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The Chinese Ox Prognostic for the Year 1995

by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

Here, based on the Chinese Ox Prognostic, a simple and excellent method of divination found among the many manuals of Elemental Astrology.

According to the instructions of my teachers and the books, I have clearly determined some events of the present year.

May the experts be the witness!

Traditional medicine and astrology are two sciences of great importance in the field of 'natural knowledge.' Medicine maintains life free of illness, cures diseases and provides long life and is therefore useful at every stage of life. Astrology has the same importance.

There are two types of astrology practiced in Tibet: white and black astrology. Once it was believed that 'white' referred to India and 'black' to China. However, nowadays this interpretation is widely criticized. Generally, 'white' indicates astrology of the planets etc., and 'black' refers to astrology of the elements.

White astrology, which is used to prepare the lunar calendar, determines the mutations of sky and earth: the four seasons, atmospheric changes, climatic changes, changes in the earth, in the vegetation, hail, storms, earthquakes, floods, cold winds, the nature of the crops, of cattle, eclipses of sun and moon etc. It

teaches how natural events influence and condition the body and mind of living beings. Thus it prepares farmers, nomads and other people to face possible difficulties and to advise them on the time of sowing, and so forth.

Elemental or black astrology considers the balance or imbalance of the outer macrocosmic elements, and of the inner or microcosmic elements and their mutual relationship. By means of this calculation one can determine the danger or advantages with respect to life, the physical body, prosperity, fortune and life energy. Following such prognostic advice one can avert unfortunate conditions through behavior and rituals with such precision as to resemble the work of a clairvoyant mind.

Before the development of white astrology, wise and intelligent Tibetans developed their own way of making predictions based on the observation of the stars, the waxing and waning of the moon, the movement of the sun, external events such as the migration of birds, growth and changes in the woods, in lakes and in ice. Based on their experience of such observations they developed their own form of indigenous astrology.

Under the tutelage of the succession of Tibetan kings, learned scholars added to this knowledge, the quintessence of other systems of astrological

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The Forests of East Tibet

An Enchanted and Endangered Treasure

by Daniel Winkler

Three years ago, after many years of study and preparation, I was finally able to research firsthand the forests of Eastern Tibet. I spent six weeks in Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve in NNW-Sichuan, between Sung-pan and the border of Gansu Province, collecting data for my Master thesis in geography and ecology. The Tibetan natives of that region, who follow Bon, know the valley as *Zitsha Degu*, which means as much as, "Nine Villages of the Turquoise Salt," referring to the 108 beautiful turquoise lakes terraced by endless dams of limestone outcropping.

Since my arrival I had tried to research at treeline, but because my Chinese counterparts were afraid of the dangers of the "unknown wild" they were more than reluctant to support my aim. Only on the final day was I told that there was, in fact, a path up the Yala Pass, where I hoped finally to conclude my forest vegetation studies.

On the last day of our stay, my wife Heidi and I left the main valley in the pitch black of night and headed toward Yala Pass, our goal being treeline. Shortly before sunrise we passed by the houses of Heye village, built mostly of wood with shingle roofs, which do not differ much from the traditional farm houses of the Alps. Their style reflects the abundance of timber, as well as precipitation. When the sun finally made it over the towering peaks to the east we had already lost our way. However, after losing two hours searching for an opening or a path up the cliffs, we finally found the singular overgrown path that threaded its

way through the rocks like a serpent and suddenly entered into a small narrow valley guarded by towering cliffs on both sides. Soon the terrain opened up into a wide fertile pasture, now overgrown by willows and shrubs. A purple flowering monkshood-vine formed a gate as we entered an impressive dark stand of old firs mixed with bright orange-red barked birches, which welcomed us to the world of forest, real untouched pristine forests. Here, the ever-present arrow-bamboo graciously left some space for ferns, wild ginseng and Rodgersias. We followed a barely trodden track, that took a substantial amount of concentration to decipher, along a creek passing through a grove of birches which seemed like they were under a magical spell of sleep. Beard-lichens, known as Dakini Hair in Bhutan, were hanging down in long green strands from the gnarled branches of the birches, giving the impression of grace and beauty amidst decay. Everywhere we looked, there were these strands of hair flowing in the wind and hanging from giant green lichen-encrusted limbs that appeared to have arthritis instead of heads.

As we climbed higher, the gully became steeper and steeper. Often we had to leave the river bed to bypass huge vertical steps of bare rock. The ground was covered by a deep soft and soggy carpet of moss that was almost too beautiful to walk on, not to mention too squishy! The impenetrable bamboo thickets, in which the Giant Panda roams, faded out as we climbed and huge Rhododendron bushes took

