

THE MIRROR

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Issue 28

Merigar: a month of retreats

by Elisa Copello

August of 1994 will pass into the annals of Merigar as the month of 'retreats'. There were three of them, two with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and one with the Lady Sakya Master Jetsun Chimey Luding. From August 1st to 7th Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave teachings to those who had passed the examination of the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level and after a few days of relative rest launched into the long August 12th-21st retreat, which was open to everyone. It was a wonderful retreat, intense and well-attended. Many 'new' people attended to whom particular attention was dedicated in an atmosphere of collaboration, as the Master always urges.

Before the beginning of the retreat there had been some apprehension as to whether the organisation would be sufficient for the numerous practitioners expected to participate. And indeed a great many did arrive, from Italy, western and eastern European countries, more than 700 according to the registrations. But as usual at Merigar, in spite of initial worries everything turned out well: parking was organised in a large field; the child-minding service, where the small guests met, played and pursued creative activities, was run by no less than eight assistants; various secretaries were busy with the tiring work of registering participants and similar activities; the reception service at the Gonpa arranged orderly seating for the



Participants of the first level training of the Santi Maha Sangha retreat held by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar in August.
(photo M. Maglietti)

teaching sessions and the short personal talks with Rinpoche at the end of each session of teaching. The little excesses, distractions or misunderstandings gradually dissolved like snow in the radiant light of the teachings that the Master generously gave.

On the afternoon of the 12th we are all seated at the Gonpa, some inside, others outside in the shade of

large awnings erected for the occasion. We are happy and expectant. Some people, like myself, have not seen Rinpoche for more than a year, others have never met him before, while a few have had the luck to see him during his travels around the world. But now we are all united in this joyful and moving wait, in the magical Gonpa shining with colours, full of energy, evoked

from the images of *rigzins* and *tathagatas* and the sacred script in *pagpa* characters.

Rinpoche arrives smiling, greets us briefly, has a look at us all and starts by announcing the retreat programme, rich with teachings and practices. It is a retreat characterised in particular by practices for purification, for reinforcing the physical body and energy, and for protection from negativities.

Rinpoche began with the teaching of a type of *chudlen* linked to a *terma* of Nyala Pema Dundul, the master of *Rigzin Chang Chub Dorje* and Ayu Khandro from whom Rinpoche received this transmission. The Master has only recently been able to have a copy of the "Kasha Randrol" ("Universal Liberation") in five volumes, the complete text which includes all the teachings related to this practice through which Nyala Pema Dundul realised the Body of Light.

All the participants at the retreat received one or two pills daily (plus a dose of honey *chudlen*) for a maximum of three days, according to how they wished to practise. Those who practised strictly consumed only rice and fruit juice, while others included varied foods in their diet. Most people kept to the strict diet

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Shang-Shung Institute in America

by Jacqueline Gens

On October 12, 1994, Shang-Shung International Institute for Tibetan Studies will officiate its American inauguration at the old Conway Grammar School in Conway, Massachusetts located at 18 Schoolhouse Road. An open house is scheduled to begin at 4:00 pm on the 12th followed by a number of presentations and speakers later in the evening, including a talk by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, the founder of the Institute in Italy.

The inauguration will feature a photo exhibit of contemporary Tibet and its people, talks by Professors Janet Gyatso of Amherst College and Anne Klein of Rice



University and a demonstration of computer reference tools Dr. Jim Valby has developed to assist the Shang-Shung Institute Translation Project. There will also be a multimedia presentation by Alex Siedlecki and James Raschick, from

the Institute's Media Resource Center of the CD-ROM Thangka Project, which is an effort to make Tibetan art collections more accessible to Tibetan scholars for study that has been created with the collaboration of various museums and institutions such as the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Well-known thangka painter Glen Eddy, who is a master of the Karma Gadri style of painting, will make a presentation as well. A slide show on the extensive activities of A.S.I.A. is currently being prepared in Italy to introduce participants attending the inauguration to the many projects already underway under the

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Discovering our real condition through Yantra Yoga

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Transcribed from a talk on Yantra Yoga given at Tibet House, New Delhi on November 23rd, 1993

I would like to give a little information or advice about Yantra Yoga, a Tibetan tradition. The word Yantra is a Sanskrit word but in Tibetan it has different meanings. It can mean 'a geometrical form', such as a mandala, for example. In Tibetan Yantra can also mean 'movement of the body'. With movement we can have many forms so that is also Yantra Yoga. In Tibetan we say *trulkhör* which means movement. Why do we use movement? Because movement is for co-ordinating or guiding our *prana* or vital energy. This is something which is used in Anuttaratantra. In different kinds of Anuttaratantra there are different kinds of Yantras, for example Yantra related to the Hevajra tantra, Yantra related to the Kalachakra tantra and others.



(photo Werner Binder)

Lineage of Yantra Yoga

That which I teach is called Yantra Yoga or *nyida khajor*. In Tibetan *nyida* means sun and moon, *khajor* means union. That is the title of the original teaching which was taught by a very famous Tibetan teacher called Vairocana, one of the most important students of Guru Padmasambhava. During the time of the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen, Guru Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet where he introduced Vajrayana. At that time there was this famous translator called Vairocana who was a very important figure particularly for the Dzogchen teaching because he translated most of the original Dzogchen texts from the language of Oddiyana into Tibetan. He received the transmission of the Yantra Yoga teaching from Guru Padmasambhava who had received this particular teaching from Mahasiddha Humkara. So this is the lineage of the teaching which comes from Vairocana who taught it to his students such as Yudra Nyingpo etc. Thus we have this transmission and the continuation of this very ancient tradition of Yantra.

Oral transmission

Besides Vairocana's text, there is also an oral transmission of Yantra Yoga. It is very difficult to understand Yantra Yoga if you only read the original text of Vairocana and do not have a teacher. Practitioners of Dzogchen particularly have applied these methods for centuries. I learned them principally from one of my uncles who was a yogi and an excellent practitioner of Yantra. After I had been in Italy for several years, many people became interested in Tantric teachings and in yoga and gradually we arrived at the point of trying to teach this method of Yantra to those who were interested. I had made many notes when I had studied and

then later I wrote a book which is a type of commentary on Vairocana's text.

We call it Yantra Yoga but its title is *nyida khajor*. And even though the title of this book is *nyida khajor*, Vairocana himself mentions at the end of the text that it is Yantra Yoga which is why in general we use this name.

Our real condition

We find the word 'yoga' in the Sanskrit language, but when we use 'yoga' in Tibetan, we translate it as '*naljor*' which has a very precise meaning. While we usually define the meaning of yoga as 'union', when we say '*naljor*' in Tibetan, it means 'primordial knowledge' or 'understanding': '*nal*' means 'original' or 'authentic', 'never changing' or 'modified', 'the original condition'; '*jor*' means 'having', or 'discovering this knowledge' or 'understanding'. So the real meaning of yoga is that we discover our real condition.

In the practice of Yantra Yoga we use our body, speech and mind: with the body there are positions and movements, then with the voice there are many different techniques of *pranayama* or breathing practices, and with the mind there are many ways to concentrate and visualise, with the aim of going beyond judging and thinking with our mind, which we call contemplation. This is how our three existences of body, speech and mind are related, and when we apply all three together, we have the possibility of arriving at real knowledge, at the understanding of our primordial state, our original condition. So this is really the meaning of 'yoga' in Yantra Yoga.

Breathing and movement

In Yantra Yoga there are many positions similar to those of Hatha Yoga but the way of getting into the

positions, the main point of the practice and the consideration or point of view of the practice of Yantra Yoga is different. In Yantra Yoga the *asana* or position is one of the important points but not the main one. Movement is more important. For example, in order to get into an *asana*, breathing and movement are linked and applied gradually. The movement is also limited by time which is divided into periods consisting of four beats each: a period to get into the position, a certain period to remain in the position, and then a period to finish the position. Everything is related in Yantra Yoga. The over-all movement is important, not only the *asana*. This is a very important point.

Understanding energy

The system of Yantra Yoga which we apply is from a book written by Vairocana in which 108 movements are described related to different types of breathing. When we consider the three aspects of body, speech and mind which of them is more important? The mind is more important, but it is easier to understand through the body because our body is related to the material level: we can see, we can touch, we can have a very concrete understanding through the physical body. But if we want to have a deeper understanding on the level of energy, then the situation is more complicated.

In the same way if we ask which is more important in Yantra Yoga, the movement, or the *prana* energy, of course, the *prana* energy is more important, and the way we co-ordinate it and use it through breathing related to visualisation.

If we have a physical problem, how can we guide the *prana* energy? Through breathing which is always related to visualisation or concentration. So when there are

physical problems or disorders associated with the five elements, we concentrate on the characteristic colour, or seed syllable, or the sound of the seed syllable related to the particular element and using sound, visualisation and all these techniques, we can guide *prana* and co-ordinate our energy. This is the reason why teachers of yoga always teach methods for overcoming problems such as energy disorders in our body. So the energy level is more important than the physical level.

But more important still is the mental level which in yoga is considered to be like a king while energy is similar to the government and the physical body is regarded as the subjects of the country. Everything is governed in this way.

But physical positions and movements are also very important because if we are not able to control our physical level, there is no way we can control our energy. If we cannot control our energy then there is no way we can control our mind. So mind is dependent on energy which in turn is dependent on the physical body.

In Yantra Yoga these three aspects become balanced, firstly working on the physical level with positions and movements which are a means for co-ordinating or harmonising our energy.

In the Yantra Yoga of Vairocana there are 75 principle positions or movements which are divided into five groups. In the five groups there are five different techniques of breathing or *pranayama* to control *prana* energy. Why do we need to control this function of energy or *prana*? Because that is the only way in which we can really become aware and enter into the real condition of mind.

When we consider mind and the nature of mind, nature of mind means potentiality of mind. Mind has its

potentiality which we can govern. If we govern our potentiality of the nature of mind, that means that we are on the Path and that we have the possibility for realisation. If we are ignorant of that then we become a slave to the mind and to judgement. In this case we need to co-ordinate our physical body and our energy. For this reason Vairocana taught this teaching of Yantra Yoga which is a characteristic teaching of Dzogchen.

Transformation

The principle methods of Dzogchen are a little different from the methods of the Tantric teaching of Anuttaratantra. For example when we talk about Tantric teaching, the characteristic method is transformation while in the Sutra teaching it is the Path of Renunciation in which we renounce the cause of negativities and control our existence. If, for example, we consider emotions, in the Sutra teachings they are called 'poisons' because when we are conditioned by them we can have many problems and create a lot of negative potentiality. But in the teachings of Anuttaratantra, even if they are 'poisons', they can be transformed. The emotions are not considered to be without value because they are related to our energy. The real meaning of the nature of the emotions is energy which is an aspect of our real condition. For that reason there is a possibility to transform them.

Self-liberation

Then there is Ati Yoga or the Dzogchen teaching found particularly in the Nyingmapa tradition. Ati means 'primordial state' in the language of Oddiyana; 'Yoga' means knowledge, understanding. This is a characteristic of the Dzogchen teaching and this method is not transformation but self-liberation which is different. The Yantra Yoga of Vairocana belongs to Ati Yoga system of Dzogchen teaching and for that reason has no particular visualisation of deities or transformation. If you learn other kinds of Yantra Yoga such as that of Hevajra or of Dorje Phagmo or Kalachakra, then first of all you must receive the initiation of the *tantra* and then practise the Development and the Accomplishing Stages in order to practise Yantra Yoga and work with *prana* energy.

However since the Yantra Yoga of Vairocana belongs to the system of Ati Yoga we do not always use practices of transformation such as visualisation of deities etc. When we visualise channels and *chakras* etc., we always start with what is called *tong-ra*; *tong* means 'emptiness' and *ra* means 'dimension'. The dimension of emptiness means that we do not

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Shang-Shung Institute in America

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direction of Namkhair Norbu Rinpoche in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).

The Shang-Shung International Institute for Tibetan Studies is dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan culture through special projects and initiatives which directly benefit the Tibetan people. Another objective of the Institute is to promote educational opportunities

uration. On October 13, following the inauguration activities, a round table discussion has been planned to stimulate and promote discourse on the various directions the Institute can manifest in America.

With generosity and expertise, members of Tseggyalgar have nearly completed a massive reconstruction of the 3 story school in time for the inauguration and Namkhair Norbu Rinpoche's October retreat.

lack of which is one of the major stumbling blocks Westerners face who wish to seriously study Tibetan medicine. The stability of an actual physical facility such as Shang-Shung Institute in Conway increases the possibility of developing a permanent base to build an on-going Tibetan medical studies curriculum taught by both residential and visiting faculty. Needless to say, such aspirations are in the realm of



which further an understanding of Tibetan Studies in the fields of language, medicine, arts and sciences. At present many aspects of Tibetan culture are threatened with extinction unless institutions and organizations such as Shang-Shung create intelligent alternatives for actively preserving those endangered areas. Since 1989 Shang-Shung Institute has successfully worked without political or religious bias to establish networks between individuals and institutions working on behalf of Tibetan cultural preservation in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), China, India, and in a number of western countries. This concerted effort resulted in the Second International Seminar on Tibetan Language which brought together scholars from the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR), China and Tibetans in exile for the first time to discuss the future of the Tibetan language (See Mirror Issue # 16). The initial stages of a 5 year program in Tibetan Medicine has already begun in Italy with the aim of eventually developing academic affiliation with institutes and universities of traditional Tibetan medicine.

