

THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

January/February 1995 • Issue No. 29

A.S.I.A. Expedition returns from Tibet

The Dangche Tibetan Language School

by Andrea Dell'Angelo



On September 27th, Tony Laurent and I left for Peking; the aim of our mission was to clear up the final bureaucratic and technical agreements for the construction of a school for 500 Tibetan children with the authorities of Guide county in the prefecture of Chabcha, Qinghai province (historically known as Amdo). Tserangtar and Tenzin, Doctor Phuntsok Wangmo's brother, were waiting for us on our arrival. Two days later we all left for Xining, capital of Qinghai where we were met by another Tserangtar who is in charge of the Department of Education for Guide County. From here we started off by jeep for Dangche.

On leaving Xining we noticed that the mountains were already snow-capped and we met the first groups of nomads with their herds of sheep and yak. The area is very dry and the only vegetation consists of poplars and willows, the only crop is barley grown on the flat areas

along the Yellow river. The village houses are built of earth, the same color as the mountains. As we gradually ascended, the scenery changed and black tents of the nomads dotted the landscape. Throughout the zone, each Tibetan family is divided into two parts: one involved in agriculture while the other nomadic part looks after the livestock. There is frequent contact between the two components of the family. Unfortunately, the lives of the farmers and the nomads is becoming more and more difficult because of the increase in population and the diminishing areas of arable lands and pastures.

There was a grand welcome for us when we finally arrived in Dangche where we were taken to the town hall and feasted with *momo*, boiled mutton and grappa.

The entire population of the village turned out to greet us. In the afternoon we spoke with the village chiefs about

how to organize the work. The first difficulty to arise was the type of construction for the school building. Since it is to be built on two floors, it has to be constructed in reinforced cement, a job which the Tibetans were unable to undertake and which would have to be done by a Chinese firm. We immediately proposed that there should be a clause in any contract with a Chinese building company that at least half of the laborers on the project should be Tibetans.

The villagers accepted the proposal with enthusiasm. Later, we started an inspection to visit buildings with traditional characteristics in order to give Tony Laurent (the architect for A.S.I.A.) a more precise idea about traditional construction techniques and local materials.

The following day we were taken to the county government offices to discuss the details of the A.S.I.A. pro

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Shang Shung Institute in America

by Woody Paparazzo

Energized by the enthusiastic participation of students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from around the world, as well as encouragement from non-community individuals who expressed interest, the American offices of the Shang-Shung Institute have come to life.

There remain, of course, many issues and questions which will be gradually refined. For example, the Institute has not yet adopted a definitive legal structure, but the details of the internal organization are being worked out even as the Institute begins to function in accord with Namkhai Norbu's vision of

ing traditional Tibetan drawing and painting techniques class including Tikse proportions and the preparation and use of natural mineral paints, his specialty. Students will then have an opportunity to enter into an ongoing thangka project at their particular level and talent. Other, more intensive but shorter courses of 4-5 days are scheduled for the spring and summer. As part of his program, Glen will produce various artworks and line drawings associated with the lineage of Namkhai Norbu for the Institute, Shang Shung editions and the Mirror. The drawing of Adzam Drugga is the first in a series of draw-



preserving the great cultural traditions of Tibet including its language, arts, and sciences such as medicine and astrology, history and literature.

Participants in the various planning groups who met during the autumn retreats at Tsegylgar selected from among themselves an interim board of directors to shape the Institute's structure and to act as facilitators during this start-up period. This board includes: Enrico Dell'Angelo, Lauri Marder, Woody Paparazzo, John Shane, Joan Marie Wood, and Jim Valby. Lauri Marder is the board's administrator to oversee and coordinate communication.

A few of the Institute's projects have already begun to take shape and are proceeding well:

Glen Eddy, an established Thangka painter and well-known illustrator for many early dharma publications in America proposed a comprehensive program in Tibetan art which was approved and has already been implemented by the Institute. In February, Glen will begin teaching an ongo-

ings he is undertaking for the Mirror on great masters of the past.

The Institute has initiated its International Tibetan Translation project proposed by Jim Valby. Jim studied with Tibetan scholar and translator, Herbert Guenther, at the University of Saskatchewan, where he received a Ph.D. in

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The Joy of the Master's Presence

by John Shane

As this year of the western calendar draws to a close and 1995 approaches, the Vajra Sisters and Brothers of the Dzogchen Community on every continent of this planet blessed with the presence of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu are joined together in our love for our precious Master.

We who have the good karma to have received his teachings whether we live in Europe, in North or South America, in Africa, Australia, Asia, or the Middle East, on each of the continents to

which he has traveled with such selfless compassion to nourish us fortunate students, are united beyond the separations of place and time in the state of transmission.

We pray with deep devotion for the complete recovery of his health, for his long life, and for the accomplishment of all his aims and wishes!

The autumn retreat at Conway ended really quite a long time ago now, and yet despite all that has happened since then, it seems as if it was only yesterday that I walked

into the library of the Shang Shung Institute at Tsegylgar, where the bright sunlight of a New England fall morning, streaming through the big windows behind Rinpoche made me blink for a moment after the relative dimness of the corridor outside where I had been waiting my turn to take the much anticipated Santi Maha Sangha Foundation Level exam.

Rinpoche was sitting behind a desk at the far end of the large room and Jim Valby,

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WHEN WE ARE FOLLOWING a teaching like Dzogchen, the first thing we need is an introduction, that means we discover what Dzogchen is. Dzogchen is not a book, it is not a school or tradition. Many people think that Dzogchen is a kind of philosophy – it is not a philosophy. Dzogchen is our real nature. So the first thing we need is to discover our real nature, and that is called introduction. When we say introduction, it seems that there is something to introduce. Sometimes we remain fixed in this idea, but in the real sense, our potentiality, or we can also say, our nature of mind, is beyond concepts and example. So how can we introduce it? It is not something we introduce like an object. But even if there is nothing concrete to introduce, introducing means we give methods to experience our real nature. When we have experiences, then we can feel and discover our potentiality. Having discovered, we say, “The Teacher introduced.”

The principle of the Dzogchen teaching is not the idea that we are accepting something. You see, very often we have this kind of idea. When we follow any kind of teaching, then we have the idea: “Now I am becoming someone, I am accepting this method, this teaching, this transmission.” But that is relative; in the real sense if you decide to accept something, or you have changed and you are becoming something or someone, that is false. There is nothing to change, for even if you can change today, tomorrow you can change again. You see there are many people who say, “In earlier times, I was Islamic, then I became a Hindu, and today I become Buddhist.” So they feel that they have changed. But if you believe that is the principle, today you might be a Buddhist but tomorrow you might be Islamic – why not? You can always change – just like your clothes. When you feel too hot, then you need a very thin garment. When you feel cold, you need warm clothes. So you change according to the circumstance. But we are playing with our minds and we believe it, but this is false.

Knowledge is not something like that. If we say that we have discovered Dzogchen it does not mean that we are accepting something. Knowledge of Dzogchen means that we have discovered our nature. You must remember what it means: what is the difference when we discover or merely accept something – they are completely different. The principle is discovery. You discover the Teacher, the

qualification of the Teacher. Then you discover the transmission and the qualification of the transmission. You discover there is nothing to change.

Some people say, for example, that “You are a very good Teacher – I want you to be my root Guru...” This point of view is really false. Because being a root Guru

that you observe yourself so you can discover your real nature. If you discover your real nature, that is good for you, not for your teacher. The teacher tries to make you understand. That is called giving teachings, or we say that the teacher is working with the student to make them understand. That is really the teaching. So if we work that way,

someone hits you, then you have pain, not Sunyata. So it does not correspond. So why do you have this problem? Because you are not realized. Therefore, realized means not only thinking in the mind, but that it corresponds to one’s experience. For that reason we need many different kinds of practice. After we have discovered our real nature then

can relax in the knowledge of your real nature, for instance, when walking. It isn’t necessary to think that when you want to do the application of Tregchöd then you must only sit somewhere. You can walk. If you are eating, you must not be distracted, but you can be present when you eat and integrate taste and everything in that state. In other words, this means you are relaxed also when you are eating, when you are sleeping or working, in any moment; that is really Tregchöd.

But then people are very attracted to names. They think, “Oh I really want to learn Tregchöd. It is important.” But Tregchöd is important only if you have knowledge. Then you can always integrate your experiences with awareness. For example, when we speak of the Dzogchen Semde, in the Dzogchen Semde series, we explain four states of contemplation or Four Yogas. The final state is called the state of Lhundrub – the self-perfected state. Just that is Tregchöd. When we are in a state of Lhundrub or when in the Dzogchen Upadesha it speaks of Tregchöd, there isn’t any difference. The only difference is that in the Dzogchen Semde, the term Tregchöd isn’t used. People use many different names – sometimes names become elegant. We say Upadesha teaching is at a very high level. Then there is Tregchöd, and even if we don’t know what it is, we feel that Tregchöd must be something wonderful – something very elevated. And then people need to explain what Tregchöd is because many people don’t know the meaning of Tregchöd. But in the real sense, Tregchöd means total relaxation.

You see in the Tibetan word, *treg* (khregs) means binding something. If you bind wood, we say *shingtig*. If you bind clothes, we say *goslag*. If we bind objects we can always use this word – binding. We say in general, our condition is bound up with our tensions and emotions – with our confusion. Our body, speech and mind are all bound up with different kinds of tensions. Chöd means something we cut, but not something that we are actively cutting. Chöd means something already cut and loose – free. For example, we have the practice of Chöd. In this case, chöd means actively cutting; we are doing visualization, we are using methods to cut our ego. But when we say Tregchöd, here, chöd does not mean that we are actively cutting something, but that something breaks automatically. For

The Meaning of Introduction & Knowledge in the Practice of Tregchöd

by Chögyal Namkahi Norbu

means that a teacher communicates to you and you wake up and discover your real nature through this teacher and this transmission. In this case, even if you do not accept this teacher or you have decided that this teacher is not your root Guru, there is nothing to do. He is your root Guru. Even if he is a dog, he is your root Guru! Even if he doesn’t sit on a high throne, dress nicely and is not a very famous teacher, it does not matter. If you choose someone saying that, “Oh this is a very famous teacher and everybody is saying that this is an enlightened being – wonderful!” even if you did not experience him that way. And then when you say, “Oh, this is my root Guru,” that is totally false. Why is he your root Guru? Perhaps you never received a single teaching – how can he then be your root Guru? You see in society, we don’t understand what it means to be a Guru. It means teaching and transmission. That is why in the Dzogchen way, we need to discover everything – we don’t need to decide anything at all. As to the value of the teaching, you say, “Dzogchen is a wonderful teaching,” but it does not mean anything. Dzogchen is interesting or powerful or an important teaching only if through Dzogchen you wake up to discover your real nature. Then you find that Dzogchen has a real function.

So it is very important, when we are following a teaching, particularly Dzogchen, that we understand what Dzogchen actually means. Otherwise we spend year after year but we always remain at the same point. We depend on name and form but then we continually delude ourselves, because it does not correspond to the real sense. A teacher of Dzogchen never asks you to accept or change something. A teacher of Dzogchen only asks



then basically even if we have only been following the teaching for a short time, then it makes sense. Maybe through this principle you can discover for yourself one day, if you still haven’t discovered your real nature and potentiality.

The teacher gives many methods to work with different experiences. But first we need knowledge – understanding what it means to be in our real nature. First we must discover it, otherwise we could not be in that state. So this is the first step. After that, then we must realize that knowledge, so it becomes real. Even if you have an experience, sometimes experience is real and could be something related to your real nature. Still we are living in a state of dualistic vision with our concepts of subject and object. Also, we have an infinite potentiality of negative karma. So you see, you can speak of Sunyata, emptiness, and you know also what it means and you can also believe that you know what Sunyata really means, but when you are thinking that everything is Sunyata and

we have many many methods for realizing it.

In Dzogchen, we say that we are learning mainly methods to practice. You see in the Dzogchen teachings, for instance, in the Upadesha, we say Tregchöd and Thogal – these are very famous. But Tregchöd and Thogal are special names used only in Upadesha, not universally in Dzogchen teachings. We never use Tregchöd and Thogal in Dzogchen Semde or in Dzogchen Longde. Only in the Dzogchen Upadesha are Tregchöd and Thogal used.

But what does Tregchöd really mean? It really means that you are being totally relaxed. But where, how? You are totally relaxed in your knowledge, the understanding about your real nature which you have already discovered. If you never discovered it, then where do you relax – what do you relax? There isn’t much sense to it. You think, “Oh, I am totally relaxed...” that means that you are not doing anything else other than sleeping and eating, so then it makes no sense. Tregchöd does n’t mean that. Tregchöd means that you already have knowledge and understanding. You know and then you totally relax your body, speech and mind, and all tensions into that state of awareness.

The Dzogchen Upadesha often refers to the method of Tregchöd. Why? Because in the Dzogchen Upadesha, the principle is continuing in the state of your knowledge. That is the main point of Dzogchen Upadesha. Of course, in the Dzogchen Upadesha, there is also introduction. And then, having had the experience of introduction, afterwards you continue in that state – relaxed in that state.

That is what Tregchöd really means. If you are going somewhere, you can apply the state of contemplation. You

example, if we have discovered our real nature and we are in the state of our real nature then we have self-liberation, but it is not that someone is coming and liberating. That is why we say self-liberation.

Self-liberation is like a mirror. If there is a mirror, then in that mirror there can manifest infinite reflections, good or bad. If we are living in dualistic vision, when in front of a mirror then we think, "I am here, the mirror is there and I am looking in the mirror, and I can see this or that." When you can see something nice, then you are happy, "Oh nice thing - I like it. I am enjoying it." But if you are seeing horrible things in the mirror continually for hours and hours, then you are nervous and say, "I don't like it - please take this mirror away." That is an example. Why? Because you are living in a state of dualistic vision and have concepts of subject and object when you are looking in the mirror. You have a problem. That is not self-liberation. In this case, if you want to liberate actively then you do something - for example, take away the mirror. That is definitely not liberation but at that moment you don't have a problem. Small liberation of problem! When we say self-liberation, it means we are not being in the state of dualistic vision, but we are being just what we see. If we see the mirror, then the mirror is our condition. We are the mirror. If we are the mirror, really being the mirror, then whether good or bad manifests in the mirror, it doesn't matter, because always manifesta-

tions of reflections are just qualifications, that is all. There isn't any problem.