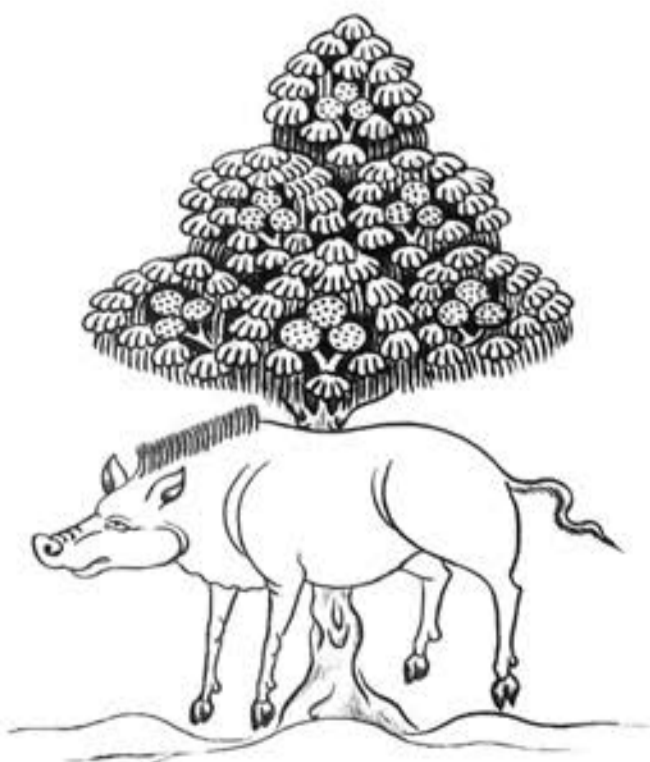
over. In the juniper forest of the southern slope, bright sunlight bathed huge tufts of grass that would have been perfect as beds on which to rest our completely exhausted and protesting bodies.

It was already 4:00 pm when we finally reached treeline at 3700m (12,000 ft) and found, to our disbelief, a small wooden hut used by plant gatherers and Yak herders when crossing the pass. This would have been the perfect base-camp for thorough research at these high elevations. But as was the case, I had only one hour to take notes and to collect all the specimens I needed before rushing down 1600m of altitude to reach the narrow

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Wood Boar Year 2122

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The Three Sacred Principles, or *Dampa Sum* in Tibetan, are three fundamental aspects of the teaching that are always explained right at the beginning. This is true not only in the Dzogchen teachings, but also at the levels of Sutra and Tantra. The first of these Three Sacred Principles is Refuge and Bodhicitta; the second is Contemplation, and the third is the Dedication of Merit.

At a practical level what the first and the third of these three principles mean is that when we start a practice, we begin it with an idea or thought, and similarly, when we finish a practice and return to our normal activities again, we begin those activities, too, guiding ourselves with an idea or thought. The fact is, we are not always in the state of contemplation (which we also call the 'primordial state' - the second of these Three Sacred Principles). Even if we have some experience or knowledge of this state, most of the time we are distracted from it. So in order to find ourselves in the state of contemplation, we start by guiding ourselves towards it with an idea or thought.

Let's assume, for example, that we have at least intellectually understood that our real nature is like that of a mirror which has the capacity to reflect everything without judging it good or bad, without accepting or rejecting anything. How can we, on the basis of our intellectual understanding, actually discover this real nature in ourselves? How can we enter into the true state of knowledge and thus come to a real experience of how our thoughts and emotions are actually like reflections and in a mirror? The way we do this is to begin by guiding ourselves with a thought. Just as to enter into contemplation we always begin with the thought of wanting to enter that state, so, too, in the same way we begin our practice with Refuge and Bodhicitta.

It is important, particularly in Dzogchen, to understand what Refuge and Bodhicitta really mean and how to apply them concretely, not just remaining at the level of words and external forms.

The origins of the practices of Refuge and Bodhicitta are to be found in the Sutra system. And in both the Hinayana and Mahayana systems of the Sutras the way in which one takes Refuge determines whether an individual is considered to be Buddhist or not. In the Sutras, if a person takes Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, then such a person is considered to be a Buddhist. I, for example, have personally been criticized by some people who claim that I am not a Buddhist because I use another form of Refuge - taking Refuge in the Guru, Deva and Dakini instead of taking Refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

But such criticism is based on a fundamental misunder-

standing of the principle involved here, because Guru, Deva and Dakini do not mean something different from Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. The principle of the teachings does not depend on the superficial level of the names by which things are called, but on the real sense and meaning behind those names. And so we must understand what Guru means, what Deva means and what Dakini means. These are terms used in the Tantric system.

Generally speaking, when we use the word 'Buddhist' what we are referring to is someone

in many different ways, not only in the form of a human being. There is a saying in the Sutras that the Buddha sometimes manifests as a bridge or as a boat in order to save people; it is not necessary that he should always manifest as a human being. There are many possibilities of manifestation. This is the principle of Deva and Dakini. In the same way, Refuge is not limited to the taking of a vow, as it is in the Hinayana view. Many people like to say that they have taken Refuge with this or that Lama. Or there are teachers who travel widely and give Refuge vows

their problems, so that they can avoid creating negative karma.

Any of us may have a weak point. We should not think that since we are Dzogchen practitioners we are very highly developed people and that we therefore do not need such a thing as a vow. Many people have this idea, but it is not true. We must observe ourselves well. We have many weak points. If an individual wants to stop smoking or drinking, for example, he may never succeed for a long time. Why? Because it is his weak point. Sometimes it is necessary to take a vow to deal with a situ-

way? It doesn't mean anything. The Buddha never asked anyone to become a 'Buddhist'. The Buddha never proposed these kinds of limitations. These are our own limitations projected onto the teachings.