The American seat of the Shang-Shung Institute will continue to foster similar orientations as its Italian counterpart while developing its own identity. Individuals who have interest or experience in Tibetan Studies, related fields of scholarship or medicine, fundraising and administrative expertise are especially invited to attend the inaug-

Although the school will maintain its outer identity at the request of the town of Conway, some architectural interior features have assumed subtle traditional Tibetan motifs such as the moulding in the central hallway. Natural qualities of light, original wood and brick have been considered in the overall planning. Despite the high decibel screams of heavy equipment from morning to evening each day, the elegant beauty of the builders' craftsmanship has begun to emerge through the clouds of dust. Individuals who attend the opening will have an opportunity to view in person part of the photo exhibit of contemporary Tibet in the newly created official Shang-Shung Institute space at the school. Next door to the Institute will be housed the proposed archival library with computer systems for The Shang-Shung Tibetan Translation Project and other research projects. The enormous annex now fortified with steel supports will be available for large gatherings such as the October retreat. Well equipped offices for Tseggyalgar, the Mirror and Shang-Shung Editions are already in operation.

A tentative program on Tibetan medicine has been scheduled for March 1995 at the Shang-Shung Institute in Conway. Since Namkhair Norbu Rinpoche hosted the 1983 first International Tibetan Medicine Conference in Italy, interest in the Tibetan medical system has grown considerably in the West. A unique aspect of the Shang-Shung Institute's developing program in Tibetan medicine has been to provide theoretical and clinical training in English, the

a long-term project but at least no longer impossible.

The Shang-Shung Translation Project under the direction of Namkhair Norbu Rinpoche presents an equally daunting task of translating the entire body of Dzogchen tantras. Although a number of translators have been working independently on different projects, the existence of a central facility in America will greatly aid the realization of these goals since scholars and translators from all over the world will have an opportunity to work and collaborate together for sustained periods of time in an atmosphere conducive to this type of work. The development of a library and archive with enhanced technical systems offers unlimited benefit to future generations. It is imperative that the Shang-Shung Translation Project receive support now while living Masters such as Namkhair Norbu Rinpoche who are the last generation of fully trained scholars in Tibetan can participate and oversee the translation process. Otherwise centuries of accumulated knowledge will be lost unless these translations occur within the next few years while such Masters are still alive.

In the past, Tibetan culture has been the caretaker of an enormous repository of knowledge and wisdom. Now it is the task of concerned individuals in the West to take responsibility to preserve these traditions both inside and outside of Tibet. Supporting the many projects of Shang-Shung International Institute for Tibetan Studies is a small step in this direction.

NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE Teaching Programme 1994-95

U. S. A. Tseggyalgar 12 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: Tseggyalgar, PO Box 277, 63 Hart Road, Conway, Mass. 01341
USA. Tel: 001-413- 3694153, Fax: 001-413-3694165

Mexico, Mexico City 17-21 November
Seminar

Contact: Viviane Buzali, Bosques de Zapotes 91, Bosques de las Lomas,
Mexico City 11700. Tel. & fax 52 5 2513078

Venezuela, Higuero 2-8 December
Teaching Retreat

Contact: Pablo Lau Rivera, Lhundrubgar, PB. A. Res. Pedernales, Av. Paez
Montalban II, 1021 Caracas. Tel. 2 442 1434. Information on page 6.

Argentina, Buenos Aires 16 - 18 December
Seminar

Contact: Nelida Saporiti, Bulnes 1849 - DTO 7, 1425 Buenos Aires. Tel.
& Fax 54 1 825 0144 or Martin Borthagaray, Av. del Libertador 4996 - 7
A, Buenos Aires. Fax & tel. 541 777 3247.

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.

Peru, Lima 27 - 29 January Seminar

Contact: Juan Bustamante, Calle E. Palacios No. 1125-C, Miraflores, Lima
18. Tel: 51 14 455003. Fax 51 14 472984

U.S. A.

New Mexico 2 - 6 February Seminar

10 - 12 February Seminar for Tibetans

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

Los Angeles 16 - 18 February Seminar

Contact: Michael Has, 20131 Marina Lane, Huntington Beach, CA 92646.
Tel. 1 818 997 7117

San Francisco 23 Feb. - 1 March
Teaching Retreat

Contact: Rosanne Welsch, 977 Cornell Ave., Albany CA 94706. Tel. 1 510
527 4904. Fax 510 524 0933

Tseggyalgar 9 - 15 March
Teaching Retreat

17 - 19 March

Seminar for Shang-Shung Institute at Conway

Italy

Merigar 2-9 April 1995

Teaching retreat

Contact: Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso Gr Italy. Tel. 966837, 966322 Fax
968110

"Victorious" Gar in the Pacific



Dancing on the Mandala at Namgyalgar

by Jean Mackintosh

All financial arrangements were finally settled on our Dzogchen land, "Woodlands", at 4.15pm on 18th August 1994. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was informed of the progress and he wrote giving us the name "Namgyalgar" for the Dzogchen land. He said that it means "victorious" and he sent his very best wishes to us all.

We had raised about \$110,000 in donations and fund-raising and we arranged to borrow another \$115,000 from the bank. Many of our members have committed monthly contributions to pay off this loan. There were many ups and downs between the time Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was here with us on the land when we made the decision to buy it, and the time that we actually signed the contract and settled on "Woodlands", which is now called Namgyalgar. At times we were unsure whether we could really do it but everybody kept going ahead and now we are there and we have a Gar in Australia.

Besides our own members there were one or two people who were invaluable to us in achieving this. Our solicitor, Diane Edwards has been remarkable in the way she

handled our conveyancing, talking to members of our Community, bank officials, solicitors and dealing with many stressful situations that we are getting used to, without giving up on us. She also assisted members to sort out their questions and concerns. We have invited her to meet with members and to visit Namgyalgar if she ever gets a free day from her busy life.

There were of course many obstacles during the course of conveyancing this special land which is to be used for the practice and preservation of the precious Dzogchen teachings for the benefit of all sentient beings. One of these obstacles came just before settlement day, which was set down for the 18th August. On the 16th, enquiries revealed that an essential certificate was held up in the Lands Title Office and might not go through registration for three weeks. That night practitioners around the country did the offering of Ganapuja and strong Guardian practice. The next day a telephone call to the Land Titles Office indicated the certificate was now registered and everything was ready to go ahead. So miracles do happen!

Mal Dibden is another of those special people who stayed with us throughout the whole procedure with

a great deal of patience and endurance. He is a dairy farmer and used to things taking a long time. Six of the newly formed South Coast group met with Mal Dibden for a celebration dinner on 17th August. It was a nice evening by the fire with Mal talking to us about the history of "Woodlands" and the area in general. It is 16 months now since we first met Mal and talked to him about buying "Woodlands". He is dedicated to the preservation of the mountain, Gulaga, (Aboriginal name)/Mount Dromedary (European name), and because of this he worked with us in our efforts to buy "Woodlands". He wanted to sell it to someone who would care for this land and treat it respectfully as part of this special mountain. During the evening he wished our Community well and said he hoped that we would work together as neighbours. He told us that he was creating a Family Conservation Trust on his neighbouring farm "Spring Hills" in order to preserve a piece of rain forest that still exists there, and he hoped that both our plans and his would co-exist and work in harmony. We thanked him for his assistance and patience. Following settlement he removed all the "for sale" signs and the entrance now looks nice and clean.

Mal was very pleased when I showed him the photos of the Dalai Lama opening the Gonpa at Merigar and I think he would really like it one day if the Dalai Lama opened a Gonpa on "Woodlands". There are quite a few of us living near Namgyalgar now. I am living in a small cabin just below the mountain where I can see our land from my window. Our South coast practice group meets and practises regularly. Soon there will be a practice retreat on the land and members will begin discussions about the development of the Gar.

Namgyalgar Raffle

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

The land, recently given the name "Namgyalgar" by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, has breath-taking ocean views, lakes, beaches, mountains and forests, and is bordered by a delightful pristine creek suitable for drinking and bathing with smooth boulders and a sandy bottom.

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

The winning prizes in the raffle are

1st prize

A trip to Australia with a full months accommodation

2nd prize

A piece of Aboriginal art (paintings or carving) or an Australian opal

3rd prize

A dryabone full length oilskin coat and an akubra hat

If you would like to have a ticket for the lottery (\$50 US) or wish to make a donation towards the land, as some have already done, please contact: Jean Mackintosh, Post Office, Central Tilba 2546, N.S.W., Australia.

Fabio Andrico is coming on 19th January 1995 to give Yantra Yoga retreats so we need to be prepared.

At present Namgyalgar is shining in the beautiful sunny days of the South Coast. The weather is warmish. The native white clematis flower is covering bushes and trees and the land is alive with blossom. Dolphins are swimming off the beaches at the foot of the mountain and whales are in the harbour at Eden, a little distance away.

The Australian Dzogchen Community would like to thank everybody in the international

Community who supported us financially and through their practice, to achieve our goal and establish a Gar in this part of the world downunder. In particular we would like to thank Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for his limitless kindness. We would also like to thank Merigar and "The Mirror" for their support. Our international lottery is still open and we are still selling tickets. Get yours now for your chance to visit Namgyalgar. Anyone who would like to visit us please write and let us know. Namgyalgar is waiting for your visit.

The British Retreat

by Colin Ellar

After travelling from Holland our group of three arrived in London to catch the last few minutes of a well attended and very comprehensive public talk given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at the house of friends near Euston. After greeting many old friends and making arrangements to travel to Wales the following afternoon, we retired for the night.

There were a few minor delays (the hotel evacuated for a fire alarm, tube line breakdowns, and some computer language problems for Lucy) before we left London to join Friday's rush hour to the west country down the M4 Motorway to the ancient Principeddom of Wales.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave teachings in an enormous yurt in a field five squishy minutes from the main farm buildings. This beautiful yurt had a large central dome

supported by six smaller domes and easily big enough for the 130 people attending.

We were well protected from the Welsh rain (unfortunately the weather showed little respect for the Dzogchen Community).

The locally built yurt hired for the retreat in Little Pencoed could not have been improved on, and a small generator supported lights and also amplification.

All these amenities must have involved much organisation and hard work, and anyone coming from outside could only see that everything was working well, meals were always available, etc.

So many thanks to all those who gave so much work and dedication from all of us who did nothing but turn up.

We were lucky on Monday when the sun broke through and after the mornings teachings a convoy set off

for the community's land about 40 minutes to the North, not far from Fishguard.

Passing through narrow lanes with high-hedgerows, we came upon all the other cars beside a ramshackle farm within sight of the sea.

Everyone sat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to do a rite of authentication for the land and afterwards we poked and wandered around the property speculating on eventual developments and work to be done.

The last days flew by and on Wednesday people began to scatter back to where they had come from.

Rinpoche had come, and taught with compassion and clarity, and in the wink of an eye was leaving already, and as impermanence raced on into another day some seeds had been planted to grow and flower some day soon.

Retreat in the Netherlands

September 9th - 11th

by Colin Ellar

The teaching given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Holland (Netherlands) took place on a property owned by the Theosophical Society in Naarden, about half an hour from Amsterdam. Woods are rare in this area, so the beauty of the forest covering the land was all the more striking. There was only limited accommodation available, so many people commuted daily from Amsterdam, while others braved the elements and camped on the land.

Rinpoche taught in a modern, comfortable hall that easily held the approximately 200 people that came. The core of older students was quite small, so for many people this was their first contact with Norbu Rinpoche and the Dzogchen Teachings.

With limited time to introduce new-comers to the essence of the Teachings, Rinpoche skilfully eased us into the collective *run* practice on the first evening before the lengthier explanations during the days that followed.

During the retreat Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave a very complete transmission of every practice already in print, so that anyone wishing to continue has only to read the appropriate book and begin to practise.

Rinpoche stayed in a beautiful house on the land (about 1/2 mile away) and was able to rest undisturbed, and have a few days of peace, before travelling on to Germany.

Many thanks to Stoffelina Verdonk who taught the Vajra Dance, all the Gakyil and everyone else whose work helped to make this retreat a success and bring new inspiration to the Dutch Dzogchen Community. And above all thanks to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for his precious teaching.

Historic visit to South Africa

by Jerry Smith

South Africa has been on the news fronts of the world for quite a long time. Politically many changes have taken place which people see as being very important. The visit of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to South Africa is seen by many of us as the most important spiritual event of this century. It has been the first time that a great enlightened master has truly blessed all those who attended the teaching, and also blessed the country.

When one is in the African bush at night with just the moon and stars, one can hear the sounds of the wild animals, both great and small, a strange type of bush music. But when a lion roars, all the animals, right down to the crickets become silent. At that moment there is an electrifying pregnant silence, silence filled with pure potential.

Rinpoche's teaching was like the lion's roar. His profound enlightened activity brought about this state of vibrant electrifying inner awareness pregnant with potential, an experience that will be with us forever.