It is not necessary for us to use some antidote for liberating or overcoming our problems. When we say, for example, Tregchöd, it means being in that knowledge, that understanding. We are something like a crystal ball. If there is a crystal ball, since the beginning it has been pure and clear and limpid - that is the qualification of a crystal ball. In the same way, we have our real qualification in our three primordial wisdoms - essence, nature and energy. So we are being in that knowledge. In this case, we are like a crystal ball which never changes its nature, its qualification or essence. There is nothing to change or develop. Yet it can integrate any circumstance. You can put a crystal ball on a red table and the ball looks red; on a green base, then it looks green; on a multi-coloured base, then it looks multicoloured. The crystal ball never changes. In the same way, when we are being in that state of knowledge and understanding, then even if we are walking or standing or sleeping or eating, it does not matter. Everything is part of that real nature.

The preceding text is an excerpt from a longer teaching on Tregchöd Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave in Kathmandu, Nepal on January 1, 1994 which is currently being prepared for publication by Shang-Shung Editions in America.



The Health of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Rinpoche

In early November, on one of the last days of teaching the first level of the Santi Maha Sangha at Tsegylgar, Conway, Massachusetts, USA, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Rinpoche communicated to those present that he had very recently developed a major medical problem. Thereupon, Dr. Gerry Steinberg, a physician, and Paula Barry, a nurse-practitioner, both long-standing members of the Tsegylgar community, explained the malady in detail.

Rinpoche was diagnosed on Saturday, November 5th as suffering from acute promyelocytic leukemia in a very initial phase, though at that date he showed no external signs of illness. On Monday, November 7th he was admitted for treatment to the Sloan-Kettering Memorial Institute in New York City, widely considered one of the outstanding hospitals in the world for this type of disease. Rinpoche's schedule of travel and teaching through the first quarter of 1995 was immediately suspended.

Tests on Tuesday, November 8th confirmed the first diagnosis, and treatment was begun with transretinoic acid, a new and powerful medicine. This treatment arrests acute promyelocytic leukemia, obtaining relatively rapid remission, in more than 70% of cases. Leukemia is a cancer of white blood cells. Different forms of the disease affect different types of white blood cells, and/or the cells from which they originate. Acute promyelocytic leukemia is one of four major subtypes, and can itself be distinguished into four different forms (by cytological characteristics), each having different probability and duration of remission. The condition from which Rinpoche is suffering is the most susceptible of all to treatment.

On Sunday, November 13th Rinpoche was discharged from the hospital to become an outpatient. His treatment plan foresaw 45 to 60 days of continuing medication with transretinoic acid, involving twice-weekly clinic visits for controls, with chemotherapy to be administered in a subsequent phase. Unfortunately, complications ensued, and on Thursday, November 17th he was again hospitalised. Due to lack of immunity, expectable in leukemia, Rinpoche had contracted a pulmonary infection which became pneumonia with high fever. This, with renal insufficiency, and anemia, thereafter occasioned his transfer to an intensive care unit within the hospital. He underwent antibiotic and corticosteroid therapy, repeated dialysis and transfusions of various blood products.

This difficult period ended with release from the intensive care unit on Sunday, November 27th. Pneumonia had ceased. His kidneys initiated a slow return to normal functioning, the first signs of incipient remission of the leukemia began to appear, and his doctors arrived at a positive prognosis. A new discharge from hospital came on Wednesday, December 7th.

On Saturday evening, December 10th he was readmitted to the hospital once again suffering from various side effects of the treatment. As of Saturday, December 24th, Rinpoche was again discharged from the hospital at Sloan Kettering Memorial Institute in New York City. The Leukemia is yielding to treatment, and is very close to what can formally be defined as remission. The various infections which necessitated the most recent hospitalization are healed. Renal functioning has returned to normal.

After full remission of leukemia is verified as stable, which will require several weeks, the initiation of chemotherapy, hopefully leading to complete cure, will become possible.

He now begins care, once again, as an outpatient. His wife and children are with him. He is living in an apartment, arranged by the Dzogchen Community, on the 48th floor of a residential building three blocks from the hospital.

On the occasion of his original announcement, and in messages sent later to various members of the Community, Rinpoche urges us not to worry over his condition, but to give concrete help through practice, and above all to keep pure our relations, thus our samaya, with the Master and between practitioners. Rinpoche has indicated the following practices for all individuals and groups, to sustain and participate in the healing process: the "Long Life Practice of Mandarava" in the morning; the mantra of Guru Dragpur in the evening; "Ngagong" as often and as much as possible; the "Brief Ganapuja of Jigme Lingpa" as frequently as possible.

Barrie Simmons
Blue Gakyil, Merigar

THANK YOU

The International Dzogchen Community would like to thank all those who have so generously given support to Rinpoche and his family. Your ongoing concern, love, practice and monetary donations are deeply appreciated, and very much needed.

Worldwide Practice

The Blue Gakyil of Merigar has started what will become an ongoing worldwide practice dedicated to the healing of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. This means that at any moment in time, somewhere in the world, a group of community people will be practicing with this aim in mind. The practices that can be done are those advised by Rinpoche himself: Mandarava, Guru Dragpur, the Ganapuja of Jigme Lingpa and the Ngagong. Those practicing can choose the practice they wish to do which should be done according to the timetable below. If people are unable to meet as a group, these practices can also be done at the same time by people individually at home. Contact people in the different countries are listed for further information. All times listed are local.

Practice around the world is as follows:
North and South America..... 14.00 - 22.00
Australia, New Zealand..... 13.00 - 18.00
Japan..... 13.00 - 18.00
Europe..... 9.00 - 20.00

In Europe local practice times are:
Great Britain..... 5.30 - 8.00
Cheh Goh
Tel. 272-737622

Merigar and Italy..... 8.30 - 9.30 and
Francoise Van Den Berg 18.00 - 19.00
Tel. 564-966837

Switzerland..... 9.00 - 11.00
Federico Winkler
Tel. 2424-5800

Austria..... 11 - 15.00
Isabella Ernst
Tel. 222-4083016

France..... 15.00 - 17.00
Stoffelina Verdonk
Tel. 65-59-0901

Lithuania..... 19.00 - 22.00
Antanas Danielius
Tel. 02-776824

Germany..... 12.00 - 18.00
Gerd Manuschi on Tuesdays
Tel. 871-670521

Greece..... 21.00 - 24.00
Alessandra Bagnasco
Tel. 1-34-11856

North and South America..... 14.00 - 22.00
Contact Tsegylgar
Tel. 413-369-4153 or
Fax 413-369-4165
E-Mail: 74404,1141 @ compuserve.com

Additional local practice times are:
Hawaii..... 9 - 10 am
Vancouver..... 12 noon - 1 pm
New Mexico..... 2 - 4 pm
California..... 3 - 5 pm
Conway..... 8 - 10 pm

The Poetry of Shabkar

Songs Arisen in the Mirror of Mind

by Constance Wilkinson

The first Volume of Lama Shabkar's autobiography has just been published by SUNY Press as The Life of Shabkar: Autobiography of a Tibetan Yogin. Translated by Matthieu Ricard (Gelong Konchok Tendzin) and the Padmakara Translation Group, the 700 page book records Shabkar's life-story and his experiences on the path.

Best known for his lucent songs of realization, such as "Flight of the Garuda," Shabkar Tsogdruk Rangdrol (1781-1851) spent his existence fulfilling the solemn pledge he had made to his master: that the length of his session of practice would be the whole length of his life.

The songs of Shabkar are sometimes poignant, sometimes satiric, often exquisitely beautiful, and always profound. Because of both his poetry and his realization, Shabkar is revered by Tibetans to this day as "the second Milarepa."

Shabkar was born among the Nyingmapa yogins of the Rekong region in Amdo, and was always strongly inclined toward the dharma. He assiduously avoided all attempts to marry him off, and, going firmly against family tradition, instead took full monastic ordination as a gelong. Barely managing to wangle permission from his mother, Shabkar finally left family, home, and his homeland behind him. He set out for Mongolia to meet Chögyal Ngakyi Wangpo, who would become his main teacher and change the course of his life.

The Dharma King, his consort, and their family lived in a great tent-camp at Urgeh. Receiving from Chögyal the name Tsogdruk Rangdrol, Self-Liberation of the Six Senses, Shabkar spent many years at the Chögyal's court, serving his master and taking teachings from him.

Shabkar recounted, "Because I saw all his actions as pure, and did whatever he asked, the Dharma King came to think of me as a heart-son. Therefore, as if filling a vessel to the brim, he gave me all the pith instructions."

The Chögyal sent Shabkar into retreat at Tsheshung Grove. Here he completed the preliminary practices again, performed various Mantrayana sadhanas including practice of inner heat, the Dzogchen preliminary practices, and practices of Tregchöd and Thogal. Returning to the Dharma King, his master confirmed for Shabkar the signs that had occurred as a result of his practice. Shortly thereafter, Lama Shabkar's meditation experiences first began to blossom in the form of songs of realization.

One such song was inspired by a friend, who saw Shabkar walking to Urgeh, and called to him, "Hey! You're supposed to be on retreat in your cave! Are you out of retreat already?"

Here, in part, is the song Shabkar sang in reply:

*Fortunate Friend, listen without distraction,
For the yogin of the most secret Great perfection
There is no leaving of retreat,
neither is there any entering.*

*I, the yogin of awareness
That is itself brilliant and cognizant
Remain in the retreat
That is the uncontrived natural state.*

*Freed from discursive thoughts,
Staying within the limits of naturally abiding meditation,
Fearing visitors – mental dullness and wildness –
I mark my retreat boundaries
With the poles of undistracted mindfulness.*

*Whether walking, sitting, or sleeping,
To blend all actions with contemplation
Is the Mantrayana seal.*

*Just as no darkness exists in the center of the sun,
To a yogin the universe and beings all arise as deities –
And the yogin is content.*

*In the vastness of awareness,
Without any separation into sessions of practice,
For a yogin, practice is relaxed and at ease –
And the yogin is content.*

*In the indivisible state in which, from the beginning,
Development and completion are dissociable,
One may do practice, or leave everything as it is.*

*Even if one does do intensive practice,
There is nothing to be done.*

When Tsheshung Grove became too popular a retreat place, Shabkar returned to his master to seek advice. The Dharma King suggested that he go to practice at the solitary place called Takmo Dzong, Tigress Fort.

One day during this retreat, when Shabkar felt a strong desire to go back home, he composed a song in order to motivate himself, and get his mind back on his practice; that song, in part, appears below:

*You, the renunciate Tsogdruk Rangdrol,
Listen well, without distraction!
When you are still yearning for home,
What's the point of having gone off to the mountains?*

*When your attachments aren't like pure empty space,
What's the point of calling yourself 'renunciate'?*

*When you're still not making good use of your free, well-
favored birth,
What's the point of having obtained a human body?*

*When you still don't behave so as to be free of regret at the time
of death,
What's the point of knowing that death will come?*

*When you've still not renounced samsara and its ways,
What's the point of having understood its imperfections?*

*When you're not taking refuge with all your heart,
What's the point of doing it just with your tongue?*

*When you're still not doing as your master says,
What's the point of tall those polite yeses?*

*When you're still not practicing with diligence,
What's the point of having heard the profound instructions?*

Shabkar remained in retreat, and then returned to his Master. Chögyal Rinpoche clarified some uncertainties. Shabkar then went into dark retreat at Thayenchi, where he achieved visions just as they had been described in the texts.

One day thereafter, there had been a slight rain, and rainbows appeared. Shabkar climbed the mountain peak behind Thayenchi, and sang a spontaneous song in praise of the area which appears, in part, here:

*Tsheshung, this secluded mountain place:
Above, a slow, soft rain drizzles down.
Flocks of eagles flying – north, south –
Beaked mothers and their young,
Trying their wings –
Rainbows vividly appear.*

*Below me, the curved necks of geese,
Glancing, and the Tsechu River flowing on,
Sinuous. Behind them, deer dance on the slope
Of a mountain whose peak penetrates space.*

*Today, I climbed behind
This excellent retreat place.*

*I raised my head, looking up,
And saw the cloudless sky.*

*I thought of absolute space, free from limits,
The view of dharmadhatu.
I then experienced a freedom
Without center, without end –
All biased views
Completely abandoned.*

*I lowered my head to look in front of me,
And saw the sun of this world.*

*I thought of meditation –
Luminous and unobscured.
I then experienced a nondual empty clarity –
All meditations that focus the mind
I completely abandoned.*

*I turned my head, looking south,
And saw a pattern of rainbows.*

*I thought of all phenomena –
At once both apparent and empty.
I then experienced a natural clarity beyond duality –
All nihilist and externalist viewpoints completely abandoned.*

After Shabkar returned once more to consult his master, he became aware that some conflicts had occurred within the Dharma King's court. Having become the target of gossip and ill-will, Shabkar decided it would be better if he left. He asked his teacher for permission to leave the Chögyal's presence, and go stay at the Heart of the Lake, Tsonying Island.

Knowing that they might never meet again, Shabkar asked his teacher what his objective should be for the remainder of his life. The Chögyal replied:

"Give up all thoughts of this life, as the Victorious Ones have done, to gain liberation. Wander from one solitary mountain retreat to another, without preference.

"Make your life and your practice one, and through its fruit, benefit the teachings and beings in every possible way. Especially, train yourself to see all teachings and individuals as pure and perfect. With love, compassion, and a mind set on enlightenment, care for all weary sentient beings as if they were your own children."