We must try to understand the real sense of the teaching. The real meaning of Refuge is to know that we are on the path. We take refuge in the path. How do we find that path? We find it from a teacher. If there is no teacher there is no path. Whether we speak of Sutra, Tantra, or Dzogchen, the root of the path is always the teacher.

When we take Refuge in the Sutra system, the first words we recite are *Namo Buddhaye*: Thus we take Refuge in the Buddha; then we take Refuge in the Dharma, and in the Sangha. In Tantra, the way of seeing Buddha and the way of seeing the teacher or Guru is a little different. In the Sutras, the Buddha is understood to be the origin of the teaching, the source of the path. The final goal is seen as the state of the Buddha, or the Dharmakaya. For this reason we take Refuge in the Buddha at this level of the teaching.

In Tantra and Dzogchen we take Refuge principally in the Guru. This is because, even though it is the teachings of the Buddha that we are following, we have received them from our own teacher. We can never receive teachings directly from the Buddha. We do not even have direct contact with the Buddha's direct students. But his students taught other students and so on, and in this way, the teachings have continued until the present day, when our teacher taught them to us.

Tantra is also particularly related to special transmissions such as empowerments. In Dzogchen the principle is to give a 'direct introduction' of knowledge and understanding. The students receive this transmission, this introduction from their teacher. Even though we may receive explanations or methods that have been handed down from the Buddha, we can only receive direct transmissions from our own teacher. We can never receive such transmissions from the Buddha. For this reason, our teacher is extremely important for us. That is why he is referred to as the 'root teacher'. By root we mean the source from which something originated; our root teacher is the source of all transmissions, knowledge and understanding. Therefore, when we take Refuge in Tantra and Dzogchen, we first take Refuge in the Guru.

In Dzogchen, in particular, when we take Refuge we do so in the Guru. This means that the teacher is considered more important than other persons. If there is a Guru, there is a teaching. This is the principle of transmission. Then there are practitioners: when we speak of the 'Sangha', what we are referring to are the people with whom

Three Sacred Principles

Part I: Refuge and Bodhicitta

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



who follows the teaching of the Buddha himself or something relating to the teaching of the Buddha himself. At least this is what is meant by the term 'Buddhist' in the Hinayana. The official Buddhist teaching is considered in that tradition to be only that knowledge and understanding which the physical Buddha himself actually transmitted. But there are many other teachings. The Buddha transmitted teachings in other manifestations, not just in his physical body. And this is the origin of Tantra.

How did the Buddha manifest to transmit the Tantras? To transmit these teachings he did not manifest in the form of Buddha Shakyamuni, the physical, historical Buddha. A Buddha can manifest in different ways. He works with circumstances, not just according to someone's idea of a rule. For a Buddha, there is no rule that his form must be a figure like that of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni. The form he will manifest depends what the circumstances are. A Buddha will work with the particular circumstances in which he finds himself.

A Buddha will sometimes manifest in a form like those beings to whom he is trying to communicate knowledge and understanding. When a Buddha communicates to an elephant or a monkey, for example, he may manifest as that kind of being. He can do this because he is free. He is able to work with any circumstances, he never remains limited by rules. People who are limited do not understand this and they believe a Buddha can only manifest on the physical level. They believe that if the physical form of the Buddha is not the one they are familiar with, then this is not a Buddha at all.

But it is nothing other than the Buddha who manifests as Deva, and Buddha who manifests as Dakini. He can manifest

everywhere, claiming that they have converted enormous numbers of people to Buddhism. They seem to think of Refuge as if it were a matter of conquering people.

But this is not how the teachings should be spread. Spreading the teachings really means helping people to wake up and understand something; it should not become another means of conditioning people. That is not say, of course, that it is not useful for people to take a vow of Refuge if they understand its real sense and meaning. But when they do not understand its meaning, then they can deceive themselves into believing that something has changed in them, when it has not. If they really honestly observe themselves they will see that their conditioning, their attachments, their problems and so on are all still there and are just the same as before they took their vow. Nothing has changed. What then is the benefit of taking Refuge? The real point is to know and understand what Refuge means.

Refuge can be taken with a vow. If someone doesn't have the capacity to control themselves, then they need to take a vow. The Hinayana specifically aims to help individuals whose capacity to integrate their emotions is less developed. Such people take a vow, and through it they are able to control their emotions and

ation like this. There are people who are not in the Dzogchen Community who have told me that my students are very arrogant: they feel they are on a very high level and do not need to do the Ngondro, or Preliminary Practices, that are commonly practiced.