The teaching was attended by one hundred plus people who came from all over South Africa to Johannesburg. A few of the participants had even been to Tibet in search of teaching. Everybody attending agreed that they had never



received such profound teaching. Everybody expressed their profound gratitude to Rinpoche for gracing us with his presence.

Fabio Andrico taught two sessions of Yantra Yoga in the late afternoons and had all the participants in stitches of laughter, they enjoyed themselves thoroughly. On the Monday evening a trust deed

was signed by Rinpoche and five trustees establishing the Dzogchen Community Trust of Southern Africa. The purpose of the trust is to preserve and promote the teaching of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Southern Africa and the rest of Africa for the benefit of all. A Gakyil is also being formed and will be fully operational soon.

Happy reunion in Denmark

by Erik Meier Carlsen

From September 23 - 25 Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche visited Denmark and Scandinavia for the first time in seven years giving unique and dazzling teachings to a hundred new and old students in Copenhagen.

Following Rinpoche's last visit to Copenhagen in the summer of 1987 there had arisen embarrassing strife in the Gakyil and it was believed that this was the reason why Rinpoche had refused all invitations for several years.

But last year all scepticism towards the membership scheme of the Dzogchen Community was overcome when two old students visited Rinpoche at Merigar and it seemed that the ground was cleared for a new beginning in Scandinavia.

The Copenhagen retreat was attended by new and old disciples from Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark who came to receive the blessing of the Master. Co-operation worked out well and we were able to offer a well organised retreat.

Practices and books published in Danish were available during the retreat as well as books from Italy, England and the USA.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave two sessions of teaching each day: a magnificent teaching in the morning for two-three hours and a practice session in the afternoon with explanations and transmissions.

On the first day of the retreat Rinpoche spoke about the three vehicles: *sutra*, *tantra* and *Dzogchen*. In the afternoon he gave instruction on the short *tun* and we practised together.

The next day, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave a concentrated explanation of the *yangtig guruyoga*.

This was a genuine introduction to the *yangtig* retreat and included a special empowerment of Garab Dorje with *rigpa'i rtsal-dbang*. After this we received a long series of *lung*s for the practices for special days and purposes.

On the last day of the retreat, Rinpoche gave an empowerment of Guru Dragpur and told some entertaining and enlightening stories about the Eight Classes and recounted some experiences from his own life.

The retreat closed with a *fineganapuja*.

In the evening we elected a new Gakyil and Rinpoche told us about his visions for the Santi Maha Sangha.

After a few days of rest Rinpoche left for America.

German retreat - European possibilities

by V. Kalinowski, G. Manusch, R. Portack

For the third time a teaching and practice retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche took place at the Kamalashila Institute in mid September. The castle-like building houses the most well-known centre of the Karma Kagyud tradition in Germany. Up to 200 people from all over the country attended the five day event. Many "new" faces as well as "older" ones were there, listening and cooperating with great interest in the teachings.

After the two previous retreats with Rinpoche here in 1991 and 1992, this retreat was a full, complete cycle of teachings and transmissions. It started with basic explanations concerning how our condition of body, speech and mind is connected to the three basic experiences of bliss, clarity and emptiness. These are inseparable from spontaneous awareness (*desal tong*, *mitogpa*, *yerme rigpa*), which is related to the three testaments of Garab Dorje, the first human Dzogchen Master in the Buddhist tradition: "direct introduction into the state", "not to remain in doubt", and "continue in the state of self-liberation".

The schedule of teachings and practices seemed to be quite tight, at first glance, because we started at 9 o'clock in the mornings - without the master - do do the Guru Yoga of Garab Dorje. At 10 am each day,

Rinpoche gave teachings until lunch time. After lunch break there were explanations of practices by older students followed by sessions of Yantra Yoga and also collective practices led by Rinpoche. In the evening we had - cherished by all - video shows and mostly we ended the day with *achod* practice. Certainly the afternoon sessions were offered as a kind of "open space".

For the "newer" people Rinpoche gave many *lung*s and explanations on the different *tuns* and on collective practices: *xitro*, *Mandarava* and *Guru Dragpur*. He also explained the night practice in connection with *yangtig* and then focussed on its *ngondro*, an intensive preparation on the Guru Yoga of Garab Dorje and *xitro*. Application of the practices and integration of the path in daily circumstances were the essence of Rinpoche's final teachings.

This retreat was a "continuation" of the more international retreat of 1993 in Austria, in which many members of the eastern countries including Germany took part. During this retreat we considered the possibility of organising an international European retreat together with the French, Dutch and German Communities for two weeks in 1995. Generally Rinpoche is open to this idea, which also means less travel, reduced problems and stress for him and possibly increased international cooperation and



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche teaching at the Kamalashila Institute

communication for us. Also within Europe travelling is not too expensive as distances are not too long and travel structures are well developed. This "international" gathering could, for example, take place at the "Pfauenhof" or "Peacocks Palace", close to the Dutch border.

This year the Pfauenhof was the main host to the famous lady master Sakya Jetsun Chimed Luding who also gave teachings at Merigar. Michael Hellbach, organiser of the first European tour for Jetsunma and organiser of Pfauenhof, will soon also be a member of the German Dzogchen Community. The Pfauenhof offers not only space and co-organisation for a possible international Dzogchen retreat, but,

on top of all that, a place and financial contribution for the construction of a fixed Vajra Dance mandala. This means the German Dzogchen Community is moving towards a concrete cooperation with the Pfauenhof.

Another member of the German Dzogchen Community who is the owner of a beautiful and large property in southern Germany, has offered his place to the Community to develop a "geographical" central point for practitioners where the German Community would have facilities and possibilities for developing together until we find our own property. The Community has already fixed a schedule for practice weekends to be held there up to 1996 and we have prepared a

construction plan for a removable retreat hut for personal retreats to be built on this land sponsored by members of the Community. There is even a possibility for the German Community to purchase their own land nearby.

These were some of the possibilities that emerged "out of the blue" during the retreat with Rinpoche at Kamalashila as well as an intensive exchange and presentation of plans and ideas. Certainly if these prospects are shared amongst us, it could contribute towards a closer cooperation between the German and the international Communities.

During the retreat, Jan Leguen of the French Community presented three land projects in France including Community land to develop an international housing co-operative in a castle which would be suitable for retired elderly practitioners. This place could be close to Mediterranean near Nice.

With the same purpose in mind Gerd Manusch of the German Community proposed a housing plan for a place called "Blumenthal", previously a spiritual center and currently a home for retired people, surrounded by small lakes, grassland and a natural park. This may be an opportunity for the German Community as Rinpoche stressed the importance of Community property for Community use.

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Retreat in Venezuela with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu December 2 - 8 1994

The retreat will take place in Higuerote, a town on the north coast a hundred miles from Caracas. Those travelling from abroad should take a bus from the airport to the terminal in Caracas where they can phone any of the following people in order to be picked up.

Pablo 4421434; Alicia 02234 8744; Walter 234 8744; Eglee 014 2616 69
If possible it is better to announce your arrival in advance. Outside Caracas dial 02 before the number, from abroad dial 00582.

Retreat participants will be able to take a bus from Caracas on Saturday December 2 at 8am from Plaza Venezuela, returning from Higuerote on Thursday December 8th.

Planned price of the whole retreat (subject to modification) is \$150 which includes meals, and accommodation at the Villa Golefa Hotel. There is no space available for pitching tents.

Please register with us by phone or fax in advance: Pablo Lau Rivera, Ave. Paez, Montalban II, Caracas, Venezuela 1022. Tel. 00582 442 1434, fax 00582 471 2772.

Dancing in Sunlight and Shade



by Joan Marie Wood

We had a wonderful Dance Retreat in northern California. Adriana Dal Borgo taught the complete Dance of the Song of the Vajra in ten days, May 27th through June 6th. It's more than a month later now, and as I reflect on my experience, three words come to mind: space, bliss and collaboration.

I'll talk about collaboration first. Last year the California Community frequently discussed how to create a dance floor for the Mandala. We were using Margaret and Ken Bradford's spacious but bumpy backyard for our portable Mandala, and in the fall they graciously offered this space to the Community to build a dance deck. Carol Fields' generous financial contribution enabled us to begin construction.

John Bidleman laid out the coordinates and the cement blocks for the base in January, and John "Nary" Mitchel and Paul Tuell provided expertise and hours of labor through the rainy season to finish the substructure. They were assisted by others of us who measured, lifted, carried, hammered, and provided meals. In May we laid the redwood decking.

When Adriana arrived, the daisies and gladiolus were in bloom. She came to the Sunday Santi Maha Sangha study group, and we discussed answers to questions we had been uncertain about. Sharing this way I had a sense of "no distance" between California and Merigar.

We began the Vajra Dance course Friday evening. Some of us had learned through Ke La Nam with Prima Mai two years ago, and we were eager to learn the rest. Adriana

was kind, patient and thorough, introducing new steps with clarity, answering questions, repeating over and over, helping beginner and "intermediate" integrate new learning. A dozen people attended the entire course; another twenty came for one or more days.

On the second day we realized we needed a sun shade. Though we had been concerned about dancing in the rain two weeks before, now the sun heated the deck to a fine roast by 11 a.m. Within a day the shade was designed and built, a light task for a half-dozen of us.

As the course developed, I became more aware of space - both the qualities of the physical space in which we danced, and the "space" of the Dance itself. The shade cloth billowed in the breeze as if it were alive and breathing above us, and dappled the dancers in stripes of light and shadow. Many birds - mockingbirds, robins, sparrows - sang in the Tuscan cypress standing guard around us. When we sang the Song of the Vajra and the dedication verses, their melodies seemed especially full and sweet. The sound of the freeway which roared several blocks away like a waterfall enriched the auditory space, along with occasional woofs and yips from neighbouring dogs. We moved our bodies in this aural universe which was woven together with Matteo Silva's harmonium sounding the Dance of the Song of the Vajra.

We were initially eager. Then for some, middle-aged bodies began to rebel. By Wednesday we had learned Ghura-ghura, the *gdang* energy line. At the end of the day I felt twinges in my back, so much that I got up during the night to take aspirin and

find a cold pack. Adriana told me that this wasn't uncommon, that she had some pain in her back when she first danced, but when she began to make bigger arm movements, it went away.

Getting the details and integrating them, so as not to "blank out" became the ongoing task. By midweek our feet hurt. Having begun in socks, we searched for workable footwear, trying ballet slippers, moccasins, jazz dance shoes. We dosed up with sun lotion and practised between the morning and late afternoon teaching sessions, helping each other and discovering questions to ask.

We shared cooking the midday meal. This resulted in spectacular offerings of food - Dale's basil tofu, Lynn's gazpacho and corn bread, Reid's incredible feast of roast lamb and vegetables. One lunchtime we discovered a homey Indian restaurant within walking distance of the Mandala.

On Thursday we did Mandarava practice; on Friday we held a Dakini Day Ganapuja after the Dance. Many of us made Namkhas during the week, weaving the bright yarns onto notched sticks as we sat in the shade of the wisteria arbor.

So the bliss, I delighted in watching Adriana dance. I could see Rinpoche's movements in hers and felt my heart open as I watched her precision and flow. There seemed nothing extra, nothing calling attention to itself. I gradually began to try to copy how she moved, to learn a bit more than the foot placements. I had moments, flashes of awareness united with movement and sound.

After a few days I said to Steven, I feel like I'm getting to know the men and women in our Community intimately without intimacy. I'm beginning to notice the harmony of all of us together, the continuous sharing of learning. Looking deeply in each other's eyes we can feel connected, committed, fall in love, without words. "Here we are, dancing in Rinpoche's dream", I thought. Marvelous. We finished learning Ra Ra Ra on Sunday. On Monday we polished the whole dance, and concluded with a Ganapuja on the Mandala, during which we authenticated our Namkhas.

Thank you Rinpoche, for this incomparable practice. Thank you Adriana for your trustworthy guidance.

Working at Tsegylgar

Tsegylgar has been receiving many requests for invitations from people who are offering to work on the renovation of the Conway School in exchange for meals and accommodation.

Organisation at the school for full-time residence is still in early stages so the Gakyil of Tsegylgar has adopted a procedure to consider these requests individually:

"If someone is interested in coming to Tsegylgar with the idea of living in the dormitory, they should write a letter to the Gakyil in which they describe their intention, their experience with the Community, their circumstances, etc., and in general what they propose. They should try to obtain a reference letter from the Gakyil of Merigar or their local community and send this together with their request. The Tsegylgar Gakyil will then consider each request individually. At this time, we can only begin on a small scale with perhaps two or three people until we see how it will be worked out. When arrangements are made with individuals, it will be for a period of two months, and people should understand that they will need to plan accordingly.

Also, we do not have much experience here in dealing with immigration and other authorities regarding travel, visas, etc. Certainly, we will do what we can by providing appropriate letters of invitation, but people will need to investigate and resolve for themselves whatever issues may be involved in that regard."

Tsegylgar wishes to thank everyone for their support and interest in their activities and hope that soon, many of Rinpoche students will find the opportunity to collaborate and participate with them there in Tsegylgar.

E-mail Tree

by John Bidleman

I have an important request for all Dzogchen Community people who are E-mail users to reply with their name "as they want it shown" for the Shang Shung Institute and Dzogchen Community E-mail tree.