Shabkar wrote, "With unbearable regret, I left. Proceeding down the road, I kept turning my head back to look at Urgeh. When it was finally out of sight, I could not bring myself to continue, and turned to look again.

"There, bright and vivid, was the tent encampment of Urgeh. I longed to go back.

"Then I realized that I had received all the pith instructions, and that there was no real need for me to return. Thinking that after staying awhile at Tsonying Island I would be able to return to see the precious Dharma King, I prayed over and over that I might meet him in all of my lives.

"Finally, I proceeded with a heavy heart."

Shabkar's life story continues as he wanders from retreat place to retreat place, quite at random. Wearing the white shawl of a yogin above the red patched skirt of a fully ordained monk, with his uncut hair piled in high coils on his head, his unusual appearance drew comment, even in a land where wandering ascetics were a familiar sight.

In the course of his life, Shabkar confronted wild beasts and thieves who invaded his meditation hut. He mediated clan wars. In satirical songs, Shabkar criticized shortcomings, calling things just as he saw them, without regard to politics or mere manners. He was particularly critical of monks, who failed to keep their vows and lamas who misused religious wealth, and he was, above all, critical of himself.

A strict vegetarian, Shabkar's compassion for sentient beings led him to try to protect life as much as he could; he recounts his attempts to save the lives of ants and mayflies and fledgling birds. When attacked by an army of Tibetan mastiffs, Shabkar prayed for them even as he tried to fight them off.

According to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's, *The Precious Vase*, training oneself in the Paramita of Diligence includes "diligence that acts as armor." By studying the biographies of great practitioners, learning about the sacrifices they have made

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Lives of the Great Masters



Adzam Drugpa 1842-1934

Adzam Drugpa Drondul Pawo Dorje, also known as Rigdzin Natshog Rangdrol, was born on the 25th day of the 9th Tibetan month in the year of the water tiger (1842) in eastern Tibet, in the village of Adzam near Derge. When he was 3 years old, he declared himself an emanation of the great Drugpa Kagyu master, Pema Karpo and was later acknowledged as his emanation by several masters, among them the great Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo who was to become one of his principal masters. He received transmissions from and studied with many of the greatest masters of his time, such as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, Chogyur Lingpa, Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje, Nyagla Pema Dudul, Mipham Namgyal, Paltrul Rinpoche and the Drugpa Kagyu master, Sakya Sri. All of these masters were involved in the tremendously important 19th century spiritual movement towards tolerance, understanding and, in particular a non-sectarian synthesis, which came to be known as Rime.

As his practice matured, on several occasions he received visionary instruction from the masters Padmasambhava, Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa. He later revealed his own cycle of Terma teachings, the Odsel Dorje Sang Dzod. He established the practice community of Adzamgar in eastern Tibet where he would give Dzogchen teachings to large gatherings of students for three months every summer. In the wintertime he would teach the salung practices of the channels and winds.

In 1934 Adzam Drugpa predicted that he would soon pass into Nirvana and for the last time a great number of disciples gathered around him for three months to receive his profound instructions. On the 25th day of November 1934, after midnight, Adzam Drugpa assumed the position of Vajrasattva and accomplished the Phowa, transference of consciousness, passing into Nirvana amidst wondrous signs. His body remained in the upright meditation posture for three weeks during which time it shrunk to the size of an 8 year old boy.

Our own teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, was recognized as an incarnation of Adzam Drugpa. Many significant people in Norbu Rinpoche's life were disciples of Adzam Drugpa such as his paternal grandmother, Lhundrub Tso who lived for many years at Adzamgar and who later wrote a biography of Adzam Drugpa; Norbu Rinpoche's paternal uncle, Ogyen Tendzin; his father, Tsewang Namgyel; his masters, Ayu Khandro, Rigdzin Changchub Dorje and Adzam Drugpa's son, Gyurme Dorje, who was the principal holder of Adzam Drugpa's teachings.

Jey Clark is a dharma student and translator of Tibetan who studied and practiced for the past 17 years with many contemporary Tibetan masters, among them Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Sogyal Rinpoche, Gonpo Tsestan Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche and the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa. He lives with his family in Santa Cruz, California.

Illustration by Glen Eddy

Book Reviews

Machig Lapdron and the Practice of Chöd

Jerome Edou, translated from the French by Hubert Decler. Forthcoming from Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York, 1995.

This book provides some wonderful material on the Chöd lineage, Machig Lapdron's biography, and investigations into the origins of Mahamudra Chöd. This research is focused around a new translation of the biography of Machig called the *Marvelous Life of Machig*.

After the introduction, the book is divided into two parts. The first part traces the background of the Chöd tradition of the Prajnaparamita teachings in India and how they came to Tibet. The author discusses the lineage of mad saints as distinguished from practitioners of the monastic tradition. Then he explains three transmissions of the Chöd: Sutra, Tantra and the combined Sutra and Tantra traditions.

Edou has made real effort to trace the written lineage of Chöd to its source and discovered "The Grand Poem on the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom," linking the Chöd to roots in the Prajnaparamita teachings in India, which describes the demons in much the same way they are described in Tibetan Chöd teachings. The following passage delivers the essence of the teachings from Aryadeva, the Brahmin's "The Grand Poem Explaining the Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom," following direct oral translation made by Dampa Rinpoche:

"Thus to cut off the mind itself at the root, to cut through the five poisons of emotional affliction and opinions and mental formations during meditation, also to cut through anxiety, hope, and fear in actions as well as to cut through arrogance (which is grasping at a self) since all this is a matter of 'cutting through' Chödpa) that is the real meaning of Chöd."

The author gives helpful historical background placing Machig in a context within the development of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism and its transition to Tibet. He explores the connection of Chöd with the Prajnaparamita, the Heart Sutra and the link through Dampa Sangye to Machig.

Edou dismisses any connection between Chöd and Shamanism stating that Chöd does not have either a state of trance or "initiatory journey."

He acknowledges only the union of religious systems in India, defined by the methods of the Prajnaparamita with

indigenous Tibetan popular beliefs. He ignores the similarity between Shamanic initiation of descent, dismemberment and being devoured by the very diseases that can later be cured as well as the body offering in Chöd. He also fails to notice the similarity between the shaman's drum and the Chöd drum, one of the things that sets Chöd apart from the other Buddhist practices. Although he does an excellent job tracing the Buddhist lineage of Chöd, I was disappointed in his dismissal of Chöd's non-Buddhist connections. Often there is a tendency within Buddhist scholarship to minimize cultural connections to pre-Buddhist or non-Buddhist traditions. Edou dismisses Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's statement that Machig's parents were Bon, because he did not find such references in the sources he consulted. He says in his notes, "Although there also exists a Bon tradition of Chöd, it will not be dealt with in any detail in the present study." Nor does he explore in any depth the terma sources of Chöd or the way Chöd can be used for healing physical and mental illness. These lacks should not in anyway diminish all the research Edou successfully accomplished, as well as his inspirational translations of the teachings of Chöd.

The second part of the book is focused on the translation of a biography of Machig called, *The Marvelous Life of Machig Lapdron Dakini of Tibet*, from an exposition on transforming the aggregates into a food offering, illuminating the meaning of Chöd. This is a wonderful and inspiring story of Machig's life. It ends with "Machig's Last Instructions," an extraordinary Mahamudra teaching.

Phyag' is the nature of Emptiness (of the mind).

'Gya is Liberation from the vastness of Samsaric (appearances).

'Chenpo is an inseparable union (of appearances and Emptiness).

Primordially co-emergent (this inseparability), like empty space, does nothing, is not dependent on anything.

In the same way, mind itself, natural and coemergent has no support, has no object:

Let it rest in its natural expanse without any fabrication.

When the bonds (of negative thoughts) are released you will be free, there is no doubt.

Like when gazing into space, all other visual objects disappear. This is the same for mind itself.

When mind is looking at mind, all discursive thoughts cease and enlightenment is

attained. Like in the sky all clouds disappear into the sky itself. Wherever they go, they go nowhere, wherever they are, they are nowhere. This is the same for the thoughts in mind: when mind looks at mind, the waves of conceptual thoughts disappear.

This song goes on to give the pointing out instructions of the nature of mind. Machig stresses the urgency of using every moment as an opportunity to, "Look for the essence of mind which is meaningful. When you look at mind, there is nothing to be seen. In this very not seeing, you see the definitive meaning."

She urges her students not to procrastinate in their dharma practice, thinking that they will do it when they have leisure time saying: "Human life is wasted in the thought, 'I will practice dharma later'."

So with the publication of *Machig Lapdron and the Practice of Chöd*, we come a little bit closer to feeling the spirit and incisive wisdom of this great yogini, who almost a thousand years after her death, warms our hearts with the intimacy of her presence and gives us a glimpse of Liberation.

Tsultrim Allione

Tsultrim Allione is the author of Women of Wisdom which contains a biography of Machig Lapdron, the first ever translated into English.



Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving Kindness

by Chögyam Trungpa, edited by Judith Lief Shambhala Publications, Boston & London, 1993

Start Where You Are A Guide to Compassionate Living

by Pema Chödrön Shambhala Publications, Boston & London, 1994

Since the death of Chögyam Trungpa in April 1987, Shambhala Publications has published numerous new titles by the late master. These books are often finely edited versions of earlier seminar teachings given in America during the 1970's and 1980's. *Training Your Mind and Cultivating Loving Kindness* is just such a commentary collected over a period of many



continued from page 1

gram. After the favorable outcome of a long discussion about the location of the construction area, we proposed setting up a general project committee composed of the head of the county, the director of the department of education and three chiefs from the Tibetan villages of Dangche. The previous evening we had proposed that the villages form a committee for the management of the school and to act as spokesman for the village proposing projects for improving living conditions there. The proposal was accepted. We also decided that the funds for the project would be deposited in the A.S.I.A. account in Peking from where it would be managed by Tserangtar upon authorization from A.S.I.A. in Rome.

The last point we considered was how to organize the celebration for the start of the work. We asked for a ritual of favorable auspices to be done according to ancient local tradition, choosing a favorable day according to Tibetan astrology and involving a purification ritual using sang and burying an authenticated vase on the site. We asked that the ritual be performed together by the local Gelugpa, Bonpo and Nyingmapa practitioners of the area. The local people were very pleased with this idea.

The meeting concluded with a full work program. The county would prepare an office for us in the hotel opposite the government building and would ask for two engineers from Xining to help Tony with the preparation of the designs.

During our stay in Dangche various technical problems arose related to the construction of the school. We finally decided that the entire project would be divided into two main projects and three secondary ones. The first project is for the construction of twelve classrooms on two floors to be built in Tibetan

style by a Chinese firm using a 50% Tibetan labor force. The second project is for the construction of dormitories for students and teachers, a surrounding wall, and a building on two floors containing the library, a meeting room and a music room are to be built, using traditional earth and timber materials. The work is being managed by the village committee and the local people are providing free labor. At the moment work has stopped because the land has frozen but will continue in the spring with the arrival of A.S.I.A. personnel.

The three secondary projects which need more detailed research are for heating, bathrooms and traditional roofs. In Tibetan houses they use simple coal stoves which tend to be smoky, unhealthy and give off dangerous fumes. Our idea is to introduce a project into the area to improve these stoves not only for use in the schools but also in the home so that they will be safer and more economic.

The project for the bathrooms will not be easy to resolve because of the frigid winter conditions. Water is frozen for most of the winter and so cannot be used for the bathrooms. We are studying the idea of using solar panels to heat the water but there is still a long way to go to find a solution.

The third project concerns traditional Tibetan roofs which are built of wood, with wood supporting beams and covered with beaten earth. Although they are very nice to see, they leak water under heavy winter rain.

The entire project for the Dangche school should finish in spring-summer of 1996 with a total cost of \$100,000 of which \$32,000 is already deposited in a Peking bank.

We spent the following days travelling to inspect traditional architecture, materials and techniques and meeting people from nearby villages. There were also long hours of discussions in our office, banquets and inter-

minable toasts until the arrival of the inauguration day.

The day that was favorable according to astrological calculations was October 3rd. The day before the inauguration we had measured the entire site, located the place where the vase should be buried and sited the main door, according to local geomancy, facing a mountain called the Mountain of Padmasambhava. When we had finished the village people started to put up a large colored tent with a big sign which read, "Inauguration of the Dangche Tibetan Language School." In the afternoon we worked on a new convention between A.S.I.A. and the county to be signed in the following days. When we returned home, we met one of the village chiefs who said he had heard that the government officials would prefer that we did not carry out religious rituals for the inauguration. We sent a car to inform all the Tibetans to come very early in the morning so that we could finish the ritual before the arrival of the authorities.

The morning of the inauguration we got up at dawn. It was grey and cold. The tent was in the middle of the field and there were a few people who were preparing the place for the Sang (smoke offering) and building a little bridge to cross the stream which ran along the side of the land. In the distance we could hear the sound of the bells and drums coming from the Bonpo temple. We decided to go and look for them and found Hamba and some practitioners at the temple waiting for other people. We went home to have tea and warm up a little!

When we returned the land was miraculously filled with children carrying flags coming from all the valleys dressed in traditional clothes. Gradually groups of Gelugpa and Bonpo monks started to arrive and finally the tantric Bonpo and Nyingmapa ngakpa practitioners. They had all brought ritual instruments with them. The Gelugpa monks were in scarlet robes,

the Nyingma distinguished by their white dress and brilliant red turbans and the Bonpo practitioners wore colored felt boots, flowing embroidered robes and towering head-dresses with large peaked flaps on three sides. They sat down in the tent and started the ritual.

In the meantime the land became filled with people. There were more than 600 children. The ritual was long but there was still no sign of the government officials. After a couple of hours the practitioners came out of the tent and started to dance very slowly to the accompaniment of clashing cymbals and the long horns. Then after a round of dance they all went together to the place where a large hole had been dug to bury the consecrated vases. Each tradition had brought a consecrated vase. As soon as the ritual was finished it began to rain a little which made the people very happy. Then suddenly the county officials arrived. The atmosphere was relaxed and everyone seemed very calm.