To think that just because we are Dzogchen practitioners we do not need a vow is completely wrong. When we discover we have a weak point we may need a vow to help us overcome it. This is why it is said in Dzogchen that we should work with our circumstances. What do we mean when we speak of 'working with our circumstances'? What we mean is that even if we understand that at the absolute level, spontaneous self-perfection is our own inherent condition, and rules and vows are not necessary at that level, if in our own particular circumstances we find that there are problems we cannot overcome without such methods, then we apply a rule or a vow. The difference between Dzogchen and other levels of teaching is that these relative methods of rules and vows are not considered to be the main point. They are not the fundamental method of practice of Dzogchen as they are of the Sutras.

In the Hinayana, for example, receiving a vow is considered to be the single most important aspect of the training. But in Dzogchen we proceed differently. The principle method is not to take a vow, although a vow might be used if necessary. But, of course, if it should be the case that someone has received a vow of Refuge from a teacher other than myself, then they need to understand what its meaning and function is. Then it will make sense. But if we think, just because we have taken a Refuge vow we have become Buddhist, that is ridiculous. It has no meaning or sense. What does it mean to say we are Buddhist in such a

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Three Sacred Principles

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we collaborate on the path. In Dzogchen, Sangha can also refer to the Dharmapalas or Guardians, beings who help us on our path to obtain realization.

In the Sutra system, when we speak in terms of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, the teacher is considered to be part of the Sangha. What does Sangha mean? In Sutra, Sangha is a group of at least four monks. For example, if an individual wants to receive a full vow of a monk or nun, he receives it from a Sangha of at least four monks. Three monks is not enough. One cannot receive a full vow from only the teacher. A Refuge vow can be taken from the teacher, but a full vow of monk or nun can be received only from the Sangha.

Similarly, in the Sutra system, if we make a mistake, we confess it to the Sangha. We cannot confess to the teacher. In order to make a confession, we always need a Sangha. This is a characteristic of Sutra level. For this reason, the teacher is part of the Sangha and the Sangha are considered to be the people who help us.

In Dzogchen, on the other hand, the teacher is indispensable. In the Sutra system, if there is no teacher we nevertheless still have the teachings of the Buddha. As long as we have the possibility of studying with a group of people, learning words, reading books and so on, we can still go ahead. That is not possible in Tantra and in Dzogchen. If we want to follow the Dzogchen teachings we must receive an introduction from a teacher, otherwise our knowledge is not connected with the transmission and there can be no Enlightenment. This is also true in Tantra. In Tantra it is necessary to receive empowerment from the Teacher. Otherwise, even if one knows many Tantric methods, one's situation remains like a ploughed field in which no seeds have ever been sown; even if one works it for years and years, nothing will grow from such a field.

Whether one takes a vow of Refuge or not does not matter; but we must understand the meaning of Refuge, because Refuge and Bodhicitta are the first of the Three Sacred Principles.

Bodhicitta is a term found principally in the Mahayana which speaks a great deal about the two truths, absolute and relative. By absolute truth we mean our real condition, the condition of things as they truly are. When we do not have knowledge of this real condition, then we are conditioned by the relative dimension, and that is what is called the relative truth. So in Sutra teaching the relative truth is considered to be like Samsara, the state of confused, deluded mind. And absolute truth is considered to be like knowledge, or understanding, or the state of Nirvana. The terms Nirvana and

Samsara correspond to what we mean by absolute truth and relative truth, respectively.

Bodhicitta is also explained in that way, in terms of absolute and relative. Absolute Bodhicitta means having real experiential knowledge of shunyata, or emptiness, not just having an intellectual idea of emptiness. This experiential knowledge comes about through practice. You see, for example, in the Sutra teaching, one of the principal practices is Shine, developing a state of calm: through the calm state we discover emptiness.

And when we have experience of emptiness and our knowledge has become more concrete, then finally we can consider that we have at least a little experience of Absolute Bodhicitta. By Absolute Bodhicitta what we mean is the experience of emptiness in which its energy or its function are manifest.

When we speak of Bodhicitta in general what we are speaking of is compassion. But what is compassion? Compassion is a feeling; compassion arises through our feeling as a kind of experience we have in relation to others. But where does it arise from? It arises from emptiness. Emptiness is its source; emptiness is its basis. In an empty sky, for example, you can't find anything. But sometimes clouds can arise in an empty sky. They arise, they develop, and they disappear again into an empty sky. The same is also true of Bodhicitta, or compassion. Compassion also manifests from emptiness. That is the reason why, when we are speaking of Tantrism, we always speak of emptiness and clarity. Emptiness and clarity are functions of the same principle. Both arise from emptiness. All manifestation comes from emptiness. Emptiness is represented as being like the sky. When we speak of the 'Dharmadhatu,' 'dharma' means all phenomena and 'dhatu' means the real condition of emptiness. But even though there is total emptiness, from that emptiness everything manifests. When we speak of the manifestation of the five elements, too, the first of these is the element of space. The element of space is emptiness. If there is no element of space, there is no possibility of manifestation; when there is space, there is also the possibility of manifestation.