This is important even if you don't plan to participate in activities. There may be events occurring on-line after or during the upcoming retreats in Conway and Santa Cruz and it would be best for as many of us as possible to be active.

I would ask that you send the following information:

Full name, Mailing address, Gakyil affiliation/state whether you are on the Gakyil, Telephone number, One area of interest such as Tibetan or Asian medicine, Mirror, etc.

Please indicate if you do NOT want your address to be made public in which case it will be kept private and used only to send you the newsletters, posts etc.

This list will be used also to update Community information such as address changes, new resources, etc. The decision to update the current list comes from the need to have more complete information about the members, to add people to the list, and subtract if desired, and to give Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche a general idea of the number of people who communicate in this fashion.

I suggest using this format:

Richard Dent, 1112 49th Street, S.F. CA 95034, (dent@bowl.com), West Coast (Red), (415) 459-8367, Thangka painting

John Bidleman, Box 721, Healdsburg, CA 95448, USA. (robbee@crl.com)

New Gakyils

Germany

Blue - Gerd Manusch (Director), Holle Seer, Florian-Peter Rohmann

Yellow - Rolf Portack, Heike Schindler, Marie Krupp

Red - Elke Glander, Helmut Smrcek, Jürgen Lind

France

Blue - Dominique Espaze, Michelle Lanteri, Monique Leguen

Red - Marina Renucci, Giorgio Brunacci, Paul Mesrobian

Yellow - Ermanno Lagana, Yann Leguen (Director), Alain Tardy

Italy Merigar

Yellow - Giovanni Boni (Director), Silvana Pisani (Vice Director), Pia Bramezza

Blue - Barrie Simmons, Francoise Van Den Berg, Carlos Ramos

Red - Giorgio Minuzzo, Giancarlo (Frank) Aleotti, Franco Branca

Merigar: a month of retreats

continued from page 1

and many continued with it for the entire retreat, using the honey *chudlen* instead of the pills. The *chudlen* was linked to the Long Life practice of Buddha Amitayus which was done collectively three times a day when the pills or the honey *chudlen* were taken. The pills, which had been patiently, skilfully prepared by hand on Rinpoche's instruction by Rinpoche himself, Michel Bricaire and other volunteers, belonged to the *chudlen* of the Nirmanakaya and are meant to coordinate and reinforce vital energy. Rinpoche also gave the *lung* of the *chudlen* of the Sambhogakaya and the Dharmakaya. It is hoped the text will soon be translated for whoever intends to pursue this practice.

The retreat continued with the empowerment of Guru Dragpur Kilaya which, as Rinpoche emphasised, condenses the joint action of Hayagriva, Garuda, Vajrapani and Vajrakilaya to dominate and control provocations coming respectively from the classes of the *Tsen*, the *Naga*, the *Za* and the *Yaksha*. These can lead to illnesses such as paralysis, cancer and infectious, lymphatic and skin diseases.

This particular manifestation of Guru Dragpur Kilaya, whose *purba* body pierces a *Gyalpo* and a *Senma*, is able to eliminate all the negativities coming from these powerful disturbers. Rinpoche explained that the *Gyalpos* send provocations leading to nervousness and agitation both on the individual level and collectively, in the form of wars,

disorders such as the cultural revolution or today's conflicts in Yugoslavia, Africa and many other countries.

The *Senmos* provoke terrible infectious diseases such as Aids. Because of this it is easy to understand the importance of the informal initiation which Rinpoche conferred on August 17th. The empowerment summed up two different teachings: one linked to Nachos Mingyur Dorje who at the age of twelve, on the 10th day of the 4th month, had a pure vision of Guru Dragpur who transmitted this teaching and the other linked to a *terma* which was discovered by Rinpoche's uncle. During the retreat we frequently used the practice of non-gradual transformation in the short and medium *tun* and also in the final *ganapuja* when we met Rinpoche on the 19th for the evening *tun*.

The last days of the retreat were filled with teachings and explanations. There were teachings on the six liberations, and distribution of *tadrol* to be worn (to place a good cause for a non-practitioner or to increase clarity in someone already on the path). There was instruction on how to prepare well for a *yangtig* retreat, and finally an explanation of the *phowa* linked to a teaching transmitted to Rinpoche by Master Chang Chub Dorje.

Besides morning sessions of teachings by Rinpoche, there was also a busy programme of activities: at 8.30am explanations of the practices in English for new people in the Gonpa; a course for perfecting

the practice of the Dance of the Vajra in the Mandala hall; at 3.30pm explanations in Italian for new people and of Vajra Dance for beginners; at 5pm two courses of Yantra Yoga, for beginners and for more expert practitioners, and at 7pm a collective *tun* with Rinpoche.

On August 21st, there was the reluctant parting with Rinpoche and departure for most of the practitioners. About two hundred people remained to receive the initiations of the Twenty-One Taras and of Vajra Yogini, and instructions on their respective *sadhanas* given by the Lady Master Jetsun Chimey Luding. Patiently and skilfully she guided the practitioners through sequences of rituals and visualisations in long daily sessions over three days.

At the end of this long account, on behalf of us all, I would like to express our profound gratitude to Rinpoche, who represents the Three Jewels and who gave us the possibility of experiencing different ways to be together, to collaborate, and to practise. Through him, we could help each other in a serene atmosphere in which it was easy to integrate and dissolve possible tensions and difficulties. Thanks to all those responsible, of whom there were many, who dedicated many hours of work for the good outcome of the retreat.

All best wishes that we will be together again at Easter in the same atmosphere of serenity and harmony which emanates from the mandala of the Master.

MERIGAR CALENDAR Autumn 1994

Western date	Tib. date	Time	Practice
Sat. 22 Oct.	18/8	10am 4pm 6pm 7pm	Karma Yoga Beginners Tibetan course Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Purification of Six Lokas
Sun. 23 Oct.	19/8	10am 2.30pm 7pm	Beginners Tibetan course Karma Yoga Medium <i>tun</i> and <i>chöd</i>
Sat. 29 Oct.	25/8	10am 10am 4pm 6pm 7pm	Yantra Yoga course for teachers and advanced students Agar Lama'i Naljyor Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Yantra Yoga course Ganapuja with intensive Ekajati practice
Sun. 30 Oct.	26/8	10am 10am 4pm 7pm	Yantra Yoga course Agar Lama'i Naljyor Yantra Yoga course Long <i>tun</i> and <i>chöd</i>
Mon. 31 Oct.	27/8		Yantra Yoga course continues
Tue. 1 Nov.	28/8		Yantra Yoga course ends
Wed. 2 Nov.	29/8	6pm	Ganapuja with naggon three hours
Thu. 3 Nov.	30/8	7pm	Purification of Six Lokas
Sat. 5 Nov.	2/9	10am 4pm 5.30pm 7pm	Agar Lama'i Naljyor Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Santi Maha Sangha and Kumar Kumari for children Agar Lama'i Naljyor
Wed. 9 Nov.	6/9	8am	Puja for the Nagas
Sat. 12 Nov.	10/9	10am 4pm 6pm 7pm	Anniversary of Tertön Sogyal: Padma-sambhava Long life practice and <i>chöd</i> Beginners Tibetan course Santi Maha Sangha First Level Ganapuja
Sun. 13 Nov.	11/9	9am 10am 7pm	Amitayus Long life practice Beginners Tibetan Amitayus long life
Wed. 16 Nov.	13/9	7pm	Amitayus long life
Thu. 17 Nov.	14/9	7pm	Amitayus long life
Fri. 18 Nov.	15/9	7pm	Amitayus long life with Ganapuja
Sat. 19 Nov.	16/9	10am 4pm 5.30pm 7pm	Tara practice Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Santi Maha Sangha and Kumar Kumari for children Long <i>tun</i> with intensive practice of Ekajati

Merigar: the Fruits of the Summer

With the return of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from his long and intensive teaching programme around the world, Merigar became the venue of an intensive summer programme through July and August of teaching retreats, courses and meetings.

Besides courses of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance held in July, a course on Kumar Kumari, Yantra Yoga for children, was held for adults. After the first bout of exams of the Santi Maha Sangha Base level at the beginning of July, Rinpoche kindly examined other aspirants during two days at the end of the month just before giving the one week teaching on the First Level.

The nine day summer retreat in the middle of August given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was attended by well over 700 people from all parts of the world and was the first large teaching retreat to be held in the newly fully decorated 'Temple of Great Liberation'. Those who could not find place inside the crowded Gonpa were able to sit under the awnings around the wings of the Gonpa and hear the teachings through the loud speaker system there.

The highly active summer period



drew to a close with three days of teachings and initiations by the woman master Sakya Jetsun Chimed Luding.

Many people from all over Europe participated in the summer activities and it was also an opportune time for various meetings to take place with the presence of so many.

The Annual General Meeting on August 10th slightly modified the statute of the "Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen" of Merigar bringing it into line with new Italian law and updating it

according to the present situation in the Community. One of the new changes does away with the distinction between 'aspiring' and 'full' members of the 'Associazione' so that all members are now 'full' members with the right to take part in the General Annual Meeting and to vote. Another amendment to the statute states that a member of the Gakyil can continue with that responsibility for three consecutive years.

During the retreat a general meeting of international Gakyils was held

during which information was exchanged about Gakyil activities and about the relationship of the various Gakyils with Merigar. There was also a discussion between the representatives of the Gakyils of the eastern European countries and Merigar about how to establish a special fund in each country in which the amount usually sent to Merigar for membership dues will be deposited. These funds will be clarified in the future and will be destined for buying land and property for the Community of that country.

During the last meeting of the "old" Merigar Gakyil with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu before the election of the new, it was unanimously decided to send contributions of \$10,000 to the Community of Tsegvalgar to help in developing the Conway school building and \$5,000 to the Australian Community to boost the land project. This financial assistance was given to these two Communities as a token of gratitude for all their help to Merigar in the past with the regret that it could not be more.

Also tied up in the financial side of affairs was the decision to continue the development programmes

already under way at Gadeling and Merigar Two but not to take on any new major projects at this time due to the current financial situation.

In reply to a request by Shang Shung Editions, the publishing house of the Dzogchen Community dedicated fundamentally to publishing texts on the Dzogchen Teaching, the "Associazione" has decided to collaborate financially with the publishing house because at this moment it requires investment to boost its serious development in both the fields of production and distribution.

The matter of translators was discussed during the meeting. Up to now translators have worked in connection with the Shang Shung Institute and then with Shang Shung Editions. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu proposed that the translators for the Community should be financed through a fund for translators administered by the Gakyil and consisting of contributions from all the international Gakyils.

Those interested in receiving a copy of the statue of the "Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen" can contact the secretary at Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.



Chortens at Khamdogar village

A.S.I.A.: A YEAR OF PROGRESS

With many thanks to all those who contributed and continue to do so for the numerous projects of A.S.I.A. we would like to give an up-date on many of the projects which are in progress.

Sponsoring Tibetan children

The programme which involves private sponsorship of Tibetan children in exile is now highly active with more than one hundred children being sponsored since A.S.I.A. became involved in the programme at the beginning of this year. At the beginning of 1995 the first technical mission of A.S.I.A. to Dharamsala is planned to establish direct personal contact with the authorities of the "Tibetan Children Village", the A.S.I.A. counterpart of this project. The mission will also give an opportunity to meet some of the sponsored children and become acquainted with the actual use of the funds.

A new project has been launched in the field of education in Bir, Himachel Pradesh, India where there is an important Khampa settlement. At the moment the settlement has only a primary school going to the 5th grade which means that children wishing to continue their studies have to leave and attend another school in southern India where the climate is so unhealthy that they get sick easily. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has decided to improve and enlarge the present school building by adding a second floor where classes up to the 8th grade could be held. The planned mission to India will also include a visit to Bir aimed at the verification of the feasibility of this project that could possibly be conducted also with the contribution of the Dharamsala authorities.

Ralung Monastery

The main temple reconstruction has been completed as well as some of the residential construction.

\$5,000 has recently been delivered to local project organisers to complete the reconstruction of the selected additional buildings. Beside reconstruction activities, A.S.I.A. is also covering the expenses for two monks from Ralung who have been sent to the Nalendra Monastery to complete their studies.

Khamdogar hospital and school

At Khamdogar in Chamdo province (former residence of Rigzin Chang Chub Dorje, root master of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu), A.S.I.A. is widening its field of operation which currently includes the projects to construct a hospital of traditional Tibetan medicine and a primary school to include other projects which will give greater impact. A.S.I.A. has already completed the reconstruction of the nunnery there, and contributed to the temple reconstruction which is now completed. The land where the Tibetan Medicine hospital and the school will be built has been selected. At the moment, A.S.I.A. is waiting for a document to be prepared by the local authorities stating their requirements for the hospital and school.

Samdrop Shang - Khamdogar road

A.S.I.A. is currently financing the construction of the road that will connect the village of Khamdogar to the village of Samdrop Shang. Until now Samdrop Shang was the last village that could be reached by car. This road will become particularly important when the hospital of traditional Tibetan medicine and school constructions in Khamdogar are completed since access to those facilities will be made easier.

Samdrop Shang river banks

The local school is regularly flooded during the rainy season. A.S.I.A. has already sent the funds necessary to reinforce the river banks in order to avoid this flooding.