Tables were set up in front of the tent and Tony, Tserangtar and all the chiefs sat down for the usual ritual speeches. We spoke about the importance of Tibetan culture and of the collaboration among peoples. When the speeches had finished, the dance began. First there was a ritual dance with terrifying masks and then traditional Tibetan dancing and singing. After the entertainment we went to the community hall where a grand banquet had been prepared. As soon as we went into the building it started to rain heavily which everyone considered to be an auspicious sign. In the days that followed we carried out more inspections and also went to visit the capital of Chabcha. The convention was concluded and signed in our

DZAMCHOG FUNDING APPROVED

A.S.I.A. is happy to announce that their request for funding for the school and hospital project in Dzamchog, Chamdo in the Tibetan Autonomous Region has received final approval from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In February 1995 the Italian government should give the first funding for the project which will be launched by A.S.I.A. before August of the same year. The project involves the construction of an elementary school and a hospital as well as providing electricity for the village and the new buildings plus development of microprojects to improve the local economy and social conditions.

office. The Chinese authorities had accepted all our conditions and we were quite satisfied with the work to date.

In the spring we will start the more important work and hope to finish the project within a year. In the meantime we must find necessary funding to complete the school (about \$70,000) in quite a short time. For this we ask for the collaboration and commitment of all those who are sincerely interested to help this marvellous people and their precious culture.

Andrea Dell'Angelo, secretary-general of A.S.I.A. with its headquarters in Rome, has recently returned from a mission to Amdo for starting construction on the Dangche school project.



INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL NEWS



DEAR FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY,

With the production of the Mirror's first issue in America, we would like to take the opportunity to invite all individuals connected with the international Dzogchen community to participate in further development of communication between the different Gakyils and practitioners located around the world. One of the ways to accomplish this is to subscribe to the Mirror. Another way is to keep the Mirror updated on the activities of your Gakyil by submitting timely news about events in your local community. Personally, you can write articles and poems which reflect the many interests and experiences of the international community. These are just some of the possibilities.

At present, all Gakyils have a complimentary sub-

scription to receive vital information about current issues for the Dzogchen community, such as Namkhai Norbu's schedule, practice retreats, special calendars, Shang Shung Editions publications, and recent developments in Shang Shung Institute and A.S.I.A. programs. The Gakyils can then share the paper within their respective communities. In addition, all Sustaining Members, receive the Mirror as part of their annual membership fee. Beyond that, if you have the financial capability, please help support the Mirror's cost by individual subscription or through sharing small group subscriptions.

Over the years many people have participated in the growth of the paper, and brought it to its present global maturity and high standards. It

is the wish of Namkhai Norbu that we all continue to progress the work of the Mirror as a cooperative vehicle of communication between the individuals and communities associated with his lineage. Please think about how you can make a contribution at this critical time when communication is so important for us.

To submit material to the Mirror, please keep in a mind these basic guidelines. Articles and news updates can be sent to either the US office, where production is taking place, or if it is more convenient, to the Mirror office at Merigar in Italy. It is within our capability to translate most languages including Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and Yugoslavian. So please, do not let a lack of English limit your participation. The US deadlines for 1995 will be

on the 5th of the following months: February, April, June, August, October, and December. Therefore, if you are submitting to Merigar, the deadline is 1 week earlier. These deadlines may be negotiable under some circumstances. For longer articles, please make an inquiry to the editors. We welcome children and young adult's art work and articles. In general, all texts should be typed, double spaced and written in clear simple language with attention to details. Authors should supply a two sentence biography/by-line. Whenever possible, please send text on Macintosh disk for longer pieces, by E-mail or Fax. Post is fine, too. Above all, stay in touch!

Our best wishes for the New Year

The Mirror Staff

Merigar Christmas Retreat

December 28, 1994 – January 8, 1995

The retreat program is based on practices advised by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as follows:

December 28 17.00
Tundus with Guru Dragpur & Puja of Jigme Lingpa and Ngagong

December 29 to January 6
8.30 Yantra Yoga
10.00 Practice of Mandarava with explanation
15.30 Santi Maha Sangha Base and 1st Level practice and explanation
17.30 Long Tun with Guru Dragpur and Puja of Jigme Lingpa and Ngagong
19.00 Dance of the Vajra
21.00 Medium Tun with Simhamukha and Chöd

January 7
8.30 Yantra Yoga
10.00 Long Tun with Guru Dragpur and Puja of Jigme Lingpa and Ngagong for 10 hours

January 8
10.00 Ganapuja of Mandarava

Tashi Jong in India, will give teachings Merigar in late January. (Dates to be announced). At Losar, the Tibetan New Year in early March 1995, Merigar will host Sey Rinpoche, also from the Drugpa Kagyu tradition, who has been invited by Namkhai Norbu to teach.

Report from Merigar Work, Study and Practice — Keeping the Samaya

The news of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's ill health during his travels and teaching in America was the cause of much concern and sadness among the Dzogchen Community at Merigar. Although this seems to be a difficult and trying time due to the obstacles to Rinpoche's health, it is having a strong effect of drawing community people together through their group practice which helps us to realize the preciousness of Rinpoche and his teaching, and the importance of practicing now, for the benefit of Rinpoche, ourselves and the Dzogchen Community.

In response to Rinpoche's message to keep samaya with the Master and between practitioners pure and to practice, Merigar immediately launched into a series of extensive practice programs dedicated to the healing process of Rinpoche starting with 72 hours of Ngagong practice. This was followed by a non-stop week of short Ganapuja practice of Jigme Lingpa and then another week of daily 10 hour practices of Ngagong and Guru Dragpur. The program continues with daily practices of Mandarava, Guru Dragphur, the Ganapuja of Jigme Lingpa, and the Ngagong which are all closely linked to the healing process. The Christmas retreat from December 28th to January 8 will principally be a series of practices dedicated to The healing of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in addition to sessions of the Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga as well as Santi Maha Sangha first and base

level study and practice.

Work, study and practice related to the many projects envisioned by Rinpoche here at Merigar continue with dedication and enthusiasm. The decoration of the "great flower," the Gonpa, is being gradually brought to a conclusion through the skill of

the "Tantra of Instructions", the third of the four Tibetan Medical tantras. This tantra concerns the lung or the air humors, their origins and their cure. Dr. Pasang Yonten spoke about the psychological and psychotherapeutic approaches to illness from the point of view of Tibetan Medicine. As

the practices for the special days.

The program presents an intense need for space in which to accomplish all the activities planned. Since work at the Gonpa does not permit its use most of the time, the rest of the available space at the Merigar complex is used to its full advantage — it is quite normal to find a practice session going on in the "barn," another in the "little gonpa" while a meeting or study group meets on the veranda.

Future programs for 1995 include visits from visiting teachers. Dogu Chögyal Rinpoche, an incarnate master, from the Drugpa Kagyu tradition and currently head of the Tibetan community at



Anna Eid, Sonam Palmo, Tsering Wangchuk, and Isabel Wagner in the Gonpa.

Thangka painters. Tsering Wangchuk and Sonam Palmo, from Tashi Jong who have returned to finish painting the panels depicting the different lineages of masters. They will be joined in January by Dugu Chögyal Rinpoche, well known artist and master thangka painter, who will finish one of the panels of the lineages of masters he began last year. They are assisted by a group of international painters who have been able to study traditional thangka painting techniques during their work with the Tibetan master painters at the Gonpa.

From November 12th to November 26th, the "Yellow House" at Merigar hosted the fourth in a series of ongoing courses in Tibetan Medicine organized by the Shang Shung Institute in Italy. Course teachers for this seminar included Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, who taught on the first chapter of

in the previous seminars, the participants studied Tibetan with Merigar Tibetologist, Adriano Clemente.

A three month course on Tibetan language, open to all levels, was recently taught at merigar by Adriano. All the participants learned to read and write in Tibetan and to transcribe according to the Wylie transliteration system.

As the year draws to a close, the Merigar program of practice and study becomes even more concentrated. Besides ongoing courses for Santi Maha Sangha Base and First levels and practice sessions, every two weeks the children meet to do Kumar Kumari with Cristiana De Falco and to talk about the children's Santi Maha Sangha, written by Rinpoche this summer at the request of the children. Regular sessions of Yantra Yoga and Vajra dance continue to be held as well as

E-Mail for Idiots

by John Bidleman

Since the first article on digital connectivity, there have been many requests for an explanation of not only the basics of the Internet but also how to best access these services.

About 30 million people are connected to the Internet. This means:

- 1) They have a computer with a modem that is connected to a phone line.
- 2) Their computer's modem is capable of calling a computer service (carrier) that is directly hooked to the Internet.
- 3) They may move from computer to computer (as long as it is present in the Internet system) and collect files (ftp), give commands (telnet) and in some cases view graphics, listen to music and interactively

move through bodies of text (Wide World Web)

4) By typing a simple command they can "talk" to any person who is presently logged onto the Internet.

5) They can contact people via E-mail.

So if you're interested:

a) You first need a computer, a modem (with some kind of communications software) and an Internet connection, preferably with a local access number. The computer should be whatever you feel comfortable with. The two major systems IBM and MAC each have advantages and disadvantages so it is best to explore a little before buying. The modem's main feature is speed. Select a modem that is at least 9600. The 14.4 is faster and rapidly becoming the standard. Some

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New York Gakyil

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche arrived in New York City for treatment in early November following the diagnosis of his illness. Since that time, our practice schedule has expanded and drawn a large number of the local Sangha. Visitors passing through the New York City have been pleased to find numerous opportunities for practice dedicated to the long-life of Namkhai Norbu, Rinpoche.

For anyone visiting the city, here is a current list of NYC practice meetings. Monday night at 7:00 pm is our usual practice night at 83 Leonard Street, just below Canal Street and between Broadway and Church Ave. Tuesday is Yantra Yoga with Michael Katz at 106 Franklin Street, 6 pm at Pentacle Dance Studios. Beginning late in January, Michael will be teaching Yantra at 6 pm at the Open Center, 83 Spring Street. The Monday night practice will then shift to 7:30 pm.

Thursday evening we practice Ganapuja

at the Morocco Academy at 320 West 15th Street between 8th and 9th Avenues, Studio A. Sunday mornings at 890 Broadway, just above 19th Street, we meet at 9:30 am for a Ganapuja followed by the Vajra Dance. The Sunday space is ours until 1 pm. Please bring an offering, if you plan to attend the Ganapuja. Our main phone number is 212-560-7209, for information and leaving messages.

Between practices, members of the New York Community have offered their skills and assistance in many forms to Rinpoche and his family. Being so close only increases the urge we all have of offering something of benefit to Rinpoche. This is hardly the sort of extended stay in New York we would wish for Rinpoche, but as long as he is here, the New York Community has come together with strength and devotion.

Ed Goldberg

President of the NY Gakyil

NEW GAKYILS

LIMA, PERU

Yellow Gata Inurritegui
Rene Castro
Red Gianfranco Brero
Carlos Velaochaga
Blue Enrique Cox
Juan Bustamante

GAKYIL APPOINTMENTS FOR 1995

HOLLAND

Yellow Ina Schllingemann
Roland White
Red Ans Zwart
Doro Franck
Blue Guido Blondell
Loek Jehee

AUSTRIA

Yellow Sylvester Lohninger
Dr. Horst Gelter
Red Dr. Ursula Kogler

Blue Karin Koppensteiner
Stephan Peddi
Irmgard Pemwieser

NEW YORK CITY

Yellow Yannie Ting (Treas.)
Sally & Michael
Daner
Red Ed Goldberg (Pres.)
Kathy O'Connor (Secy.)
Blue Mariano Gill
Michael Katz

TSEGYALGAR AT CONWAY

Yellow Sally Atkinson
Vern Harrington (Treas.)
Efrem Marder (Pres.)
Red Woody Paparazzo
Catherine Ishi
Jason Williams
Blue Bodhi Krause
Lauri Marder
Glen Eddy

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Santi Maha Sangha for Children

by Cicci D'Arista



For several years Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has been giving teachings especially for children. He started with Kumar Kumari, based on traditional Yantra Yoga taught by Vairocana adapted to the physical constitution and breathing of children. In this form of Yantra Yoga there are no explanations on the breathing but the breathing exercises are replaced by certain sounds while breathing so that the children automatically breathe correctly. The great benefit of Kumar Kumari is that it coordinates energy during the early years which helps to reinforce growth.

Rinpoche gave this teaching almost three years ago. It starts with the nine purification breathings and is followed by ten movements and three Yantras which are very similar to those of Yantra Yoga for adults. However, the difference for children is that the breathing is always combined with the emission of a sound.

Just after this, Rinpoche gave a short Ganapuja for children. He called it the, "Ganapuja of cake and ice-cream," and told the children that it should be something very joyful, and that they should really enjoy the food during the Ganapuja.

When the children and a few adults did this short Ganapuja with him for the first time, Rinpoche did not give any explanation apart from explaining what to do. He only said that they should have a really joyful attitude while they were eating the ice-cream, etc. The children had really enjoyed it spontaneously without asking a lot of questions.

After this first time, some of us parents did the Ganapuja with the children a few more times. Each time we gave the children a little explanation so that they would continue to learn more about the meaning of the Ganapuja. We spoke about this with Rinpoche who told us

that it would be better not to explain everything all together but rather a bit at a time so that it would not become too heavy for the children.

It is true that children have a great interest in and need for spiritual teaching. It is not necessary that they come into contact with these things through reasoning alone. Children are much more integrated and in contact with the circumstances around them, the world and the universe, than we adults. There is not much need to define concepts, a child understands very easily and does not require a lot of words.