In the same way compassion manifests from emptiness. So real knowledge of emptiness is called 'Absolute Bodhicitta.' But then there is also what is called 'Relative Bodhicitta,' which is compassion, related to our thoughts, our sensations, our feelings, and to everything that develops in the dimension of Samsara. Sometimes even when we do have compassion, it is still something limited. For that rea-

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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, U.S.A.), 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 longstanding 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 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 hospitalized. 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 had started slow recovery, the leukemia had begun to respond to treatment. The doctors arrived at a positive prognosis. A new discharge from the hospital came on Thursday, December 8th. Unfortunately, it was followed within days by an emergency readmission, again provoked by collateral complications. This time Rinpoche was under attack by an oral fungus which impeded eating, by oral infection, by continuing anemia and by bleeding from stress-induced stomach ulcer. Although the new problems were, from a medical viewpoint, simpler to overcome, they brought fever, pain, weakness to Rinpoche and preoccupation to his family and the Community.

On December 24th, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu once more left the hospital and began outpatient care. The infections and bleeding had been healed. Anemia was gone. In subsequent days, ultrasound imaging confirmed restored functioning of his kidneys and bone marrow tests indicated, at last, great progress with the underlying leukemia.

On January 8th, the leukemia had entered remission. His doctors proposed, and Rinpoche accepted, therapy with monoclonal antibodies. This treatment is still experimental, so new that it has been tried for this type of leukemia with very few human beings, all successfully. It should make subsequent chemotherapy much more effective. It is, hopefully, free of risk. Treatment was administered twice weekly for three weeks, on an outpatient basis, at Sloan-Kettering, beginning Monday, January 23rd.

As of Saturday, February 18th, Rinpoche has completed three weeks of treatment for Leukemia with monoclonal antibodies, as an outpatient, with positive outcome. Bone marrow tests, blood and platelet counts and other analysis all indicate satisfactory progress.

Rinpoche was in the hospital from Monday, February 20th to Saturday February 25th, at the Sloan-Kettering Memorial Institute, for a first cycle of chemotherapy. This was administered on the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of that week by the intravenous drip feed method. He also received medicines to limit nausea and other possible collateral effects. During his subsequent days of hospitalization, he, in fact, showed no untoward reactions. There were no contraindications for his release on Saturday.

As of noon, Sunday, March 5th, the situation is as follows: Rinpoche celebrated Losar, the Tibetan New Year, at home in his New York apartment, comfortable but expecting probable fever, as his doctors had warned, as a consequence of lowered immunity after his first cycle of chemotherapy. That fever came the next day, Friday, March 3rd, and he was immediately readmitted to the hospital at the Sloan-Kettering Memorial Institute, where he is now and likely to remain for some days.

Weakened by chemotherapy, the body's defenses are inadequate to neutralize the kinds and qualities of bacteria normally encountered in everyday life. Rinpoche is undergoing intravenous antibiotic therapy which should defeat the present infection while, simultaneously, the immune system naturally resumes its functioning. In the interim, one or more transfusions of red blood cells and platelets will keep up levels of immunity.

Rinpoche's condition is not considered worrisome under the circumstances. Positive developments, which can reasonably be expected, may make the second cycle of chemotherapy feasible in a few weeks. After completion of three cycles, another course of treatment with monoclonal antibodies is probable, bringing the entire cure to its hoped for successful end in late Spring.

Rinpoche is in excellent spirits, working on a new book. His wife and children are with him. They are 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; Ngaggon as often and as much as possible; the "Brief" Ganapuja of Jigme Lingpa as frequently as possible.



Barrie Simmons
Blue Gakyil, Merigar

This article is based on the transcript of a teaching by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1984 in Devon, England, edited by Cheh Goh and Nina Robinson. It first appeared in the Mirror, Issue 11, September 1991.

INTRODUCTION

Namkha is a Tibetan word which means space. This word is also used as a name of an object made of sticks and colored threads. This type of construction is not exclusive to Tibetan culture. Similar objects, sometimes known as God's eye, are found all over the world. They can be found in the American Indian culture and in Africa, and some people say they may have originated in India. But very few people have any idea of the practical use of such objects.

In Tibet, Namkhas have been used a great deal yet few people understand exactly how they work. They are usually regarded as ornaments for rituals.

In 1983, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche clarified the ways that Namkhas can actually be used by a person to harmonize his or her energies. This involves a certain understanding of Tibetan astrology related to the individual. Once the astrological signs and aspects of an individual are understood, a Namkha can be constructed and with the use of appropriate rituals, it can become a practical aid in making one's life more harmonious.

THE MAIN ASPECTS OF A NAMKHA

In general, we know that in the astrological make-up of an individual, there is not only one, but several elements of energy. Related to the Namkha, we have four specific aspects to consider: the Life element, the body element, the capacity element, and the fortune element. These four aspects exist for an individual not only internally, but also externally in the universe. The outer energies are represented by the four aspects of the Mewa and appear in the lower part of the Namkha while the inner elements are represented in the upper part. In total, therefore, there are eight elements to harmonize.

THE LIFE ASPECT

In the center of the Namkha is the Life aspect. This is the most important part of the Namkha, because when one is conceived, the first thing present is life. At the moment of conception there is a characteristic energy, which is represented by the Life element. This is the element with which the elements of all other aspects should be harmonized. This aspect is analogous to the head of a person, in that if a person loses his head, he will die. Similarly, if a person's Life aspect is threatened, his life is in danger.

