Thu. 3rd Nov. 1994

New moon

9th Month, 3rd day Sun. 6th Nov. 1994

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

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