Finally last summer, at the request of the children, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche wrote *Santi Maha Sangha for Children*, a training in seven levels starting with that of the base. The concepts it contains are not very elementary and it is quite a precise and complex training. Each level is divided into the way of seeing, meditation and behavior and there is a kind of progress through these three in each level.

The various levels of training introduce the children to the nature of their body, voice and mind, the law of karma, the Three Jewels and Refuge. The last four levels are training on the Four Immeasurables.

The base level explains first of all what Santi Maha Sangha is and what the way of seeing means, how a positive way of thinking is the basis of everything and how illuminated masters have a positive way of seeing because negative thoughts no longer enter their minds. A "good" thought has a good effect for oneself and others, while a "bad" thought has only bad effects.

In the chapter on meditation Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche explains how any path or level can be positive if the thought it is based on is positive. He talks about the importance in training oneself to have good

thoughts and when bad ones arise how one should consider that the bad effect of those thoughts will turn back on one. The behavior of the children who follow the Santi Maha Sangha should be noble: respect for old people, friendship towards other children and love towards those who are weaker than oneself. This is the base, very simply and clearly. The first meeting that we had with the children was very interesting because they really needed to talk about themselves, how they saw themselves in relationship to the teaching, towards the community and in their normal daily life. What should they say outside of the community, what should they reveal? These were problems they were very concerned with. The great usefulness of this first meeting was, according to them, to speak about themselves. Sometimes it was difficult to speak about everything so we tried to keep our talk light. Finally, we integrated this with a children's Ganapuja.

At Merigar we already met four times with the children to speak about Santi Maha Sangha and we are going to continue our sessions. From the way they have gone I can say that since we have many aspects of teaching to work with it can become easy to organize too many activities in a single session. At the last meeting we started with the nine purification breathings for children, then study of the Santi Maha Sangha text giving a lot of space to the children's comments and ideas, then we came back to the breathing and then we finished with the Ah. I feel it is important to find a balance between keeping the session light and relating the teachings to the concrete experience of the children. Editor's note: *Kumar Kumari, Lo Yantra Yoga per Bambini* will shortly be published by Shang Shung Edizioni in Italian followed soon after by the English version. *Santi Maha Sangha per Bambini* is forthcoming in both Italian and English versions.

Cicci D'Arista has a degree in psychology. She has been living in Merigar for the past ten years where she has been active in organizing and explaining the Santi Maha Sangha teachings to children

To My Master My True Father The One that is Inseparable from the Three Jewels

To you I admit my sorrow, this sorrow based on illusion. Please cast a blind eye on my tears which wash the face of my ignorance, my lack of understanding the true condition revealed.

Please do not be displeased with my wish, if it is born from lack of clarity.

May your feet remain firmly on this earth, so you may speak the sacred words.

May you continue to place the holy seed in all those who have the cause to hear.

May your precious life not be subject to provocations and negativities blown by the winds of samsara.

May you remain seated on the softest of pillows, nurturing your sons and daughters in the sacred texts.

May your great mind become inseparable with holders of the samaya.

May you complete the great transmission, and see it flourish like flowers in the warm spring sun.

May you and you alone, through the light of your great clarity, determine when your sacred work is completed.

May you upon completion manifest the great transference for the benefit of all beings.

Joe Zurilo
Conway 1994



Santi Maha Sangha EXAMS & LEVEL 1 AT TSEGYALGAR

On October 28-30, 1994, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche administered the base level examination of the Santi Maha Sangha training for the second time at Tseggyalgar. Sixty individuals from all over the world took and passed the oral exam from 333 questions and answers found within the texts of *The Precious Vase* and *The Wish-Fulfilling Vase*, by Namkhai Norbu.

To order the base level texts and examination questions in English, please write the secretary at Tseggyalgar and specify your order:

<i>The Precious Vase</i> (bound)	\$25.00
333 Examination Questions (bound)	\$ 5.00
<i>The Wish-Fulfilling Vase</i> (manuscript)	\$20.00

Overseas orders please add \$10.00 shipping and postage for small orders, more for larger orders.
US orders, add \$4.00 per book up to \$10.00.

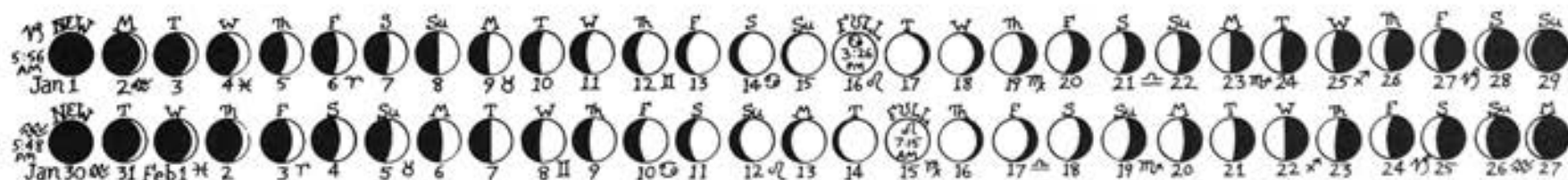
*Homage to the guru
who brought forth the 333 foldpath*

*Homage to the dakinis of the light
who fed me words,
sang mnemonics, danced lists*

*Homage to the dakinis of the night
who flashed visions of 5 x 7 cards
& brought confidence beyond answers*

*Homage to the sangha
for the inspiration of their diligence
& typed answers.*

Linda Merritt
Conway 1994



PRACTICE AND STUDY

Practices for Special Days

10TH MONTH, 29TH DAY SAT. 31ST DEC. 1994

NEW MOON. (There is no 30th day of this 10th month so we do the practice on the 29th.) This is an excellent day to practice Purification of the Six Lokas.

11TH MONTH, 8TH DAY MON. 9TH JAN. 1995

This is a particular day for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a Long or Medium Tun with intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

11TH MONTH, 10TH DAY WED. 11TH JAN. 1995

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. If you have the time and possibility it is good to do a Ganapuja collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, otherwise you can do the Long-life practice of "Union of Primordial Essences."

11TH MONTH, 15TH DAY MON. 16TH JAN. 1995

FULL MOON. This is an important day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences."

11TH MONTH, 25TH DAY THU. 26TH JAN. 1995

This is a day of the Dakinis in general, so if you have the opportunity practice a collective Ganapuja, with the transformation of the Dakini Simhamukha, and recite her heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do a Medium Tun either collectively or personally.

11TH MONTH, 30TH DAY MON. 30TH JAN. 1995

NEW MOON. This is a special day for purification practices so try to do "Purification of the Six Lokas."

12TH MONTH, 10TH DAY THU. 9TH FEB. AND FRI. 10TH FEB. 1995

The 10th day of the 12th month is doubled this year. This day is the anniversary of Guru

Padmasambhava's coronation as Prince of Orgyen at the invitation of King Indrabodhi. We can perform a Ganapuja collectively or do the Long-life practice, "Universal Wisdom Union" either collectively or personally, according to circumstances.

12TH MONTH, 11TH DAY SAT. 11TH FEB. 1995

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

12TH MONTH, 15TH DAY WED. 15TH FEB. 1995

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

12TH MONTH, 18TH DAY SAT. 18TH FEB. 1995

This day is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen master Longchen Rabjam Longchenpa (1386-1363). On this very important day try to do the Guruyoga Agar Lamai Nalgor, Guruyoga with the White Ah, either collectively or personally.

12TH MONTH, 25TH DAY FRI. 24TH FEB. 1995

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

12TH MONTH, 30TH DAY WED. 1ST MARCH 1995

NEW MOON. This is a good day for purification practices. Therefore try to do "Purification of the Six Lokas."

Vajra Dance Update & Video Project

by Prima Mai

In the Spring of 1993, Namkhai Norbu asked the New York Gakyil to fundraise for an instructional video on the Vajra Dance. In response to their appeals in the Mirror and in a letter sent to all the gakyils, many individuals and gakyils from around the world sent in funds to help support this project. Approximately \$20,000 was raised and spent thus far. So you may have wondered what has happened to the Vajra Dance Video?

From the onset, there have been a number of factors which have arisen to delay the final outcome of this project. Mainly, the continuation of changes in the steps and movements of the dance has rendered much of the previous filming obsolete, due to the changes. If you remember, there was a point when we were ready to confirm final changes. You might also remember an article on these "new" changes. Well, let's say, that the champagne bottles have moved back into the freezer, as we still have not yet arrived at a resolution to the changes.

Transcriptions of the oral translation of the Tibetan text into Italian by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, made up of 14 audio tapes running 90 minutes each have not been easy

to translate into correct movements. Some mistakes in terms of left or right, open or close, difficult to translate from Tibetan into Italian, have found their way into his text. During Rinpoche's stay this year at Merigar in 1994, he devoted some time to review carefully the doubts which had arisen among the Vajra Dance teachers. To our surprise, we discovered that there are some movements which will return to the initial movements just as Rinpoche had originally taught. Furthermore, there appeared a few totally new turns and mudra changes. This has led us to wonder what other clarifications we might find in the original text found in these audio tapes. To discover this, Rinpoche has promised, as soon as he is feeling well, and there is time, that he will dedicate time to work this out.

Because of this situation, it is understandable that we postpone the film project until we are sure of the movements and steps. The Vajra Dance is totally new on this earth. As usual in the western world, we want to do and have everything as quickly as possible. Let us be more patient, and study and practice what we have already learned. From my end, I will start to work on a new flyer

which incorporates information about all the changes.

For those who have given generously to the video project, I would like to speak on behalf of the individuals responsible and assure everyone that funds raised have not been wasted. An educational film can still be realized according to the original plan. Furthermore, the New York Gakyil is still fundraising to this end. The Vajra Dance, itself is definitely still a "work in progress," so to speak, and we still do not know its full dimension. While teaching the new changes, I feel it is important always to remember where the Vajra Dance is coming from and how it made its way into our world. It contains a hidden treasury in its harmonious movements and sounds. For me, it remains a powerful practice and even if I have to do a different arm movement at a certain place and I still don't know it correctly, it doesn't matter so much, as long as we practice this dance with the correct intention. Slowly then, we enter the dimension of this treasure, which is destined to become a truly helpful and powerful practice in this world of increasing confusion.

Prima Mai is an authorized teacher of the Vajra Dances.

Sey Rinpoche Teaches in Europe February - March 1995

Merigar is currently arranging a teaching tour through Europe for Sey Rinpoche from the Drugpa Kagyu tradition. Sey Rinpoche, the son of Apho Rinpoche, has lived for many years in Manali, India where he gives teachings.

Teachings will take place over a 3-4 day week-end. Approximate dates are:

LONDON: last weekend in January or first in February

MUNICH: second weekend in February

VIENNA: third weekend in February

MERIGAR: Losar

AMSTERDAM: second weekend in March

ADVANCED YANTRA YOGA TRAINING

August 21 - September 3, 1995 Merigar, Italy

An advanced training course in Yantra Yoga will be held at Merigar for all those who wish to deepen their knowledge of Yantra Yoga and for those who are interested to teach it. The course will not be open to beginners. Participants should already have a good knowledge of the basis of the practice. The

course is tentatively scheduled to be held under the supervision of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche who will give a certificate of participation to qualified individuals at the conclusion of the course. The certificate (released on the personal approval of the Master) will authorize that person to teach Yantra Yoga.

Vajra Dance in Geneva

In Geneva, this autumn, we received Adriana Dal Borgho, who taught us the Vajra Dance for a week. Twelve practitioners from Switzerland and France gathered in a dance space rented for the course whose dimension just fit our small handpainted mandala.

Slowly we learned every little spot on the mandala. Memorizing the steps depended on our presence and secondary relationship to the color layout, chanted syllables, and coordination of the dancers. But at some point, we could no longer keep the steps in our memory. Tirelessly we repeated the steps and phrases until we became the Song of the Vajra. With patient sweetness, Adriana guided us precisely in learning the complex Vajra dance. Slowly our bod-

ies and minds relaxed. The group became more harmonized as we began to coordinate the movements and become aware of the global flowing of the dance.

The week coming to an end, one day the room was filled with an awful smell of burnt plastic, a chance mishap! We did intensive practice of Guru Dragpur. Our mandala still smells but we will have to do the dance hundreds of times in order to purify this!

Finally we concluded with a Ganpuja. As we still had one day free, we went to the Yverdon Les Bains, an open air hot spring followed by a cous-cous dinner prepared by Frederico.

Jocelyn Carasso

VAJRA
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years Trungpa taught the root text of the *Seven Points of Mind Training* by Chekawa Yeshe Dorje (1102-1176). Trungpa's main source is always drawn from Jamgon Kongtrul the Great's (1813-1899) commentary, *The Basic Path Toward Enlightenment* (byang chub gzhung lam) contained in the latter's collection, *Five Treasuries*, an indication of the value placed on these teachings for future generations. His own root teacher, Jamgon Kongtrul of Sechen was an incarnation of this renowned 19th century Rime master.

Chögyam Trungpa loved these slogans commonly referred to as Lojong (mind training) which he taught extensively, and with great relish, throughout his teaching career in the West. He even created beautifully calligraphed posters and flash cards to facilitate their memorization. According to early Kadampa practitioners, the idea behind these slogans is that our habituation to self-clinging is so deeply rooted that we need articulate reminders to reverse the inclination to favor ourselves as more important than others. Once memorized, the various slogans are intended to percolate up into our awareness during subtle moments of ego solidification or tension as a helpful means of recognition. Many of the slogans read like ordinary homilies of human decency, such as, "Don't ponder the injured limbs of others," "Be grateful to everyone," or "Don't malign others," and "Don't bring things to a painful point." Their real strength seems to be that they progress in sequence with the paramitas as a method to unfold one's natural capacity for compassion. Trungpa says, in regard to the slogans, "The approach to moral action here is one of removing obstacles of limited vision, fear and self-clinging, so that one's actions are not burdened by the weight of self-concern, projections and expectations. The slogans are meant to be "practiced." That is, they need to be studied and memorized. At the same

time, they need to be "let go." They are merely conceptual tools pointing to nonconceptual realizations...Whatever arises in one's mind or experience is let go into the greater space of awareness that slogan practice generates. It is this openness of mind that becomes the basis for cultivation of compassion."