THE BODY ASPECT

After conception, the various elements gradually come together to form the body. The body aspect has a characteristic

energy represented by its corresponding element. This aspect, in general, is associated with a person's health. As the health of the person is also very important,

he will become passive and receive negative forces from the outer dimension. When the energy of a person is reinforced internally and externally, every-

conflict. For example, if one of those aspects has the water element and the life aspect has the fire element, this is a friend-enemy relationship, so these

this point. Only when three sixty year cycles are completed will the Mewa number 1 coincide with the wood-mouse year again. So the three cycles make 180 years, and this is called a wheel of Mewa, made up of three necklaces of Mewa of sixty years each. The beginning of the calculation of Mewa started from the first Bonpo master who taught astrology according to this system. Historically, therefore, we are in the third necklace of Mewa of the twenty first wheel of Mewa.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MEWA

If we look carefully at history, at the time of the changing of the wheels of Mewa (every 180 years), there are many major changes on earth. At the time of the changing of the necklaces of Mewa (every 60 years), the corresponding changes on earth are not so great. This goes to show that the universal energy always influences the condition of our existence.

ELEMENTS OF THE MEWA

The elements of the Mewa represent the total energy of our circumstances. Mewa has its own characteristic energy functions corresponding to Life, Body, Capacity, and Fortune for any particular year or month. For example, in our birth year, there is the global energy of Mewa with the energy of each of the four aspects we have talked about. Every Mewa number is associated with a corresponding element. From the Mewa numbers, we can, therefore, derive the Mewa elements. These elements constitute the lower part of the Namkha. As we want to harmonize both the internal and the external energy of any given individual, we put all the eight aspects on the same construction,

THE PRINCIPLE OF HARMONIZATION

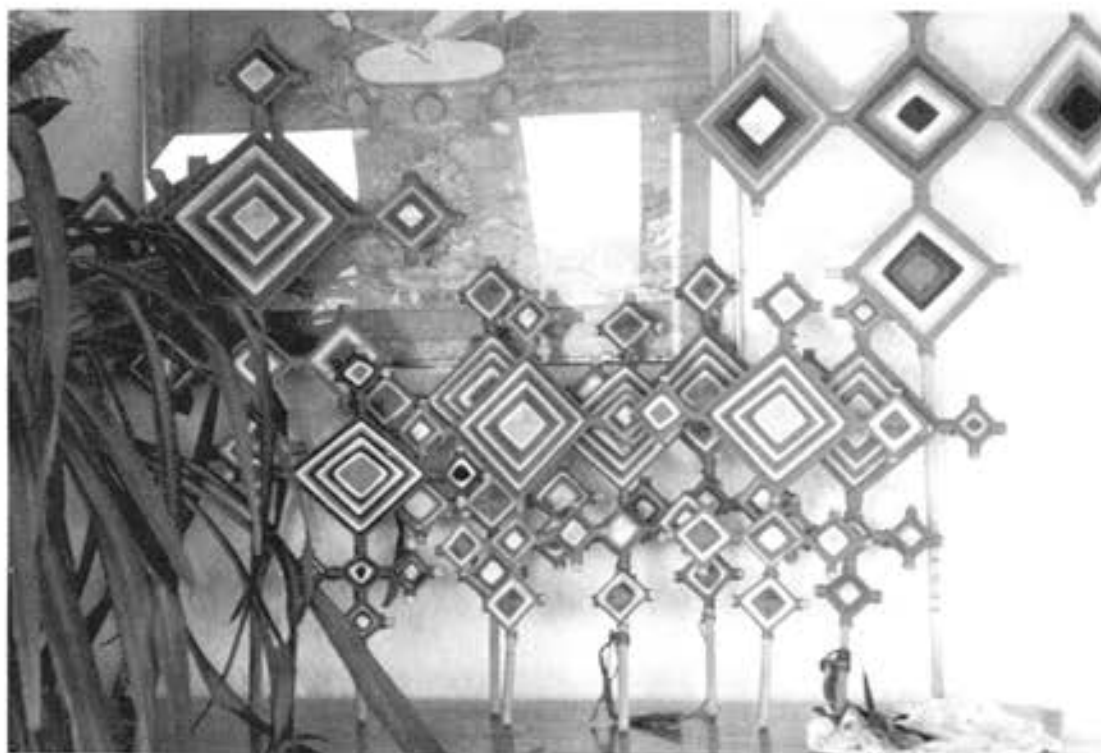
In the construction of a Namkha there are two main materials. One is straight sticks of various lengths, the other is threads of five colors. The sticks form the main skeleton of the construction and the threads are woven on the sticks in a particular way. The sticks represent the positive and negative forces when they are put together to form crosses. The process of harmonization involves positive and negative energy. The two sticks represent these aspects on the material level; since the junction of any two sticks on the Namkha is a support from the element of the relevant aspect of the individual, we write the syllable that represents the element in the joint.