Galenteng

The project to build a primary school and hospital in Galenteng, Sichuan province, is currently under preparation and is in fact becoming part of an integrated project aiming at the socio-economic development of the Galenteng area. For this reason, beside the rehabilitation of the building that will serve as a school and hospital, A.S.I.A. is considering the possibility to complete the project with the creation of a "sale and distribution centre" in Lhasa where products from Galenteng could be sold and activities co-ordinated.

Research is currently being done in Lhasa to select a piece of land and perhaps a building where this programme can be implemented. Once established, this centre will also serve as an office for A.S.I.A. in Lhasa.

The technical mission presently in Tibet will deliver an additional \$5,000 to the project organisers

Dangche school

An A.S.I.A. technical mission including Andrea Dell'Angelo and architect Tony Laurent left for Dangche, Hexi County in Qinghai province in the middle of September. The main purpose of the mission is to start the construction of a primary school and finalise the last aspects of the agreement with local authorities. Tony Laurent will stay over in Dangche in order to monitor the correct execution of the planned work. The project is expected to be completed in spring 1996 and is entirely funded by A.S.I.A. The initial funding for this project is \$30,000 which will be delivered by the technical mission currently in Tibet.

Dzam-thog school and hospital

For this project of basic health care and education facilities in the village of Dzam-thog, Chamdo

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Poetry, Performance

by John Shane

At the end of the summer retreat at Merigar with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Louise Landes-Levi had the inspiration to organise a spontaneous evening of poetry and music at which members of the Community would perform in the Gonpa in Rinpoche's presence in order to raise money for A.S.I.A.'s projects in Tibet.

When I was invited to participate, I was somewhat hesitant at first. Louise is a well known poet with collections of her work in print with a number of publishers, including the famous San Francisco based City Lights Books, and she frequently reads her work in public. I too have written poetry for years, and when I first met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu perhaps considered writing to be my primary vocation, performing frequently in public all over the U.K. where I was quite well known as a poet. But for many years now poetry has been a more private part of my life, something shared only with my close friends and family. I had gone 'underground' as it were retreating from the arduous path of sharing my innermost thoughts in print and in performance. I wrote articles for magazines, I tried to use my skills with words to further the presentation of the teachings by editing and translating books and so on, but poetry itself had become a private practice for me, an increasingly personal notation of a private history. I had many doubts about reading my poetry in public again, wary of being pretentious, of imposing my own feelings on others, as well as clinging onto my privacy.

Badgered by Louise's insistence, however, and mindful of the good

cause to which I would be contributing, I finally agreed. I reminded myself that making oneself completely available to others is the heart of the Bodhisattva path and that opening oneself through poetry, showing and sharing what one's feelings and thoughts really are, giving up the private space that ego always wants to hold back and keep to itself, can be a profound practice that cuts through the separation of self and others.

Carried out with awareness, assuming genuine dedication to it and at least a minimal skill in the art, performing poetry can be the very opposite of the 'ego trip' some people consider it to be.

When the evening of the concert came, I grabbed a handful of poems as I left the house and decided to choose from among them as the situation presented itself. There would be no rehearsal and no pre-planned running order for the performers. It was to be a spontaneous affair, as is perhaps most appropriate in the context of Dzogchen. But a little scary to participate in, nonetheless. Spontaneity does tend to put you on the spot.

There was a joyful mood as the concert began at the end of a long Ganapuja. I was seated in the crowd with my family enjoying the concert when I suddenly heard my own name being called, and felt a rush of powerful emotion - confusion/anxiety/anticipation - as I went up to stand before Rinpoche at the front of the Gonpa just as a microphone was being set up and tested. I smiled at Rinpoche, who graciously acknowledged me, and then I looked out at a sea of expectant smiling

TO

in
my
dream

'Royal Transmission'

To
the only
Guru
who didn't tell me

to
cut
my
hair,

Who
took me as his
spiritual daughter
in
Amsterdam,

To
the only
Guru
who
was shining
like an unconventional being
from another galaxy
at
the
Medical
Convention
in
Venice,

Who
actually listened to
a
punk
song
'Guru Darling'
written especially for
him,

Who
transformed the
teaching room at
'Merigar'

into
a
very
dignified
casino,

To
the only
Guru
who kissed me

and Practice

faces of Vajra Brothers and Sisters. The imposing forms of great Masters of the Dzogchen lineage stared down at me from the newly painted murals all around the Gonpa. A moment of panic and then I relaxed. A state of clear presence replaced my fear. I was overcome by an enormous sense of gratitude to Rinpoche, and I decided then and there to read two pieces written during the years immediately after I first met him, poems that expressed both my confusion and my delight at meeting him. I introduced myself, explaining how I came to write the poems, and when they were written. Then I read them. I was astonished as the words leapt off the page and into my mouth, reverberating around the Gonpa. I was surprised by my own poems: with the way they accurately recreated my thoughts at the time that they were written, and with how immediately they communicated what I had felt years ago. Rinpoche smiled warmly at me, perhaps remembering when I had read those same poems to him many years before when they were first written. As I sat down with kind applause ringing in my ears, I wondered why I had come to doubt my own capacity. When I let go of myself something magical had happened, quite beyond my limited sense of myself.

There was no sense of audience and performer, but a deep feeling of love and appreciation for Rinpoche and his teachings united all present. This feeling continued as more poems followed, read by some of the Community's distinguished poets and Louise Landes-Levi herself, who read a wonderfully warm and witty poem she had written

some years ago for Rinpoche. Louise was so generous with herself all evening in introducing the other artists, and limited herself to reading only one of her own pieces. But even with just that one poem, it was really touching to see the playfulness with which the Master received the offering of her devotion in her art and in her life.

Since poetry is the theme of this article, I have limited space to describe the musical performances that followed Louise's poem, it must suffice to say that they were as wonderful as they were various. And what can you say about such a joyous occasion that doesn't seem trite, just another account of good times at a retreat? But the fact is everyone had a great time, and the evening raised a considerable sum towards the various aid projects in Tibet which A.S.I.A. is currently undertaking.

I received another reminder of the power of the practice of poetry when after leaving Italy at the end of the Summer, I went to Great Britain for a week, and managed to attend part of the retreat there, in Wales. The location of the retreat was an isolated spot in the country many hours drive from London I arrived several days after the retreat had begun, and not having a tent to camp in, as so many others were doing, decided to drive off to try to find a bed and breakfast place in the short time before Rinpoche was due to join us for the evening practice.

I really had no idea of where to look for a place to stay, but after asking a few people for directions and ideas, set out in my hired car to search. I don't always write

conventional poems with rhyme and metre, but perhaps inspired by reading my rhythmic rhymed poems at the concert at Merigar, I had been working on composing an invocation of the Master, a kind of personal song of Guruyoga, and I began singing it as I drove, experimenting with different tunes to fit the words, which go like this:

Precious Master, Jewel of Space
come here quickly to this place
let me see your radiant face
touch me with your waves of grace

I am wandering in confusion
I am lost in my illusion
passions rage - fear and doubt -
in my darkness I cry out

Perfect Master, Jewel of Space
come here quickly to this place
let me see your smiling face
touch me with your waves of grace

I was singing this over and over to myself aloud in the car as I drove away from the retreat site. After about five minutes, taking this turning and that down the winding country lanes, I realised I was lost, and that the directions I had been given were no longer any use. I continued driving and singing, getting more and more into a state of relaxed happiness and intense devotion, and more and more totally lost in the abundantly green Welsh countryside. Then I slowed to turn a corner in a narrow lane and another car stopped against the hedge to let me pass. As I pulled alongside this car, its window wound down, and I realised that the driver was Che Goh. Then I found myself looking into Rinpoche's face in the passenger seat.

"Where are you going, John? he asked.

"I'm looking for a place to stay, Rinpoche," I replied. "I don't have a tent, and I need to find a bed and breakfast. There are no hotels near here."

"Oh", said Rinpoche, turning to Fabio in the back seat of the car. "That's all right. We have room for you in our house. You can drive me back there later!"

I feel flaky telling you this. The words 'chance' and 'coincidence' and the language of scientific rationalism come as readily to my lips as to anyone's. I'm as stuck in dualistic materialism as the next person, peering out (with Rinpoche's help, and by means of the practice) through the bars in my cage. I'm capable of being a thorough-going sceptic. So I won't belabour you with any interpretation of the sequence of events I have just outlined above. I can only assure you that what I have described above actually happened just as I have recounted it, and that I enjoyed the great privilege of staying in Rinpoche's cottage for a couple of

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As a sort of souvenir of the Merigar concert, two poems read that night are included here. The first entitled 'To', by Louise Landes-Levi was the dedicatory poem that began her book 'AMIATA'. The second is a previously unpublished poem I wrote in 1979. Both poems are concerned with the writers' relationship with the Master.

CRAZY WISDOM CHANT

Ho!
Spontaneously arising energy
is great bliss!

Hum!
Doubts dissolve
when the self-existing mandala
is seen!

Ah!
In the moment of the leap
the naked mind is free!

Phat!
Nothing is quite as it seems,
yet everything is just as it is!

Om!
Nothing to accept,
nothing to reject,
nothing to choose,
nothing to win,
nothing to lose!

No one sings this song
for no one who will hear!

Entering the primordial state,
going beyond,
losing any sense of separate self,
choicelessly aware,
becoming all I see,
I observe my own condition,
and find Buddhas all around me!

Notes:

This song, part of an as yet unpublished collection entitled 'Fish Jump in Paris', was written in January 1980 during a retreat in Paris led by the Dzogchen master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Rinpoche was at the time concentrating on the Semde Series of the Dzogchen teachings, and in explaining the practice of shine, he would explain how to bring the mind to one pointedness by fixing concentratedly for a short period on an object: in formal practice the white letter 'A' is used, though any object may be fixed on. When the mind is thus brought to attention, the sharp fixation is relaxed, and the practitioner simply observes whatever thoughts arise. Rinpoche used the metaphor of the mind becoming like a calm lake. Big and little fish may jump in such a lake without disturbing it.

The sense of a separate self observing this process must then be dissolved, and thoughts and emotions are then allowed to arise and dissolve of themselves, without effort. When one has found this state of presence unconditioned by anything at all, the mind self-liberates of itself. Then one can speak of the self-perfected state of Dzogchen. The collection of poems I wrote at that time, notating whatever thoughts moved in my mind, focused itself around the image of the fish moving in the calm lake, and the title of the collection became, logically enough, 'Fish Jump in Paris': my thoughts in Paris.

1. The first part of this song takes a form inspired by the Dohas of the Mahasiddhas in which the term 'leap' is used to denote the flash of awareness which jolts the practitioner out of the confusion of distracted mental processes into the state of pure presence. The second part playfully presents the joy and surprise of perceiving that all beings have as their essential nature the same primordial state as oneself.

Buddhas driving taxis,
Buddhas flying planes,
Buddhas check my passport,
Buddhas ride on trains!

Buddhas in my hotel,
Buddhas in the street,
Buddhas in the restaurant
when we go to eat!

Buddhas talking in Italian,
Buddhas talking French,
Buddhas laughing, Buddhas crying,
Buddhas living, Buddhas dying.

Sleeping Buddhas
dreaming some day soon
they will tremble and awake;
confused Buddhas
at the crossroads
wondering which path
they should take.

Buddha pigeons in the courtyard,
Buddha dogs in the square,
all I see all around me
are Buddhas everywhere!

What has happened to my mind?
What has happened to my heart?
Master, when I follow you
my world just falls apart!

John Shane

To
the doctor
who healed me,

Who
didn't forget
to 'invite' me too,

To
the flower-expert
who exalted sensation
with
his
precise
perfume,

Who
revealed himself
in
a
triangle,

Who
knew I was
writing poetry
at
the
Concerto Bar
in
Arcidosso,

Who
said
"Forget
Robert",

Who
shook my hand
even when it was filthy,

Whose
external body
is
the
form
of
the
stupa,

'Pure as a lotus', 'Strong as a lion',
'Stable as a mountain',

Whose
'grazie' was
pure & true
like
a
mantra,

To
the only
Guru.

Louise Landes-Levi

In the dimension of the flicker bird

by Jacqueline Gens

Bertha Grove is a recognized elder of the Southern Ute Tribe of Colorado and the Native American Church, a pan-Indian movement founded in the early 20th century. Born into a prestigious Sun Dance family, she later married into the Native American Church which alienated her birth family who were opposed to the ritual use of peyote. Thus her lineage joins two vital spiritual currents alive in native communities today.

At an early age she began to experience visions which became even more pronounced while a young mother of several children. At that time she prayed that her visions would decrease in potency until her children were older and she was able to devote more time to her spiritual development. In recent years she has become a strong presence not only among many Native Americans but to non-Indians as well. In addition to developing her interior life, Bertha has also led an active social life of service on many committees and organizations to benefit Native American concerns.