Trungpa's commentary is at his best – thoroughly hip to Western modes of self-deceit, playful but uncompromisingly serious. If you're looking for solace, you won't find it here. Our Kadampa ancestors meant business when it came to realizing Mahayana ideals of holding others more dear than oneself. They died for it. Although Trungpa always stressed the importance of oral transmission, his posthumous books often communicate a direct experience of the clear living waters of previous lineage masters, in this case, the early Kadampa tradition on whose behalf he speaks.

Start Where You Are by Pema Chödrön is an even more folksy approach to the *Seven Points of Mind Training*. Pema Chödrön, a western nun and teacher writes candidly and often with humor about mingling one's practice with daily life. With great simplicity, she really gets down to the essentials of how we continually remain blind to our own shadow while expertly knowledgeable about others' shortcomings. She's especially adept at communicating the psychological realities of integrating compassion for others as we relate with our own negativities and often bungled interpersonal relationships – so easy in theory but so difficult in practice. In this respect, she tells many delightful stories from her own experiences. While sacred biographies generally highlight the accomplishments of realized beings, it's always refreshing to hear wake up stories of ordinary practitioners struggling toward realization. The following remains my favorite among her repertoire:

"I had an interesting experience of something surprising me on retreat. It was a

very strong experience of shunyata, the complete emptiness of things. I had just finished my evening practice. I had been practicing all day, after which you might think I would be in a calm, saintly state of mind. But as I came out of my room and started to walk down the hall, I saw that in the outer serving area someone left dirty dishes. I started to get really angry.

"Now, in this retreat we put our names on our dishes. Everyone has a plate and a bowl and a mug and a knife and a fork and a spoon, and they all have our name on them. So I was walking down and I was trying to see whose name was on those dishes. I was already pretty sure whose name was on them, because there was only one woman of our group of eight who would leave such a mess. She was always just leaving things around for other people to clean up. Who did she think was going to wash these dishes, her mother? Did she think we were all her slaves? I was really getting into this. I was thinking, 'I've known her for a long time and everyone thinks she's a senior practitioner, but actually she might as well have never meditated for the way she's so inconsiderate of everybody on this planet.

"When I got to the sink, I looked at the plate, and the name on it was Pema, and the name on the cup was Pema and the name on the fork was Pema, and the name on the knife was Pema. It was all mine! Needless to say, that cut my trip considerably. It also stopped my mind."

Thus, Pema writes, on the slogan, "Whatever you meet unexpectedly join with meditation," in practical terms, the kind of surprise leap from conceptual mind to non-conceptual awareness, Trungpa indicated in his commentary.

Jacqueline Gens
Before becoming one of the editors of the Mirror, Jacqueline Gens served on the Blue Gakyil in New York City. She worked many years as an administrator at the Naropa Institute, the college founded by the late Chögyam Trungpa.

The Poetry of Shabkar

continued from page 4

for the teaching, and the obstacles they have had to overcome, a strong wish can arise to emulate them.

A teaching of this life story functions in that way, for, in whatever place he stayed, whomever he encountered, Shabkar followed his master's advice precisely. He diligently practiced meditation, achieved realizations,

and through this, tirelessly benefited beings, through his life-example, through giving formal teachings, and through teaching-songs arisen in the mirror of the mind.

Through his pure practice of meditation, and the benefit he brought to himself and others, Tsogdruk Rangdrol became famed throughout the country as

Lama Shabkar, "White-foot-step-lama," because it was said, every area of Tibet through which Shabkar passed, turned white with virtue.

Constance Wilkinson is a writer and editor who lived many years in Nepal. She now lives with her family on Cape Cod. She edited the *Life of Shabkar* recently published by SUNY, 1994.

Rigpa

To: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Rinpoche
New York

Dear Rinpoche,

On behalf of Sogyal Rinpoche, Dzogchen Rinpoche and all the Rigpa Sangha, I would like to send the very warmest wishes for your swift recovery. We are all thinking of you at this time, and praying strongly for your good health and long-life.

Also, we in the Rigpa Sangha would like to let you know how deeply we appreciate the skill, wisdom and compassion with which you are bringing the Dzogchen teachings to the world. There is not one of us who has not been touched profoundly by your teachings, and we all join together in requesting you to live long.

*Great Secret Treasure of all the Buddhas:
Supreme, unsurpassed teachings of Dzogpachenpo –
Like a sun rising in the sky
Shine and spread through the whole world!*

With deepest respect and gratitude
from all of us in Rigpa,

Patrick Gaffney
December 2nd, 1994

Joy in the Master's Presence

continued from page 1

the Secretary of Tsegyalgar, Tibetologist, translator, fiddle player and all round man of many marvels, who was to be Rinpoche's assistant, was sitting to one side at another desk, grinning broadly.

Rinpoche was laughing as I crossed the room, walking across the bare wooden boards, across the big Tibetan rug, to sit in a chair the other side of the desk from him.

He was laughing as he arranged the cards with numbers on them into a perfect fanned circle in the small wicker basket on the desk before him. Each numbered card represented one of the three hundred and thirty three questions I might have to answer on the texts of the Santi Maha Sangha training which the candidates had studied and committed to memory. Rinpoche continued laughing as he told me to pick ten cards for the ten questions I would answer, and as I (with dry mouth and throat) haltingly asked him if I should pick all the cards at once before answering the first question, or if I should pick one card at a time and answer each question in turn as I picked that card. (Such absurd complication!)

He was still laughing as I picked ten cards all at once, as he had instructed, and as he arranged the cards in a line across the desk in front of him.

I was the fourth person to go in for the exam that day, the first day of the two solid days of examinations at Conway. I had been waiting in the office next door, and had watched the two candidates before me go in full of apprehension and come out wreathed in joyful smiles of success. But I was still scared silly when it was my turn to go in: scared silly, and sharply present.

Someone had said to me during the retreat that preceded the exam: "But surely you don't think you can fail, do you? I mean, you translated all the books!" But you'd better believe I thought I could fail! Not that I hadn't studied – and practiced, too. I'd studied at home, and then during the retreat at Conway itself. The old Conway Grammar School, now so beautiful after all the work that had gone into fundraising and re-building, had been a hotbed of groups of diligent students in corners huddled over file cards, engaged in endless question and answer sessions.

Study groups on the staircase! Study groups in the corridor! Study groups in the dorm! Study groups in the library! Study groups on the lawn! Late night study groups! Early morning study groups! Practice groups! Yantra yoga sessions! Talk about intense, this was mega-intensity, intensity to the power of ten, or perhaps, better, to the power of three hundred and thirty three.

And then people going off for walks down the road, up the woods, talking Santi Maha Sangha blues, mumbling Santi Maha Sangha mnemonics to themselves – mystic ciphers incomprehensible to anyone other than their inventors, personal memory joggers, mad back to school aide-memoirs, brain teasers, brain boggles. O, how we discussed everything together, trying out answers, comparing notes! Then what a great time we had just hanging out together, trying to cool out, get some space, loosen up, let go of it, wind it down, open it up!

"We have created a new culture!" Rinpoche exclaimed with a smile as he strolled

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Shang Shung Institute Inauguration

Conway, Massachusetts October 12, 1994

ON OCTOBER 12TH, 1994, THE SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE FOR TIBETAN STUDIES HELD ITS INAUGURATION amid an intimate and relaxed gathering of about 200 old and new friends in the annex of the former Conway Grammar School. Professor Namkhai Norbu, founder of Shang Shung Institute had travelled from Italy to be present for the event where local neighbors, children, young adults, professors, scholars, Tibetans, community members and simply the curious, all mingled comfortably before the informal proceedings began. A traditional Tibetan meal prepared by the family of Ngawang Phuntsog was served buffet style in the annex to the accompaniment of Tibetan dancing and folk songs. Members of the Dzogchen Community at Tseggyalgar had worked well into the eleventh hour to finalize last minute details on the restoration of the building. Even as guests began to arrive for the day's events, open house and exhibits, a painting crew on ladders persevered in painting just the front of the three story building with a brilliant coat of yellow paint. In the late afternoon of a classic Indian Summer day, newly hung banners with the insignia of Shang Shung provided a magical transformation into a place we hope will emerge as a distinct identity in North America for the survival of the wisdom traditions of Tibetan culture.



Professor Namkhai Norbu



Professor Janet Gyatso

from Dharamsala, India who presented Tibetan Community; Chöephe Ngawang, a composer of contemporary Tibetan songs and singer of traditional folk music currently studying at Middlebury College; Anne Klein, Associate Professor of Religion at Rice University; Janet Gyatso, Professor of Religion at Amherst College; Glen Eddy, Thangka painter; Paula Barry, American Representative of A.S.I.A.; and Jim Valby, Ph.D. Tibetan Studies and secretary at Tseggyalgar.

While many topics were covered in the presentations, the main point emphasized again and again throughout the evening was the value of preserving Tibetan culture within a living matrix of language and culture literacy in order to benefit directly Tibetans themselves. Among the speeches, it was clear that the many contributions in the field of Tibetan language and cultural studies already made by Professor Norbu have been the driving force behind Shang-Shung Institute and A.S.I.A. projects currently in development. Namkhai Norbu's activities and vast scholarship encompass many secular works on history and language published in his own language, such as, children stories, a three volume History of Tibet,

Speakers at the Inauguration included: Director of Tseggyalgar, Woody Paparazzo who opened the proceedings; Professor Namkhai Norbu, founder of Shang Shung Institute and Professor Emeritus of Tibetan and Mongolian Language at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the University of Naples, Italy; Enrico Dell'Angello, Director of Shang Shung Institute in Italy; Ngawang Phuntsog, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Massachusetts, Ms. Nyima Chokpa, a medical doctor a traditional kata on behalf of the



Visiting guest Gelek Rinpoche with Namkhai Norbu

When we speak about Tibetan culture, then people think preservation of Tibetan culture is only for Tibetans but in a real sense it is not only for Tibetans. You see, Tibetans are living upon the earth. There is also Tibetan culture and history and everything else. So if there is something valuable, that is like a treasure for all sentient beings on the earth. We know very precisely every place in ancient times where there have been many civilizations which then disappeared. Sometimes when they disappeared nothing remained. We know only their names. But now, there are still Tibetan people and Tibetan culture and history. Everything is alive, so we can still observe the situation. For example, I went many times to Tibet and when I went into the country side, I saw so many Tibetan children who grow up without receiving any kind of education. They are growing like trees or plants. So you see that means a kind of

sign of the disappearance of Tibetan culture and knowledge. We are trying to do something to preserve Tibetan culture. That is a wonderful thing. Preserving Tibetan culture in a museum or laboratory is a dead culture. I don't think that is enough really.



Professor Namkhai Norbu

One of the most important things the Institute in Italy has created in the past year are the archives. There is a library with more than 400 volumes. Many manuscripts are unique in this world. A film archive with over 900 videos on Tibet belonging to the thirties and forties is the most comprehensive of its kind in the world. We are working nowadays on a project concerning Tibetan art. Another project we are trying to accomplish is digital communication between libraries in Europe for Tibetan texts. My personal wish is that all these activities will develop even more in Conway as a school where people interested in cooperating together to preserve Tibetan culture presently on the verge of extinction could meet and exchange knowledge.



Enrico Dell'Angello

Enrico Dell'Angello



Professor Anne Klein

and an anthropological account of Tibetan nomads. The scope of Namkhai Norbu's interests became even more poignantly apparent when both professors, Janet Gyatso and Anne Klein, independently of one another, spoke passionately about his inspiration and direct encouragement in their own scholarly pursuits.

The Mirror

Tibetan culture is the one living link with a distant past culture – a civilization which is really rooted in the innermost core of the human spirit. Look at the beauty of oral transmission. It just comes down from the Buddha himself. That shows continuity – a profound continuity of experience that human kind has accumulated over the years. How can we as reasonable human beings let this culture be destroyed? I think it would be a shame on all of us if we do not actively participate in making sure of its continuity.

Professor Ngawang Phuntsog



What kind of treasure is there in the world
There is a treasury of gold in the world
If you are not experienced in
recognizing the yellow of gold
You're likely to mistake copper for gold

A folk song from Western Tibet
(translated by Janet Gyatso)

News from Tara Mandala

On November 12, 1994, Guru Rinpoche Day, we gathered on 850 acres of land in Southwestern Colorado, about two and a half hours north of Santa Fe, at about ten in the morning. This was to have been the day that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was to consecrate Tara Mandala's retreat land which, due to his recent illness, he was not able to do. However, he requested that we do the ceremonies we would have done with him with the exception of the blessing of the Naga house which he will do when he comes to the land sometime in the future.

A group of forty people struggled through mud and snow up the hill, past the prayer flags, wet and stuck to the poles, to the cosy 30 foot yurt heated by a wood stove-

which we had erected during the summer (a circular insulated canvas building on a wooden platform modeled after Mongolian dwellings, surrounded with many windows). There was a feeling of something between elation and "What am I doing here?" in our efforts to get through the obstacles of the snow and the sadness that Rinpoche wouldn't be here with us in person. But even in slushy weather we experienced the beauty and quietness of the land. The feast offerings for our Ganapuja in the center of the yurt were abundant and rich.

As we began the practice of the Ganapuja, the weather started shifting. When we got to the guardians' offerings, light illuminated the circular space of the yurt through its round window in the roof.