The main frame of the Namkha is a central vertical stick and two horizontal sticks, with the top horizontal stick longer than the lower one. The three of them form two junctions, the top function is where the center of the Life element of an individual is represented, and the lower one is the position of the Life element of the Mewa. The Life ele-

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Harmonizing the Elements through the Namkha

by Cheh Goh



Namkhas prepared for authentication

it is considered analogous to the hat of a person. Outside Tibet it might not seem so essential to have a hat, but there it is very important to have one because it protects the head from the strong sun and wind. It means that the body element protects the life element.

THE CAPACITY ASPECT

When a baby is born, he or she has their first contact with the outside world: the contact of light, sound, smell, touch, and taste, the experience of the five senses. The prevailing condition at that moment determines the capacity of the individual. The element associated with that energy will stay the same throughout one's life. The capacity aspect is related to one's position and situation in life in general. For example, if a person becomes a president of a country or head of an organization, this means that the energy of his capacity is very positive. The importance of the capacity aspect is analogous to a person's clothing. Just as we need clothing to protect ourselves, we also need positive capacity energy.

THE FORTUNE ELEMENT

During the course of life one has contact with all kinds of energy in the world through the physical body. A person's energy inherently has both positive and negative sides, and these are reflected in the external dimension. When a person has strong internal positive energy, external forces can not influence then very much. However, if a person's inner energy is weak, then

thing seems to go well. We often hear people making comments about "How fortunate so and so is." Even when such people do things half-jokingly they gain tremendous success. The contrary is also true. When one's energy is weakened internally and externally, everything goes wrong, and even if a person is doing his best, nothing comes out right.

We can see that contacts with positive and negative forces are linked with secondary causes. Nonetheless, a lot depends on the person's own energy, which is represented by his fortune aspect. The energy of a person's Fortune aspect determines how easily he might be influenced by external forces. The fortune aspect is analogous to a person's belt. In Tibet, a belt is considered to be very important because the wind is strong and without a belt a Tibetan is at a considerable disadvantage.

THE FOUR ASPECTS TOGETHER

The life aspect is the most important for a person, so it is represented in the center of the construction, surrounded by the other three aspects. In Tibetan astrology, an element can have any of the four relationships with the other elements: mother, son, friend, or enemy, (see the article on Tibetan astrology by Maria Rita Leti in Issue # 11 of the Mirror). If the characteristic element of a person's energy of the aspect of Body, Capacity, Fortune, or Mewa Life is in opposition to the element of Life, then it is clear that there is a disadvantage for the aspects in

aspects are in conflict. Such a disharmony can manifest in many different ways. For example, if there is an imbalance between the fortune aspect and the Life aspect, an individual might win millions of dollars in the lottery, but one's life force would therefore be affected and the person could die from a heartattack before they could enjoy even a penny of the money. This is not an unheard of example! Similarly, a person could become the managing director of an international company as a result of his positive capacity energy and yet have a problematic life if the capacity is in conflict with the life energy. It is because of these conflicts that harmonization is needed in order to improve our lives.

MEWA - THE CALCULATION

Mewa is an extremely ancient calculation in astrology. It represents the universal aspect of existence and is calculated with the use of the numbers from 9 to 1. Every year the Mewa number is decreased by 1 so that if 1991 has Mewa number 9, 1992 will have Mewa number 8, 1993 number 7 and so on, while 1990 has number 1, 1989 number 2 and so on. These nine numbers are combined with the sixty year cycle of the element-animal combinations. The beginning of the first sixty year cycle is the Wood-Mouse year, and the Mewa number is 1. For the second year in the cycle the Mewa number is 9, then 8 and so on. At the end of the sixty year cycle, another sixty year cycle begins. But the Mewa number is not 1 at

Lives of the Great Masters



Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo 1820 – 1892

by Steven Goodman

The Dzogchen master Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820-1892) was a giant spiritual presence whose religious activity combined the deep sensitivity of a visionary with the vast erudition of an unbiased non-sectarian. He was born in the Eastern Tibetan province of Derge, on the fifth day, six month of the iron dragon year (July 15, 1820). His twin endowments of scholastic temperament and spiritual prowess soon became evident. As a child he had visions of many past lives and seems to have formed a special relationship with the Dzogchen protectress, Ekajati. He received ordination at the age of twenty-one, from Rigdzin Zangpo of Orgyan Mindroling. Shortly thereafter he began to receive teachings from a Sakya master, and was soon recognized as a Sakya tulku of the Ngor Thartse Khyen emanations. The fame of the Tulku soon spread, yet his yearning for true knowledge inspired him to forsake the usual life of a high incarnate lama. Instead, he went in search of teachers who could impart to him teachings as vast as his spiritual appetite. Thus, in the Eastern province of Kham, and throughout Central Tibet, he sought out the best and the brightest of his generation. Enduring great hardships, he studied with over one hundred and fifty masters from all the major schools, including specialists in the "worldly sciences" of linguistics, medicine, and art, as well as the Buddhist traditions of Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. He was truly a "cognitive omnivore," and his detailed knowledge of many traditions

made him sensitive to their special qualities. Along with Jamyang Kongtrul Rinpoche and others, he became a strong advocate for a non-sectarian Rime approach to the Buddhistharma.