In August Bertha Grove visited Tara Mandala's new retreat site in Southern Colorado at the invitation of Tsultrim Allione for three days to teach on the medicinal qualities of indigenous plants in the region. True to the native tradition of storytelling as a method of transmission for wisdom knowledge, she interwove her teachings on plants with personal anecdotes from her own life experiences and visions. While at Tara Mandala, Grandma Bertha, as she likes to be called, communicated her knowledge and respect for the land with its animate and inanimate inhabitants beyond the particulars of her tribal culture. Without self-consciousness, she shared her knowledge of traditional medicine, visions and dreams as though we were all members of her family. This was most apparent when she showed us the contents of her medicine bundle and her talking stick along with several dresses and hats she had made according to precise

dream instructions. The clothing held deep symbolic meaning for her in that the multicolored patterns and shell ornaments indicated she had integrated such dualities as male/

reminded me of some of Yeshe Tsogyel's fruitional experiences. While she spoke, I couldn't help but marvel how the manifestation of feminine wisdom transcends all



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female and dark/light. To dream of these patterns was a sign that she had earned the privilege to wear them publicly. Each item had a story. Although many of these items such as stones seemed ordinary, she explained in detail how she used them for healing people or for different ceremonies.

At one point she vividly related to us an experience she had during a Sun Dance in which she had an out-of-body experience in other realms as she danced with planets and stars in the universe. Her descriptive story

boundaries of culture.

When describing her own totem animal, the modest flicker bird, in response to someone's question, I again felt the power of her authenticity as I realized she was speaking from an experience of awareness, not from some conceptually dogmatic place. She seemed to embody many qualities about the flicker bird such as its neatness and orderliness. This could be seen in how she wrapped and unwrapped the items of her medicine bundle. Normally one associates

totem animals with more spectacular or powerful creatures rather than such a modest little bird. When she told us her emblem dream about the flicker bird - how she had entered into its dimension where a whole world was constructed from its red feathers - I found this very moving. Her method of teaching was not unlike the Dzogchen style we are accustomed to in the sense that she taught as though we are already accomplished and equally knowledgeable. At one point she closely scrutinized our behavior when picking plants or other objects on the land. Despite our all too pathetically inadequate knowledge of common plants and clumsy methods, we were left with a greater awareness of how to conduct ourselves on the land. To leave an offering such as tobacco or a colored ribbon when picking a plant, particularly one used medicinally, was communicated not as a quaint Indian custom without meaning but the appropriate thing to do in a larger environmental context and in relation to the many beings who inhabit our world unbeknownst to us due to our karmic vision. In my mind, this really set Bertha Grove apart from other native teachers who are often limited by the specifics of their tribal rituals and customs.

During the course of her teachings she conducted a traditional sweat lodge with her husband, Vincent, himself a recognized elder of the Native American Church. It was my first experience with sweats although I had heard about them for years. Nothing prepared me for the intense claustrophobia and pain of being confined along with 25 other half-naked and slippery bodies in a small womb-like space without air or light while several dozen red-hot lava rocks the size of a large man's fist generated searing heat before turning to suffocating steam when doused with ladles of water at intervals during rounds of vocal intonation. The subsequent relief of crawling across the threshold was truly welcome. Although I was intellectually willing to accept the value of this form of purification, I

did not opt to return for another sweat the following morning at 4am. I was amazed how everyone else seemed to bear up with fortitude. For my own part, I found myself regressing to Hail Marys praying for the ordeal to be done with. Later I was a little ashamed at my self-indulgence since Bertha told a graphically detailed story of how she had healed her advanced stomach cancer in a sweat lodge while ingesting the peyote medicine. She was so ill, her husband and son had to carry her. This endurance seemed beyond my capacity to even imagine.

On her final day, Bertha held a water sprinkling ceremony with the assistance of Tsultrim Allione. Since most of the participants were women, she made a special point to honor the few and brave men who attended the teaching. At the end of the water sprinkling ceremony she went around to each one of us and shook our hands or embraced us and in some cases said a few words of encouragement - radiating tremendous warmth.

Bertha Grove's presence at Tara Mandala was particularly auspicious since the 800+ acre retreat site borders Southern Ute tribal land. The land itself is within proximity to the Four Corners region where ancient cultures such as the Anasazi flourished in magnificent cliff-dwellings carved from the native sandstone.

The Utes have a special relationship to both bears and wild horses which are still abundantly present and many individuals who participated in the workshop experienced the magical presence of animal life such as bear, mountain lion, bobcat, snakes, and eagles which were all part of the local display and some people even reported unusual dreams. Double panoramic rainbows were an almost daily occurrence following the obligatory afternoon shower. On her final morning of teaching, Bertha, herself recounted a favorable vision she had concerning the local guardians. "Everything is in place," she said.

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Dzogchen Lineage Masters



A series of eight color note cards from the murals at Merigar's Gonpa by Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche and Tsering Wangchuk are now ready for your holiday mailings. Proceeds will go toward the publication of an illustrated book about the Gonpa with commentary by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

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Sakya Jetsun Chimey Luding Kushok: an interview

by Cristina Ledermann and Wilvin Pederson, August 28th, 1994

Sakya Jetsun Chimey Luding Rinpoche, sister of H. H. Sakya Trinzin, head of the Sakya school, and sister-in-law of Luding Khen Rinpoche, is one of the few Tibetan high lamas and lineage holders who are women. She is one of the three women in the history of Tibet to have transmitted the lamdre teachings, a system of contemplative and meditative practices particular to the Sakya lineage.

In 1959 she escaped to India with her family and today lives in Vancouver, Canada where she integrates household duties, a job and dharma centre activities with practice.

Mirror: Chimey, could you please tell us something about your life as a child in Tibet.

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: I was born in 1938 in the Earth Tiger year in the Sakya Khon family as the eldest daughter. If you want to know about my childhood, I have to talk about religion because my life is rooted in religion. I was brought up in the Sakyapa tradition. At six years of age I began learning to read and to memorise *pujas* and two years later I took novice ordination as was the tradition in my family.

Then at the age of ten I made my first one month retreat with our tutor. Since we did not attend public school we had a tutor who was a monk. My mother passed away this same year. My brother (H. H. Sakya Trinzin) was only two at the time.

When I was eleven my father Kunga Rinchen sent me during the summer months on my first teaching assignment among the Tibetan nomads on the northern plains. They were yak herders and shepherds and were continually on the move searching for pasture land so there were not many lamas living among them. Together with my tutor monk I gave long-life teachings and *phowa* empowerments as well as performing various rituals.

The following year, my father passed away at forty-nine years of age and my brother, who was five at that time, and myself went to stay with my aunt, Trinley Sangmo, my mother's sister. We were four children, but only the two of us survived to adulthood. (In 1952 Jetsunma's brother was recognised as the Sakya Trinzin by the Dalai Lama.) My aunt took us to the monastery at Ngor where the great Kangsar abbot Dampa Rinpoche, then in his seventies, taught us. We stayed there three or four years and received all the teachings central to the Sakyapa tradition.

When I was eighteen many monks came from Kham to receive the Lamdre teachings from my brother but since he was in retreat my aunt and my lamas asked me to give the teachings instead. Then, three years later, with Tibet lost, we came to India.

Mirror: Where in India?



Sakya Jetsun Chimey: First we went to Gangtok, Sikkim, because the Sikkimese king was our cousin, and afterwards to Darjeeling. I attended a missionary school for Tibetan adult refugees in order to learn English and I returned my vows as a nun, since as an exile without a convent as support, the religious life became increasingly difficult.

In 1964 I married Kushok Luding, brother of Luding Khen Rinpoche. We had met while learning English from the missionaries though my marriage was arranged by my aunt and some family attendants. In 1965 our first son was born and the following year I had a girl who lived only three months. Our third child was born in 1967 and Tashi in 1969. My youngest was born in 1970. I delivered all of my children myself at home. Then we moved to Canada.

Mirror: Why did you decide to go to Canada?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: In India at that time we were very poor with four children. A friend of mine with a hotel business in Thailand knew the Canadian ambassador who was a Buddhist practitioner. He suggested that in Canada we would have a better life. He sent us to Alberta because no Buddhist teaching existed there as yet. After staying a year and half we moved to Vancouver in British Columbia. I worked with my husband on a mushroom farm and cleaned houses and schools. I would work from 8am until 3pm and in the afternoons took care of the children and my own house work. Since 1980 I have worked part-time weaving.

Mirror: How did you reconcile your practice with everyday life especially when your children were young and you were working?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: You know when children are very small you have to take the time for your practice from your sleep. I would awake around 4am to be able to practise because I had to leave for work at 8am. Anyway it is better to practise in the morning because then one is fresh. In the evening we are tired and we also like to watch television (laughing).

Mirror: When did you start to teach?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: In 1979, my brother came to Canada. He told me that when he had given a public talk in New York many American women had asked him why Tibetan Buddhist teachers are men rather than women. He replied that he had a sister living in Canada who had received the same teachings and had the same qualifications as himself and that perhaps she would teach. Then he asked me to teach at the Sakya centre in the United States, and, upon his insistence, my brother being one of my root gurus, I agreed.

I was there for two years and while my brother was in India, all sorts of people asked me to give teaching, especially Vajrayogini teachings. My brother often wrote to me suggesting that I should teach in spite of the fact that in Tibet ex-nuns and ex-monks do not teach because traditionally the teachings take place in the monasteries.

Then my brother wrote asking me to teach in Australia where Western practitioners are mostly lay people and particularly the women need someone who can provide an example of holding a regular job and having a family while knowing how to give teachings. For these reasons and because of my brother's request I decided to teach. Personally I do not want to teach. I prefer staying at home and doing my practice.

Mirror: Why are there so few women teachers?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: Women are mostly very shy. For example every Friday my father always used to give a long life empowerment to all his children. When my father passed away, his sister, my aunt, who was two years older than him, should have continued to do this but she didn't want to because she was so shy. She only gave the empowerment to my brother. Even when I looked into her face she would say at me, "Do not look at my face! I am shy".

I know some Westerners may not believe it, but when I was in my mother's womb I was a boy. A week before my birth a change took place and I was born a girl. That is why my aunt said, "You are something different from a usual girl". As a child I never played with girls at all, I always played with boys. I really didn't like people calling me a nun, but I was very happy when they said I looked like a monk.

Mirror: Is there any difference between the teaching of a woman master and that of a male master?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: (Smiling.) This is one thing you must check out for yourself. Actually for me there is no difference. All of my teachers have been male except one, my aunt.

Mirror: Do you have any advice for pregnant women?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: During pregnancy many Tibetan women keep the area around the kidneys warm because keeping warm is healthy and everything becomes easier in pregnancy. Tibetan doctors say that people are very receptive to heat and cold so during pregnancy a woman should not drink any cold liquids, only warm or hot ones.

In the Sakya tradition, in the Lamdre teaching, there is a text which discusses the importance of life and of becoming pregnant. It states that when the mother is in contact with too much heat or cold, the baby can feel this and suffer. So you have to be careful in taking showers, they should not be too cold or too hot. Then the book says that with the bending of the mother's body, the baby can feel a sensation like being crushed by two mountains. When the mother's body is comfortable, the baby is comfortable too.

I will tell you about an experience

I recall. I had a friend who was in her second pregnancy and who was very worried about it and constantly going for checkups. One day she called me from the hospital crying that the doctors had told her that her child was dead. When I asked her what she had done earlier she said that she had drunk two big glasses of very cold water because it was so hot. Since the baby was not moving the doctor concluded that it was dead. I told her I was sure that the baby was not dead and suggested that she go home and drink some warm tea and wrap something warm around her kidneys and relax. Later she called me back and said, "Jetsun Kushi, the baby is not dead". Then I said to her that when it is freezing, people wrap up and for the same reason a baby, when you keep drinking cold water, freezes and doesn't want to move because he feels so cold.

Normally in Tibet nobody drinks cold water, and especially our medicines are never taken with cold water. When people are in pain, Tibetan doctors give them warm water and tea with their medicines, never cold water. For some digestive problems, they give medicines with very hot water, but normally it is boiled warm water.

Also it is important to do some exercise during pregnancy. For instance, in Tibet we walk around stupas, and in the first two or three months of pregnancy we make prostrations. When pregnancy is more advanced women cannot do this anymore, then they walk. They say that when the mother walks a lot a baby is born smaller while when the mother sits all the time, then the baby becomes fat.

Mirror: Here we have some questions from children of the Community.

Namsel: When people get enlightened, where do they go?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: To a Pure Land!

Namsel: And what do they do?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: Enlightened Beings purify the suffering of beings in *samsara* and help liberate them.

Celeste: Could you give me a practise that I can do?

Sakya Jetsun Chimey: First of all a good social life is very important so that you will be happy in your relationships with other children and at school. Then there is a very short practice with only a few words of the wisdom deity called Manjusri. In Tibet all children know this practice. Usually they do it before they start to study. This practice has also a short *mantra*. (She recites the mantra). You can recite it as many times as you like. It will help you to study with greater ease, since you have to learn about many different things in order to live in this world.

(Jetsunma kindly gave the *lung* for the short Manjusri practice.)