When we got to the end, Tsultrim spoke about the prayers, intentions and purpose of the land as a seat of Dzogchen practice. As she finished, it started to pour rain intensely. It was so loud on the roof, everyone stopped talking and looked up. After about five minutes, the rain completely stopped and a golden light appeared outside. We then discovered there were two rainbows with vivid colors. They were unusual for rainbows because they were only partly in the sky and partly running down the hillside near the yurt on the land. They soon vanished. We felt joy; some people were crying. We strongly felt Rinpoche's presence with us. At 1:15 in the afternoon, we felt the consecration was completed with this sign. We then went to the

place of the prayer flag banners, down the hill a bit. Ten flagpoles with five colored banners and a stone circle for sang look out to the mountains of the Continental Divide. As we all went down they began blowing in the wind, drying and looking beautiful in the sun. A group of ravens flew overhead talking. At the end, we did the Sang rite and Lungta empowerment with a strong wind blowing. There was a lot of smoke going in circles, not just in one direction. Everyone was covered with smoke at one time or other while ravens were flying through the smoke as it billowed up.

Tara Mandala is now in the process of planning our summer retreat. A Mandarava Retreat dedicated to Rinpoche's long life is scheduled

the evening of May 5 through the morning of May 14, 1995 ending on a Full moon, followed by a break during which people with transmission from Namkhai Norbu, Rinpoche can practice external Rushan in the isolated valleys and forests of the land. Starting May 19th through 28th, 1995, there will be a Santi Maha Sangha Semdzin retreat. Write or call for further information. People from all over the world are invited to participate. Tara Mandala will provide free airport pick-up from Durango, Colorado, for those arriving from outside the US.

Please contact:
Tara Mandala, PO Box 3040,
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147,
Tel. 303-264-6177 or FAX
303-264-6169 if you would
like to receive information
about our other programs.

*In the past we Vajra disciples
defiling ourselves with the five poisonous emotions
have acted contrary to the Master's teachings.
Humbly, we confess these lapses of body, voice and mind.*

*Other than you, until we realize enlightenment,
There is no hope, no place of refuge, no protection.
You, whose kindness is so vast, do not abandon us
Please seize us with the iron-hook of your compassion
and love.*

*Since sentient beings of the three realms in general,
And in particular, your intimately connected Vajra disciples,
Are not yet free from this vicious samsara.
Merciful Teacher, please don't leave us.*

*Since the unfolding of the Buddha's teaching in general
And in particular, the Dzogchen teachings
Are still not yet completed.
Please remain on earth to teach us.*

*Without hesitation I make this request:
Dakinis, who protect the virtuous in general
And Vajra Guardians who protect especially the secret teachings,
Do not be distracted from your vigil of compassion and love.*

Your last disciple, Phuntsog Wangmo

*Colophon:
You who, like the Buddha, see everything in the three realms (are
free of illness). This so called illness, I think, has arisen because
all sentient beings have exhausted their merits and especially
because we have not maintained our samaya. Therefore, I confess
all my past actions and in the future promise to maintain my vows.*

A Poem for His Birthday



Born in 1965 in Lhasa, Dr. Phuntshog Wangmo completed her studies in medicine and astrology there. Since 1988, she has divided her time between Lhasa where she teaches at the university and Derge, in East Tibet, where she is the only practicing doctor.

(The translation from the Tibetan was prepared by Jacobella Gaetani, Alex Siedlecki, Jim Valby, and Constance Wilkinson)

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Shang Shung Institute

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Far Eastern Studies. For the past ten years, he has translated, as an independent scholar, many Dzogchen tantras. The long-range goal of the Institute's translation project is to translate, over the next ten years all the essential Dzogchen tantras into English. Initially these translations will be published internally for the use of practitioners only. The Institute will explore archival and scholarly use of its library at a later time. Two groups have begun regular weekly meetings. One group is working on translation of the *rise mo byung rgyal* Tantra into English from Tibetan, after which Tsegylgar was named. The second group is working with Jim's literal translation of the *kun byed rgyal po*

Tantra, refining the translation and offering their collective insights into its meaning from a practitioner's perspective. This work is greatly facilitated by the cross reference computer program Jim developed over many years which contains a highly specialized Dzogchen vocabulary. A conference to explore the use of computers in the study of Tibetan language is currently being organized by the Institute for October 1995.

Other promising projects are in the initial planning stages: The Institute hopes to develop a number of exciting proposals recently submitted such as a conference called *Visions of Earth* to bring together people in the fields of bio-architecture, ecology, geomancy, and multi-cultural

leaders to explore the ways in which we experience our fundamental relationship with the earth.

An area we are most pleased with is our new found friendship with the Tibetan community with whom we wish to strengthen ties further. We are looking into a number of projects involving Tibetan folk music and dance. A second International conference on Tibetan language will also be formed sometime in the future.

Having barely begun, already our plate is full. Shang Shung Institute in America seems full of promise and gaining momentum everyday. For information about current programs, or proposals, please contact the Institute.



DZOGCHEN LINEAGE MASTERS

A series of eight color note cards from the murals in Merigar's Gonpa. Proceeds will go toward the publication of an illustrated book about the Gonpa with a commentary by Namkhai Norbu. To order, please send \$15 plus \$1.50 for shipping to:
Tsegylgar
P.O. Box 277
Conway MA 01341

REFLECTIONS

Together in a Hard Time

by Barrie Simmons

*What they set out to do, they
brought to pass*

*All things hang like a drop of dew
upon a blade of grass.*

— W.B. Yeats

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is gravely ill, and all of us are anguished. At the same time, if we consult our awareness, there are utterly convincing grounds for reasonable faith in his recovery and long life. He has, as many of us know directly, overcome apparently insuperable obstacles many times. He is doing his best, proceeding with the same awareness that permitted the early detection of his disease. He is in the good hands of the finest doctors possible and above all, his own. This great warrior has committed himself to specific projects, in this life, for the benefit of all beings, with no intention of being stopped. Vast and positive forces are at work for our Teacher, some of which we have learned about from him, others beyond our ken—most of them outside the confines of medical knowledge. Our practice and our commitment, he has told us, can contribute concretely to these healing energies.

Nonetheless, there is no point retreating into anaesthesia, telling ourselves we are detached and unperturbed; for us, so far from pure vision, that is as much a symptom of panic as is loss of calm and control.

In short, this is no time for either style of neurotic confusion. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has taught us for twenty years to face the fact of impermanence, that everything which is born dies, and that our own and anyone's death can come at any moment.

*This existence of ours is as
transient as autumn clouds.*

*To watch the birth and
death of beings is like
looking at the movements
of a dance.*

*A lifetime is like a flash of
lightning in the sky.*

*Or a torrent rushing down a
steep mountain.*

— Diamond Sutra

Rather than collapse into helplessness, or flee into denial, this is a moment to take the teaching seriously, understand and apply it. In a certain sense, what is happening is not unusual, and our job is just a normal day's work in samsara. We can, if we so choose, behave responsibly, like adults conscious of the preciousness of human life and of our infinite debt to the Master.

We should understand that the guru is a projection of one's own mind, the highest and innermost essence put outside and away until one is ready to live it fully. Through guru yoga we can make contact with that state of consciousness and develop it in ourselves. But while he is me,

I am not him. Regardless of where or how he is, I have my own responsibilities, in my own specific circumstances. As he is realized, I can still remain obscured by ignorance. He may be in New York, but I am still in Rome. If he eats a sandwich, I can still be hungry. Some of us seem to identify so closely with him, or cast him in such a role, that we do not distinguish our existence from his. That error, to project our very living on to him, is not helpful.

We can not give away, even to him, the responsibility of our lives; it is absurd to neglect our own necessities and yet expect him to protect us from consequences. He shows us the way, but we must work out our own salvation, with diligence (All this, of course, he has taught us over and over again.) His problem is no reason for us to be ill, disoriented, or feel our being ebb away. That serves no purpose. Instead of our weakness, we must summon our faith, our practice and our resolution.

"Each relationship is energy. The concept of sangha, for instance, means a group of people working together as brothers and sisters, working together as spiritual friends to one another...In order to be spiritual friends you have to be open to each other... Being

open is not dependent on others, which blocks their openness. In other words, the sangha does not create a situation of claustrophobia for each person in it. If somebody falls, you still stand independently; because you are not leaning on the other person, you don't fall. When one person falls, it doesn't create a chain reaction of other people falling as well. So independence is equally important as being together, acting as an inspiration to one another." Thus writes Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche.

The Vajra brothers and sisters caring for Rinpoche in New York are giving a clear example of appropriate dedication. They are dealing with the situation seriously, each doing their best in a particular capacity with unyielding commitment to positive outcome. We should be grateful to them not only for their indispensable help to our beloved Rinpoche, but also for the teaching they are giving us.

As H.H. the Dalai Lama has written, "One thing that influences my outlook is that if in any situation there is no solution, there is no point in being anxious. The forces at work have their own momentum, and what's going on now is the product of what went on before, and if this generation is not in control of all those forces, then this process will

continue...If there is trouble, some understanding brings a benefit from it. Life becomes useful when you confront a difficulty; it provides a kind of value for your life to have the kind of responsibility to confront it and overcome it. Whereas if you do not feel such difficulties, there is no such responsibility, no role for you to play in your life....That challenge allows you to practice your ability. Basically, the purpose of life is to serve other people. From that point of view, a difficulty is really a great opportunity...So from that angle it is a great honor, a great privilege...to face these times, to confront them."

The challenge now is to help. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has made clear in the present crisis, that we can best do so through practice and keep pure the samaya, our precious commitment to him, to one another and, through him, to our enlightenment and to help all beings. What we undertook to do, we can bring to pass.

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

Barrie Simmons, a psychotherapist in Rome, is a member of the Blue Gakyil at Merigar. He was asked to provide a view from Merigar on the current situation.

Heartfelt Call to the Practitioners of the Dzogchen Community

by Elio Guarisco

Due to the news that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has developed such a worrisome illness as leukemia, our minds are greatly disturbed. Rinpoche's presence among us is critical at this point in the history of the community.

Rinpoche is still in the process of transmitting his precious teaching to students who have not yet matured to the right degree through the instructions received over the years. Only a limited of them would be able to carry on a deep practice. If Rinpoche were suddenly to leave us, the community as a whole along with its organizational aspect would face serious difficulties in continuing its role of preserving the Dzogchen transmissions we have received.

A few years after his enlightenment, the Buddha disappeared from the sight of his disciples. Legend has it that he departed to the "realm

ruled by the thirty-three gods" where his mother had been reborn. The effect his departure had on his disciples was devastating; monks, nuns, and other practitioners searched everywhere desperately for the whereabouts of the Buddha. Only after some time did the Buddha reappear in the region of Nepal. Teaching his mother was only a contingent reason, Buddha had intentionally led himself away from his students to urge them to realize how precious and rare his presence was.

For us too, it is easy to become accustomed to the Master's presence undermining both him and his teaching by seeing him as a common individual and his teaching as a commodity one can afford. In this situation, when obstacles beset the life of the Master we are urged to realize the importance of his presence and his advice. The pious

Tsongkhapa, an emanation of Guru Rinpoche, said that to meet the Master with whom we are karmically linked is the result of good causes and is a "search" created and pursued over many lifetimes, not an accident. Once he has been found he should be given the utmost respect and esteem like a priceless gem which fulfills the core of our ultimate aspirations. It would be senseless to regard one's master as an ordinary human being.

Tsongkhapa further compared the Master to a fine drizzle that cools the heat of passions. This means that to effect a real "happening" within oneself, one needs a spiritual master endowed with the energy of experience and realization.

Longchenpa also stated, "Wonderful benefits are acquired by meeting the master; one enters the unmistakable way; one knows what is wor-

thy and what is not; arrives at the rank of that noble being and in no time reaches that place of freedom."

Although it may be said that the ultimate master is oneself, to disregard the teacher and his teaching, the key to actualize the ultimate master, is a shameless view and way of behavior. In particular, to actualize the Dzogchen teaching one relies on the transmission of an individual, not simply on books and intellectual knowledge. Such realization rarely occurs without the physical presence of the Teacher. That is why oral instructions often tell us, "One's master is kinder than all the enlightened ones."

Rinpoche's illness is certainly more worrisome to us students than to himself because to be left without his presence would be like being abandoned on the dunes of an endless desert without water

or provisions.

We are confident and pray that Rinpoche's will overcome his illness and, given the above considerations, I urge myself and all those who cherish Dzogchen teaching and community to refresh our awareness of the preciousness and rarity of the Master and thus strengthen our link with him.

May this awareness, aided by the appropriate practices to help the master, the matchless king of the ultimate realm of the Self-perfection, overcome quickly the obstacles and remain with us for long time.

Elio Guarisco is a writer and Tibetan translator who has written a number of articles and reviews for the Mirror.

Joy in the Master's Presence

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amidst the study groups one day during the retreat, clearly satisfied with the increased level of collaboration between his students in their Dharma study and practice.

I had learned so much from what had at times seemed a daunting task: so much to remember! The process had fine-tuned my understanding of things I had mistakenly thought I already knew and understood. But I had strong resistances too, arising from my own foolishness. Sometimes I thought I'd never be able to face Rinpoche, setting my ignorance before his wisdom.

And now here I was: finally in the hot seat in front of Rinpoche with the sun streaming into the library and him laughing and laughing, and me remembering all the places in the world we had traveled together over the years – remembering all the things we had done in those years – and thinking how really extraordinary it was to be doing such a thing as an exam with him. What I had said during the retreat in answer to the question as to whether I could fail or not came back to me: "I'll be all right as long as I don't get in my own way." Of course, I had a lot riding on the result of this exam apart from my wish to learn the material and progress to the next level of the training. You know: usual ego stuff. Discursive background thoughts rambling along when you sit to practice, such as: "What if I'm the only one to fail! What an idiot I'll look!" and: "I'm supposed to know all this material already; I mean, there's books around with my name in small print somewhere on the cover." Holy paranoia, Batman! Ha! Big investment in self image there, no doubt about it! Vanity! Pride! You name it! The works!