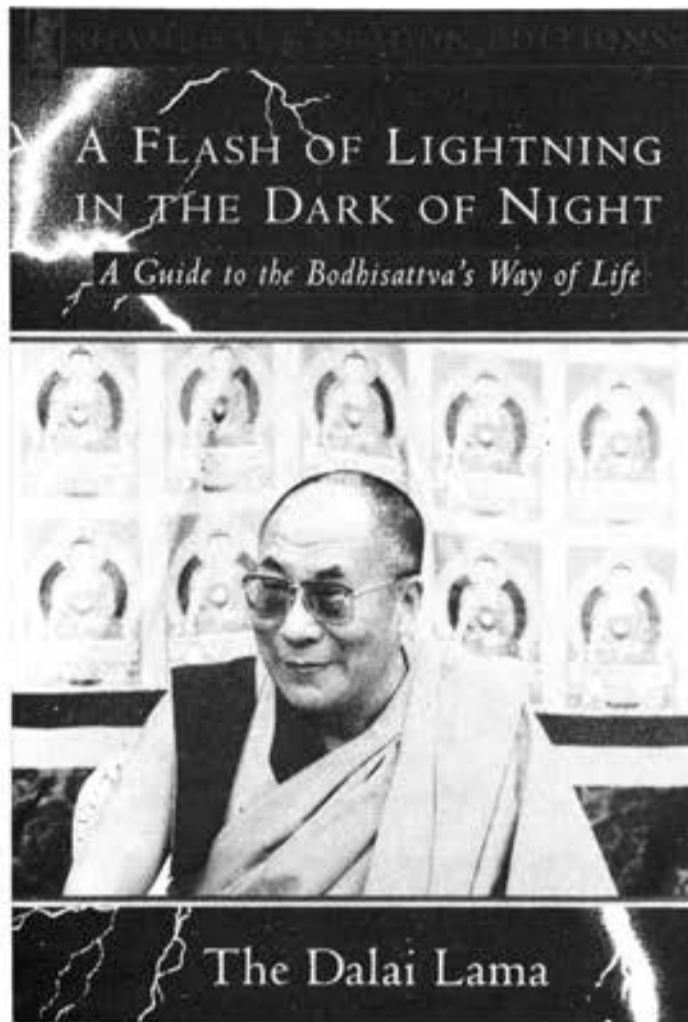
BOOK REVIEW

A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night

A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life

The Dalai Lama,

Shambala Dragon Editions, 1994



It is said that in ancient India alone over one hundred commentaries to Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* have been written. This gives an idea of the importance that practitioners of the Universal Way attached to this work.

The author, a renowned Master of eighth century India, is counted among the eighty-four legendary tantric adepts. In his early days at Nalanda Monastery, because of his apparent idleness, he became known as *Bhusuku*, 'the one who only eats, sleeps, and defecates'. Afterwards, when his turn came to take the teaching seat and deliver a discourse in front of the assembly of monks, everyone expected to have a good laugh at him. He appeared in the crowd radiant, and once seated on the throne, to the amazement of everyone, levitated above the cushions and delivered an enlightened discourse on the Bodhisattva's training. The abbot and monks pleaded with him to stay and be their master, but he flew away in the sky to lead the life of a yogi, showing wonders wherever he went.

It is unlikely that, as the tradition claims, the discourse on the Bodhisattva's training that Shantideva gave to instruct his fellow monks is the *Bodhisattvacaryavatara* (or *Guide to the Bodhisattvas' Way of Life*)

extant today in the Sanskrit and Tibetan languages. Even if this work was not his actual writings, but those of one of his followers, in no way can this undermine its value.

The *Guide* sets forth the guidelines of the altruistic way to enlightenment. Unlike Asanga's scholastic writing on the bodhisattvas' ethic and so forth, the *Guide* presents the fundamentals of that way by going right into the heart of the matter with terse and dramatic words that lack nothing and need no addition.

In the first three chapters, the exhortation to form the awakening mind is given. By awakening mind is meant the altruistic desire to attain enlightenment, where the bodhisattva through discriminative awareness looks forward to enlightenment of fulfillment of his own benefit and through compassion looks at fulfilling that of all living creatures. This awakening mind is of two types: the awakening mind that is simply an aspiration and committed awakening mind which ventures into the bodhisattva practices. Both are called 'relative'. In the fourth, sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters, the means of enhancing such 'mind' by engaging in the first five transcendences (ethics, liberality, patience, diligence, and meditation) are explained. The chapter on conscientiousness deals with the awareness needed to guard against

factors incompatible to the training. The chapter on patience is the key to the book because it teaches the methods to counteract hatred which is the principal obstacle in working for others. After having set the practitioner on the virtuous way represented by the altruistic wish for enlightenment and its related practices, in the ninth chapter, the emptiness of all phenomena is taught in order to teach the bodhisattva that he himself, the beings he wishes to release from suffering, the suffering itself, cyclic existence, and peace all exist within the ultimate realm of emptiness, and that nothing has a reality status. The ninth chapter in this sense teaches the ultimate awakening mind, which is the realisation of emptiness permeated by great compassion, clear and imperturbable, free from conceptual fabrication of an objectifiable reality. The actual ultimate awakening mind is attained when the practitioner attains the so-called path of seeing, in which the truth is seen directly for the first time. A facsimile of that, however, can also exist at a beginners' level. Re-emerging with the understanding of emptiness, the bodhisattva remains in the relative world of beings and suffering, understanding everything as an illusion. The bodhisattva continues to unfold his compassion to other illusory beings; thus, the tenth and final chapter of dedication is taught in consideration of the oneness of the relative and ultimate awakening minds.

A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night is the Dalai Lama's well balanced and learned oral resume of the main essential points of the *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* as only he can make, compiled from talks he gave in Dordogne (France) in August 1993. To present a resume was a good choice as not all the verses of the *Guide* are relevant to the modern reader, while their purport certainly is. The translation is plain and elegant with care not to burden the message with technicalities, and to attempt to please the modern reader.

Being himself an authentic experiential cultivator of the bodhisattva's training, the Dalai Lama tirelessly teaches from the *Guide*, whose transmission he received from the late lama from Kunu Valley in India, Tenzin Gyaltzen, in a direct lineage from the great Dzog-chen Master Dza Patrul Rinpoche. After the old Kunu Lama passed away one night in the snow a few yards away from his mountain hermitage, the Dalai Lama, to honour the memory of that secret yogi, promised to teach that text for a few consecutive years.

Anyone wishing to engage in the various levels of the Buddhist practices should have an acquaintance with this fundamental text. A practitioner who engages in

high techniques, systems, or views, but does not let transpire through his conduct the nature of the bodhisattva training is likely to be a practitioner who is fooling himself. A complete blossoming of one's potential occurs only when both aspects of our being, the private and the public, are synchronized. The so-called individual growth is inextricably linked with one's working with others in the world. The *Guide* is a jewel mine of spiritual instructions, to deal conceptually with our multifaceted egoism and to see the rationale of an altruistic approach which takes into consideration the humanity of others as well.

A few words of caution are nonetheless due when dealing with altruism, as it can easily be misinterpreted by beginners in the West. We could easily transform the way of the bodhisattva into an 'ideal', a far-put mode of being to be attained by transcending one's ego, passions, and hatred; yet another ideal is to strive for hoping one day one will change from being an egoist to a good and compassionate person. If this happens and one strives only at renouncing our egotism, this can turn into another 'desire to become', the very same desire that moves the so-called 'wheel of life', and thus perpetuates the wheel of life. It would cause apprehension through seeing our bad side and attachment through seeing the good one, and perpetuate the struggle within. Buddhist teachers usually distinguish a good desire from an unvirtuous one; this has to be investigated to see if it holds true. The *Guide* sets forth many practices of putting others before oneself, but it should be remembered that these are taught also in consideration of the courage, the psychological strength of the individual. The person should have already built up these qualifications before engaging in these practices. If one lacks the required mental strength and forcibly puts down one's personal desires,

this can only lead to neurotic problems and no realisation whatsoever. This, however, should not discourage the practitioner from self-examination of his selfish motives and thoughts. To examine them as one is thinking or acting is essential for a practitioner, but rather than forcing them down, it is more appropriate to heighten one's awareness of their mechanism, to see them directly and closely without the desire to get away from the bad side in oneself. Thus, the awareness of the egotistic mechanism becomes the liberating factor. The acceptance of the dual nature of oneself is the prerogative for this.

The methods laid out in the *Guide* to work with one's emotions, tough, highly effective, and based on sound reasoning, are mainly of a conceptual nature, and pertain to the way of the sutras, in which one trains gradually, first forming a constructed awakening mind and then cultivating it until it becomes genuine. This is opposite to the sudden methods that first look right into the nature of the mind or primordial state from which understanding of all qualities, such as liberality, patience, and altruism, naturally unfolds. In the gradual method explained by the *Guide*, the person engages in a battle against the almost figuratively represented negative emotions (the factors that obstruct the awakening mind) and then come to the primordial state. The best one can do in a battle is to temporarily neutralise or suppress the so-called enemy of emotions. At times and only sporadically, among the verses, and in the ninth chapter, we find allusion to the final method of realising the illusory nature: the untrue nature of all emotions.

With the proper setting of these teachings in their own tradition and system, we can certainly appreciate the remarkable tools that the Dalai Lama's book provide.

Elio Guarisco

The Venezuela Dzogchen Community's publishing house "Editorial Reflejos" announces the publication of their second book

La Jarra que Colma Los Deseos

Instrucciones sobre la Base del Santi Maha Sangha

the Spanish translation of "The Wish Fulfilling Vase - Instructions on Santi Maha Sangha".

The book costs \$US5 and can be obtained from Paola Civile, Apartado Postal No.34, 6101 Cumana, Venezuela. Tel. and fax: 0058-93-515801.

The first publication of Editorial Reflejos, the "Semdzin", in English, is available at the same price.

Reflections

Images

When first I met the great Master I had prepared myself well, doing whatever I could to learn of the disciplines of the ancients. Knowing in my heart that I had done my best, here I sat in front of a truly great Master. The first days teachings were sound and resounded deep into me, as though now there was an outer reflection of an inner voice.

That night a white shadow came and wanted to communicate. I was so exhausted from the day. I thought nothing of it and asked can you go away and return when I am not so tired?

In the beginning the retreats were small; we had time, not only to listen to teachings but to swim and play with the Master. There was a comfort level one could grow accustomed to.

After a while we started hearing words like, "the students seek the master, not the master seeks the students." This didn't mean so much at first. Then the retreats instead of being very close by, were thousands of miles away. I found to be close to him I had to practise day and night. Even though he was far away he seemed to be there in the secret teachings of Guruyoga. As the

retreats grew larger there were hundreds of people and to speak with him was by appointment. I felt anyone who needed to make an appointment, must have some pretty important things to discuss as I had learned to find answers through the many practices of day and night. It seemed to make an appointment was sort of being selfish as for me he seemed to be with me all the time.

As the years have passed and our physical meetings are growing further and further apart and samsara takes its hold, I bring my thoughts and questions directly to him in letters. Even though he writes me back he still gives me the real answer in my dreams. This has helped my personal growth tremendously. My gratitude toward him and the teachings flow deeper than all the currents of the universe.

My first response to the "Santi Maha Sanga" was with great reluctance. It took the blessings of Manjushri to get me to quiet my mind enough to really begin to study. As I study it becomes obvious what things need to be purified and recognised in myself. Here in these papers

Reflections



Illustration by P. Minelli. From "The Book of Mudras" by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu recently published by Shang-Shung Edizioni.

of the "Santi Maha Sanga" there seem to be all the possibilities of true realisation. How blessed we are to have such an intelligent king and compassionate Master to captain our

boat. May the Buddha be always with him and may we as the crew of the boat never slow him down!!!

My paddle is waxed

Melinda Sacarob

The Place of Eternal Liberation

After a few days of rain and mud at the retreat in Wales, I began to wonder if there would actually be one fine day to visit the U.K. Community land on the North Pembrokeshire coast, near St. Davids. Not that I really minded the rain: my tent had remained dry at least and the Mongolian style 'yurt' where the teachings were held, looked stunning set amid the gleaming fields, all decked with thankas and flowers ... and it only leaked in places! Even the mud, I decided, added an element of primitive realism quite conducive to contemplation.

Then one afternoon, with a watery sun still trying to break through the enveloping greyness, we set out in a loose convoy to drive the forty minute-or-so journey to the land.

As we neared the coast, the landscape changed. The terrain became wilder and more rugged. Outcrops of rock stood out against the wide skyline like waiting sentinels; the lovely colours of the multi-hued heather caught the eye unexpectedly.

Patches of pale blue began to appear overhead. Then someone I think, must have arrived with a dustpan and brush, and swept all the clouds to the side of the sky quite suddenly.

As I drove through the gates of 'The Place of Eternal Liberation', (as it has since been named by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche) the sky shone with a brilliant azure blue, luminous and totally clear. To my mind at least, this was an auspicious sign ... a sign of what, I'm not quite sure! Who knows what will take place here. The future is yet to unfold.

To those brimming with imagination, the place is a dream. Old farm buildings set round a central courtyard, weeds growing quaintly from the crumbling plaster, and the sea sparkling in the distance. To the practical pragmatist, it is a nightmare ... a pile of ruins and a few rusty barns. But the phrase that springs to mind in both cases is undoubtedly: "money- and lots of it".

Yet Rinpoche lost no time in inaugurating the site. Five candles were lit in the "cowbyre" and one and a half packets of incense were lit on the spot, each stick individually and carefully inserted into a crevice in the rough stonework. Then beneath the warm afternoon sun, a short rite was performed and the guardians evoked.