But the space I entered in the library during the exam itself was beyond all that. There was so much love in that room that it just blew everything else away. Rinpoche was laughing. Jim was grinning quietly as he read out the questions I'd picked, and I answered them all easily without any hesitation at all, and I couldn't believe it was so easy. I thought: "So you see, we raise the barrier for ourselves!" But in a corner of my mind there was the doubt that there must be some catch somewhere, and so when I'd finished, and Rinpoche was still laughing as he looked at me and he said "It's not over yet," as he re-arranged the numbered cards in the wicker basket on the desk in front of him, for a brief, wild instant the paranoia was there again, and I thought: "Oh, no, he's going to ask me another ten questions!" But then Rinpoche laughed some

more, and said: "Don't answer the next question," which Jim then asked me. But of course when Jim said "Are you a member of the Dzogchen Community?" I automatically replied with a "Yes" which set Rinpoche laughing even more.

Then Jim read me the nine Samayas, or promises of the First Level of Santi Maha Sangha training, and I agreed to abide by them, and thanking Rinpoche (who continued laughing) I left the room in a state of relief and pure pleasure quite beyond words, to hug and be hugged by other candidates who emerged one by one in a bliss that lasted right through a great celebratory champagne lunch in the Copper Angel Restaurant in Shelburne Falls.

And everyone who entered for the exam passed! No one failed! Everyone had studied so hard.

Nevertheless there were far fewer people at the more intimate Santi Maha Sangha retreat following the general retreat that had just ended before the examinations.

The first day of the seven day Santi Maha Sangha retreat coincided with my birthday, and although the teaching was wonderful, I felt a little sad being away from my wife and children. But to my amazement, after the teachings, a surprise party materialized in my honor, with cakes covered in candles, songs, more champagne, and many wonderful gifts. Rinpoche gave me an envelope filled with small presents from him, but I was most moved by what he had written on the envelope itself. Just the words "For our dear John" in his handwriting were enough to bring tears to the corners of my eyes, and as he drank he toasted me several times, raising his glass to me across the crowded room, and calling out: "Happy, John, be happy!"

Remembering those words now as I write in very different circumstances, I try to keep them in my mind, so as not to let sadness enter my heart.

As the retreat and teachings continued the sense of joy and wonder continued to grow. We all felt so strongly connected to one another and to our Master after the intensity of our study and examinations.

Rinpoche himself seemed radiant, resplendent each day in a wonderful full-length golden brocade chuba that he had been given in Mongolia. He was living a short distance down the road from the old school house, now our Community base, in a house rented for him, working on his books and correspondence when not teaching or receiving students for meetings.

When Rinpoche announced after the teachings

one evening that routine tests had revealed that he was ill, he made the announcement so calmly, without specifying what illness he was suffering from, that it took awhile for the seriousness of the situation to sink in. When he had left to go back to his house and we learned that he had leukemia, the sense of shock hit home. But the next day he continued to teach as usual, bringing the retreat to a conclusion a day earlier than had been planned. We practiced a Ganapuja together, and I resolved to try to remain in the state of joy I had entered as the retreats I had just attended had progressed.

After initially expecting to be able to be treated while staying in the Conway area, Rinpoche was suddenly whisked down to New York to be diagnosed and treated at Sloane Kettering Memorial Hospital there, a hospital that specializes in the treatment of cancer. We were assured that if one had to have a cancer, the one he is suffering from is one of the most treatable kinds, and that in Rinpoche's case the illness had fortunately been caught very early. His doctors were "cautiously optimistic."

I followed him to the city a few days later, and did what I could to be of assistance to him there.

I had taken photos of Rinpoche at the retreat at Conway just before the devastating news of his illness. When I had the photos developed he looked so well – he seemed so radiant – it still seemed hard to believe that he could be so gravely ill.

Everything was happening so fast; but down in New York, in the big city the tough reality of the situation was soon apparent. Not a good place to be ill away from home, but at least there was the consolation of the best care available for Rinpoche there. So sad to see him confined to a hospital bed, amidst all the hi-tech paraphernalia of modern medicine. But we were happily soon able to arrange a private room for him.

Oh – a thousand practicalities to take care of – and all with our hearts in our mouths.

It's a dream, it's an illusion, Shunyata (remember? – the retreat now seeming an age away) and (remember) everything is "Kuntusangpo" – "Perfect from the beginning just as it is" – even this.

But this! This is so hard to swallow: chewy chunks of suffering in the thick soup of Samsara boiling and bubbling on the high flame of New York City. Slow down this movie! Freeze Frame! Rewind!

Scrambled rush hour taxi rides to and from the hospital, frantic phone calls, suffering Master, flustered disciples, a state of shock, a state of calm, decisions to make, communications to maintain, need to

breathe, stay present, remain aware (remember), embrace this reality too, Integrate! And Rinpoche just himself, calm at the centre of it all.

He responded well enough to his first course of treatment to be able to leave the hospital.

He stayed at the apartment of Paula and Des Barry in Manhattan, while an apartment to be rented for him was sought, and he felt well enough there to joke with us, and to play Bachan at length with his son Yeshe and his daughter Yuchen, who came from Italy to be with him.

Unfortunately, the treatment for this kind of illness can unsettle the immune system in such a way that the slightest small side infection can have serious consequences. This was the case with Rinpoche, and when his wife Rosa arrived in New York from a retreat in Venezuela, he was in the Intensive Care Unit at Sloan Kettering, diagnosed as having pneumonia.

He recovered from the pneumonia, and was again able to leave the hospital. But within a few days he once again had a fever, and as I write this, he is again under observation at the hospital. Editor's note: Namkhai Norbu was released from the hospital on December 24, 1994.

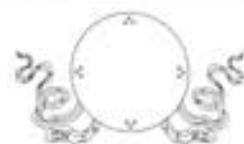
As this edition of the Mirror is prepared for printing, Rinpoche is facing his illness with the strength of mind and humor that are so characteristic of him, and, though, at the relative level, it may seem facile to see anything positive in such a critical situation, the way in which what has happened has drawn members of the Dzogchen Community together in close collaboration all over the world has been truly remarkable.

Though it is hard to remain joyful and light-hearted in the present situation, everything we have been taught by our precious Master encourages to do so, and I have written these words to remind myself and others at this difficult time of the joy of the Master's presence. We can experience that joy wherever we are by entering into the state of Guru Yoga individually or together, as we have committed ourselves to do in our Samaya.

Immediately following the Santi Maha Sangha retreat at Conway, before Rinpoche left for New York, we practiced a butter lamp Mönlam, or aspiration prayer, for the first time together. Students who had not been at the Santi Maha Sangha retreat but who had by now heard news of Rinpoche's illness came from near and far to Conway to practice with him. The sheer beauty of the ritual as we each held a small candle aloft during the recitation was breath-

taking, and the exquisite verses describing the indestructible quality of the Vajra relationship between Master and disciples, who are thus ultimately inseparable and irrevocably linked, moved many of us to tears.

Poet and author John Shane was one of the founding editors of the Mirror and is the editor and translator of a number of books by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, including *The Crystal and the Way of Light* published by Penguin Books in their Arkana imprint.



THE MIRROR NEWSPAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY

founded by Chögyal
Namkhai Norbu

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CALLIGRAPHY
"Lojong"
(Training the Mind) page 5
©1980 by
Chögyam Trungpa
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PHOTO CREDITS
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Liz Granger, Lauri Marder,
Neil Murray, John Shane

THANKS TO:
Paola Minelli for line drawing on page 3, Barbara Paparazzo and Richard Dixey for transcriptions, and Gaby Harrington

PRINTER
Gazette Printing Co.
Easthampton, Massachusetts

DISTRIBUTION
Tsegialgar at
Conway, Massachusetts

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Hoover, the Silent Sage of Conway?

by Woody Paparazzo

Hoover, my dog, has always been – well, just a dog. Like most other beings in my world, I saw him dimly through the veil of my own ego-centric vision.

In recent months, like many others in the community, I had immersed myself in study of the basic tenants of the Buddha's teachings. Over and over, the doctrine of karma, the source of our vision and experience, the very root of our existence, was explained and illustrated. Little by little, the meaning began to penetrate. No longer simply a philosophical concept, I sensed in a remote part of myself the awakening of meaning which was alive and real – a familiar but long-lost truth, like the sound of a distant ringing bell.



Then, Rinpoche came to my house for dinner.

There were a few of us gathered around him afterwards, desert cake and plates in our laps. Hoover too was among us, and we were all mildly amused when Rinpoche began to play with him. (a bit anxious, perhaps, that Hoover might forget his manners!)

With his finger, Rinpoche scooped some frosting from his cake, stretched out his

hand and held it near his heart. Hoover froze. Ears standing. Eyes wide. Sitting politely but with every cell of his body tense and fixed with utmost attention on Rinpoche and that finger full of frosting. A moment of silence fell upon us, and everyone in the room was transfixed.

Rinpoche brought the frosting near his lips and gently blew the power of mantra into it. He reached out, and Hoover, with surprising restraint, quietly, but with the obvious eagerness, gulped it down.

The next day, Amy our house guest during the retreat, was talking at breakfast. "I can't stop thinking about Rinpoche and Hoover last night," she said. "You know, none of us are really much different

than that dog, taking a bit of sweetness from him. He, in his great compassion, gently giving us something so precious, while we, in our ignorance, understand so little."

Something of the scene had nagged at me also, and when she said this, I connected immediately with her insight.

That day we made jokes about Hoover now being the Vajra Dog and perhaps now that he was on the path, we might even reach enlightenment together. Or (ha ha) he might even get there before us! It was fun. We had some good laughs, but it wasn't just a joke. We all felt something profound in this casual teach-

ing which the Master had imparted. Later, someone told the story of a goat who insisted upon attending teachings of the Dalai Lama. His Holiness later explained that this goat was in fact the incarnation of a high lama and must be treated with great respect.

Hoover began to appear intensely alive to me. Could it be, I thought? Why not? In my ignorance, I have no way of knowing whether he was an ordinary dog or some extraordinary being who only appeared to me as a dog, for that matter, he could be the Buddha himself who, out of immeasurable compassion, had entered our realm for the brief flash of a dog's life.

Several days later, driving home from some business in town, I reflected upon this improbable notion – Hoover, the High Lama of Deep Compassion choosing rebirth as a dog! Bearing the suffering of that life in order to benefit those around him. In my mind's eye, I could see his face. A hint of irony in his half-smile. His eyes sparkling with vivid vital energy but maintaining his great secret in silence.

I would do well to learn from him; to accept my brief life and to play it out with peaceful detachment. No reason to be so tense; grasping for this; rejecting that.

My dog and I have our lives to live. Rinpoche has entered them both. Neither of us will be the same.

Woody Paparazzo is a former director of Tseggyalgar and long time resident of Conway, Massachusetts. He is a lawyer by profession.

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modems come with software and others don't.

b) You need some kind of software for communications and the current top choices for IBM are ProComm Plus and Qmodem. For MAC there is Global Village and Red Ryder. There are many other packages available, so look around.

c) Next is the service you want to use. If you want to access the Internet directly, I suggest a shell account (personal shell) from a major carrier. This allows you to move about freely and access anything on the Internet that is available. The only real limit is your curiosity and ability to learn. The disadvantage here is that the system is very basic and not user-friendly. The advantage is the cost, it usually costs less than \$20 a month for total access to the Net. There are no add-on or hourly fees. Another option is the PPP or SLIP account. These are even more powerful access accounts but require a bit more experience and are more costly.

The next level is Netcom's new interface called Net Cruiser. Based in Sunnyvale, California, Netcom is available across the U.S. in various areas. They offer a personal shell that has some of the capabilities of a PPP and is affordable. Their software allows you to log onto the Internet with a very simple, user-friendly protocol (mouse). Every area has carriers that provide local access. You may even be able to arrange free access via a school, library or your own employer.

A further possibility is getting an account with a closed-carrier like CompuServe or Delphi. A national publisher of computer books and software recently graded the service providers on the following bases: access to the Internet, ease of use and all-around quality versus cost.

CompuServe rated #1 due to its professional level of service and quality of access. Its disadvantage was that E-mail from anywhere other than CompuServe can cost up to \$.15 per post. Delphi was next, with its easy to use Internet connection. Its disadvantage was that most users would rather have their own personal shell than deal with an hourly cost. America Online came in third and was rated high on ease of use but low on access and cost (hourly charges). There were other services but these were the main contenders. Again, it is best to try out these services before deciding. Luckily, they all provide free hours up front to try their service. If you're really interested but short on funds, you may be in an area where you can get your access with cream

and sugar; many cafes around the country have installed vendor-type computers where you can log on and even have your own mailbox for E-mail. There are also many packages available such as "I-Box" or "Internet in a Box" from O'Reilly and Associates that is for IBM (MAC version out sometime in '95) that allows you to plug in and play on the Internet. It costs around \$100. It provides "Air Mosaic" a new "browser" for the world wide web as well as other utilities.

If all this still seems a little "other-worldly" and out of touch, perhaps by plunging in and trying the local library access or hitting up a friend for a few minutes of computer time, you can resolve some of your reservations. If you are interested and approach it with a sense of adventure, you'll have fun as well as enlarge your access to the world and the community. How does this benefit the Community? Perhaps in the past few weeks this was best illustrated during the stressful time of the news of Rinpoche's illness. News was quickly disseminated to the top of each area's phone tree and was further spread in the usual manner. In the next few articles I hope to outline the access of the Communities ftp sites and the Web page which now fully supports graphics and has images, texts and other links to Tibetan Buddhist resources on the Internet.

During the retreat in Tseggyalgar in October, Rinpoche granted his permission to expand and further establish the Community's resources in digital communications. For this purpose he selected the following persons for a committee of communications: Steven Goodman, Jim Valby, Jey Clark and John Bidleman. The committee's purpose is to provide guidelines for communication and administrate the various functions. Please contact the committee with any questions you have. For elementary inquiries or problems, in an "Ask John" column on digital connectivity in the next issue of the Mirror, send your questions to the Mirror.

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The title of this article was chosen by the Mirror not the author.

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