Afterwards, several of the participants went down to the sea, to a small stony beach.

I stood in the water with my wellington boots on and watched while the waves washed all the mud off! I also found a nice greeny-blue pebble. The courageous ones swam naked.

Julia Lawless

Yantra Yoga

continued from page 2

transform ourselves but remain present in the knowledge of emptiness. We have our dimension and our dimension is emptiness.

Preparatory movements

In Vairocana's system of Yantra Yoga there are five different types of *prana* practices and many different movements which are each linked to time: a period of time for getting into a position, a period for remaining in it and another for finishing the position. This is a very precise system which is characteristic of this Yantra. But before we do these five types of breathings and movements there are preparatory movements which are considered to be very important.

When we learn how to do a practice of *prana* energy from a teacher, there is no guarantee that we will understand how to apply it in a correct way. So in Yantra Yoga first of all there are eight movements related to the eight characteristic ways of breathing: exhaling, inhaling, slowly or quickly, holding closed or open etc. If we learn these eight movements and apply them sufficiently, when the teacher explains how to do the breathing in a *prana* practice, we will have a guarantee because we know how to apply the breathing correctly through practising the eight movements. Later this becomes concrete.

After this there are two different series of five movements for co-ordinating our energy in a precise way. These eighteen movements, one series of eight and two of five are considered preliminary practices. Then we go on to the main movements and positions.

Breathing

When we learn the first group of movements we apply one type of breathing in a very precise way. There are five groups each with a different type of breathing or *prana* practice related to characteristic methods which are considered to have different effects. Some are more related to co-ordinating energy, some are related to *kumbhaka* holding in order to develop it. What is the purpose of these practices? Mainly for co-ordinating our breathing in daily life.

In general everyone knows how to inhale and exhale but we usually do this in an incorrect way because our breathing is linked to our mind which is often disordered and confused. We can understand this when we observe the breathing of a person who is very agitated or of someone who is very quiet and peaceful. For this reason it is necessary to co-ordinate our breathing. In yoga we say, "Life is breathing" and it is true because we started our life when we started to breathe. Interrupting our breathing means interrupting our lives. When we exhale and do not inhale again then there is no more life.

The Tantric teaching explains how many breaths a person uses in one day and a person who practices Yantra Yoga is said to have long life



After a serious illness Gina Perini passed away peacefully on August 29th in Arcidosso, Italy. During her last days she participated in a retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar.

A few days before her passing, Gina asked "The Mirror" to publish her thanks to the many Vajra brothers and sisters, doctors and friends and the Dzogchen Communities in New Mexico, California, New England, Australia, Canada and Finland for their kindness and sincere help.

On September 16th, Kalama, nine year old daughter of Pia Barilli, passed away at her home near Florence after a grave illness. She was very close to Rinpoche especially during the last weeks of her life.

Her playmates at Merigar dedicate some thoughts to her:

"She was a polite, kind and good girl! We all liked her. I didn't know her for very long but from the first moment I saw her I knew that would get along. The last time we played together was at our friend Martin's birthday party. Now we can never ever play together again."

Maria Margherita

"Kalama was always kind and generous and liked everyone and so I wish her a new life together with us."

Yesan

because their breathing is co-ordinated. How can we co-ordinate it? One of the most important methods is by practising *kumbhaka*. If we have a capacity of *kumbhaka* holding and use this practice frequently, it will influence our daily lives so that our breathing will not be dominated by thoughts and judgement but will become more co-ordinated.

Sensation

Then, for example, there are practices such as that of the inner heat or what is called *tummo* in Tibetan. It means that one is not effected by cold. How can we develop inner heat? With the capacity of co-ordinating *prana* and with one of the five types of breathing used in Yantra Yoga. What is the final goal of the practice of inner heat? There is a very precise reason: heat is a basis of sensation. In Tantra we say that in order to develop sensation, we need to develop heat. Why do we need to develop sensation? If we want to deepen our knowledge, our understanding, our final goal in the state of contemplation, then sensation is very important.

In Tantrism the final goal of Annutatantra is the state of Mahamudra, or 'total symbol'. What does total symbol mean? It means the deity, the mandala, visualisation, transformation, everything is a symbol. Through that symbol our existence of body, voice and mind is integrated.

That is called Mahamudra. How can we integrate it? Through our sensation, through different kinds of experiences such as experiences of clarity and emptiness but mainly experiences of the sensation of pleasure. All these are considered to be important methods in order to have knowledge. It is the same in the Dzogchen teaching and it is for this reason we apply practices such as *tummo* and develop our capacity of sensation and different kinds of experiences.

German retreat

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All these national and international property ideas must now undergo checking processes before being

concretely promoted among the Community.

Outside the Gonpa, information was presented on Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's work in east Tibet and the aims of A.S.I.A. Through donations and selling T-shirts, a substantial contribution was offered to Rinpoche for the school project in Khamdogar, the village of Rigdzin Chang Chub Dorje, in reminiscence of seeing Rinpoche's video "Timeless Present".

As a conclusion it is not exaggerated to say that this retreat was a "fertile" mixture, full of precious teachings, transmissions and presentations of possibilities, opening a door to future perspectives for individual practitioners and the Community as a whole. This retreat could also be a starting point for comprehensive cooperation between European Communities towards developing facilities and helping the transmission of Rinpoche's most valuable knowledge and wisdom. With deep gratitude for his kindness and compassion we try to live in the mind and heart of Rinpoche.

A.S.I.A.

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Prefecture, Jomda County (T.A.R.) A.S.I.A. has requested a contribution from the Italian government.

The total cost of the project is \$1,300,000. The project is situated in a strategic area close to the border between the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Szechuan Province. The area is seriously lacking these type of facilities and the project will make them accessible to several thousand people from both regions. In addition, the programme includes the provision of electricity, infrastructural strengthening and support to small micro-initiatives of local people aimed at the development of the local economy. In a few weeks, the project will be submitted to an important evaluation commission of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their approval. The approvals that the project must undergo are all part of a very complicated procedure but we are

confident that the final approval could come in early 1995.

Tibetan Medicine Ingredients Image Book

This project was set up with the Chamdo Tibetan Hospital authorities during the A.S.I.A. mission in 1993. The aim is to publish a comprehensive book for the identification of vegetal, mineral and animal components used in the preparation of traditional Tibetan medicines.

The book will include more than one thousand colour pictures and after a number of project reviews the estimated cost has been fixed at \$30,000. A.S.I.A. will co-operate with another Italian non-governmental organisation called CISP who will contribute \$5,000 to the project. During the ongoing A.S.I.A. mission the first \$10,000 will be delivered to local organisers in order to start the set up of the book.

A.S.I.A. Via della Nocetta 65, 00164 Roma, Italy. Tel & fax 6 66161749

Poetry, performance

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nights. I confess I didn't have the courage to tell him what I had been singing in my car. Did the invocation I was writing actually function? It's important to say I wasn't asking for help in finding a place to stay, or making any other material request. I had formulated no particular wish I wanted fulfilled other than to see Rinpoche's face in my mind. And that wish, strongly felt, manifested almost immediately in the external world.

Anyway, I'm still working on the invocation, and have taken the liberty of sharing it with you here just as it is, in a raw and unfinished state. Uh-oh: please forgive me: I've just thought of another verse:

Perfect Master, Jewel of Space
May your life be long and your energy increase
May your enlightened actions never cease
May I, and all your students, find a state of perfect, lasting peace!

O dear, this poetry thing is getting hold of me again. Louise! Like the kids who sang songs so beautifully at the beginning of the Merigar concert, I'm having too good a time now I've got started and it's hard to get me to stop. Anyway, try my invocation out yourself: maybe you could improve it, maybe you could help me finish it: I hereby offer an unspecified prize for the best suggestion, or best complete version. Write to me c/o The Mirror. But I warn you: this poetry bug is catching. Once you've got it, there's no telling where it may end. Do you write poetry? Do your kids write poetry? Perhaps we could produce an anthology of poems by Community members dedicated to the master? What do you think? Write and let me know.

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Shang-Shung Edizioni

Books in English published by Shang-Shung Edizioni are now available in the U.S.A. Contact Lauri Marder at Tsegialgar, PO Box 277, Conway MASS 01341.

The Book of Mudras

Edizioni's most recent English publication with 201 drawings showing the mudras used in Dzogchen Community practices.

Available from Shang-Shung Edizioni, Via Davide Lazzeretti 29, Arcidosso 58031 GR, Italy (Lit. 25.000 p/p) or from Lauri Marder at Tsegialgar.



Kalpa Taru - A Tree Plantation Ceremony

by Vivian Ray

Beginning this year, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday is being celebrated as a tree plantation day by Tibetan Buddhist Communities across India and the world. So, on the morning of July 6th, 1994, Tibet House and The Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama observed "Kalpa-Taru, a Tree Plantation Ceremony" on the lawns of Tibet House in New Delhi.

Buddhist chantings began the program, followed by poetry readings and musical compositions in praise of His Holiness. Professor H.Y. Mohan Ram, of Delhi University's Department of Botany next gave a talk on "The Benefits of a Tree" and eminent environmental activist of the Garhwal Hills Chipko ("Hug the Trees") Movement, Sunderlal Bahuguna led the gathering in reciting a "Prayer for the Trees" written by Richard St. Barbe Baker.

Thirteen prominent religious leaders in New Delhi, representing all the main faiths (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Sikhism, Bahai, Christianity) each gave blessings over the trees. The religious leaders and other members of the gathering planted 29 trees at prepared sites surrounding Tibet House.

Professor Mohan Ram's talk noted that the tree is perhaps "the longest lived organism" on earth. "Trees are immobile, fixed in soil where they cannot escape from any stresses; and trees are silent, doing their work without complaint". Thus,

trees often are taken for granted. But humankind began as an arboreal creature, and remains dependent on trees for the basics of life. Humankind developed abilities of no other animal, because of their brains and their hands; yet man has

release O₂, in this way having produced and still producing the earth's atmosphere of breathable oxygen. In addition, plants help regulate the water cycle, through absorption in the soil by their roots, transpiration, and evaporation from their leaves. When it rains, "like umbrellas" trees break the force of the water on the earth, thus protecting the soil and smaller plants. A tree "is like a 5000 ton air conditioner," cooling the earth through evaporation and providing shade in summer, "giving warmth in winter". These are just some of the natural processes by which trees help to sustain other forms of life on earth.

Aside from the services that trees give naturally, people also can harvest many useful products from trees- fruits, other foods, timber, firewood, gums, resins, fibres, and multiple other goods. "The coconut tree alone has over 700 uses. The date palm has at least 272 uses." Indeed every tree, every plant is a factory- a renewable, and non polluting factory!

As human life is beyond value, the benefits of the tree also are invaluable to life.

Sunderlal Bahuguna's recited "Prayer for the Trees", and the prayers of the thirteen religious leaders, also expressed eloquently why we cherish trees, and the inspiration and hopes we may draw from them- both in our tree-plantings, and in our sowing the seeds of love, beauty and understanding in the world.



sustained himself for thousands of years by relying on agricultural production, planting and nurturing seeds of growing plants, including trees.

Professor Mohan Ram observed that green plants have several unique abilities, essential to the life of other creatures. Aided only by the sun, green plants manufacture their own food from the simple compounds of carbon dioxide and water. As a by-product, from this process, they

Practices for special days

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.

9th Month, 10th day Sat. 12th Nov. 1994

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

9th Month, 15th day Fri. 18th Nov. 1994

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

9th Month, 22nd day Fri. 25th Nov. 1994

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

9th Month, 25th day Mon. 28th Nov. 1994

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

9th Month, 30th day Frid. 2nd Dec. 1994

NEW MOON. This is a good day to do "Namchos Shitroi Nalgyor", the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible. The best time for this practice is around eight o'clock in the evening.

10th Month, 10th day Mon. 12th Dec. 1994

This is an important day of Guru Padmasambhava, so try to do the Long-life practice associated with the "Universal Wisdom Union" which is included in the medium or long Tun, or if you have the possibility it is beneficial to perform a Ganapuja.

10th Month, 11th and 14th day

Tue. 13th and Fri. 16th Dec. 1994

These are very special days for doing practice of Ekajati. If you know how to perform the rite of Ekajati, then do it in the usual way, otherwise you can do it in a very simple way with the "Medium Tun", reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

10th Month, 15th day Sat. 17th Dec. 1994

FULL MOON. This day is considered to be the day to honour the Lord Buddha in general, and it is one of the best days to do the Long-life Practice with the Dakini Mandarava particularly. Therefore try to do the Long-life Practice, "Cycle of Life's Vajra". Generally the best moment to do this kind of practice is at 7-8 o'clock in the morning. But if you don't have this possibility, then do it in the afternoon or later in the evening when you are free.

10th Month, 25th day Tue. 27th Dec. 1994

This is a **Dakini day**, and the anniversary of Tsongkhapa (1357-1491), who made a synthesis of the previous schools and founded the Gelugpa school. Try to perform a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters or the Medium Tun personally. In either case recite the heart mantra of the Dakini Simhamuka as many times as possible.

THE MIRROR

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