For the next thirteen years, Khyentse Rinpoche spent considerable energies receiving and practicing many rare spiritual traditions from all the major and minor sects. He transmitted his knowledge of these traditions to many students, publishing some forty volumes of his own writings. In addition, he established over thirteen temples which housed several thousand volumes he had printed, as well as numerous gold and copper images and stupas. Troubled by the growing civil unrest in Eastern Tibet, enflamed by the machinations of the Khampa warrior, Nyarong Gonpo Namgyal, Khyentse Rinpoche served as council to officials in China and Tibet. In particular, he advised the Derge king and ministers to maintain their support of endangered educational projects throughout Eastern Tibet. Khyentse Rinpoche's students numbered in the thousands. They came from all over Tibet and China and included laity and clerics, government officials and commoners, city folk and nomads. These are but quick brush strokes outlining the public activities of Khyentse Rinpoche. His inner spiritual life was equally vast. He was recognized as an embodiment of Vimalamitra, and King Trisong Detsan.

Known as the "Fifth King of Hidden Treasures," he was destined to reveal many Dzogchen

teachings. Under the esoteric name Pema Osel Donag Lingpa, he was recognized as the thirteenth emanation of the treasure finder Gyalsay Lhaje. He also was recognized as the "mind emanation" (thugtrul) of the great Dzogchen master Jigme Lingpa (1730-1798), whose own mind treasures were collectively known as the "Quintessence of Longchen" (*Longchen Nyingthig*).

In the fall of 1853, Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1871), himself a treasure finder, came to meet with Khyentse Rinpoche. This historic meeting of "the sovereign and his son" re-established a close spiritual link previously revealed to Khyentse Rinpoche when, at the age of sixteen, he had a visionary encounter with Guru Rinpoche. This reconnection resulted in Chogyur Lingpa and Khyentse Rinpoche co-revealing the "Seven Successions of Transmitted Precepts." These teachings include "earth treasures," (sater) centering on Avalokitesvara, relics from a Guru Rinpoche tooth, and esoteric Dzogchen teachings of Vairocana, the *Bairo Thugthig*. They also include "reconcealed treasures," (yangter) connected with the treasure finder, Sange Lingpa, land "mind treasures," (gongter) centered on the Tsoki Dorje form of Padmasambhava, visions of White Tara, and the Siddha Nyingthig revelations inspired by the iron bridge builder and Dzogchen master, Thangton Gyalpo. A complete inventory of the treasures revealed by Khyentse Rinpoche would be too numerous to recount here, but one must mention the famed "Quintessence of Jetsun Cycle," or *Jetsun Nyingthig*, so named because it commemorates Khyentse Rinpoche's past life as the Dzogchen master Jetsun Senge Wangchug who, at the age of one hundred and twenty-five, attained the rainbow body.

The last years of Khyentse Rinpoche's life were devoted to tireless teaching whose inner core was sustained by a deep visionary brilliance. The tangible signs of this brilliance culminated on the twenty-first day of the second month of the water dragon year, April 18, 1892 when, at the age of seventy-three. Thus: "He withdrew from the display of physical embodiments, and returned to the rainbow expanse of the great teacher Vimalamitra." As had been foretold, five Khyentse emanations issued forth from this rainbow expanse, which is centered at the five-peaked mountain, *ribo tse-nga*, thus insuring the continuity of these accomplishments for the compassionate benefit of generations to come.

Steven Goodman specializes in the Nyingma and Dzogchen traditions of Tibet. He recently co-edited the book, *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation*, SUNY Press, 1992, and is a frequent contributor to Tricycle Magazine.

Illustration by Glen Eddy

Book Reviews

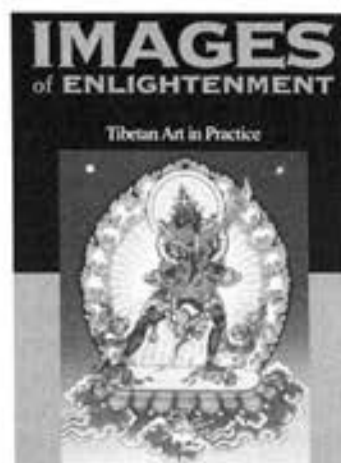
Images of Enlightenment Tibetan Art in Practice

by Jonathan Landaw and
Andy Weber

Snow Lion Publications, 1993.

In the West, the images of Tibetan tantric divinities have been the object of much genuine interest but also some confusion. Until recent times, it was a commonly held opinion that the joyous and wrathful forms, in particular, were eccentric manifestations of a degraded form of Buddhism which had little or nothing to do with Buddha Shakyamuni's original teachings, and much in common with local animistic beliefs and superstitions. Since the diaspora and consequent arrival in many countries of genuine Tibetan spiritual teachers, the situation has radically changed. But uncertainties still exist even amongst practitioners, let alone the general public. What do all these strange faces and many-armed creatures represent? Why so many different colored heads? What do their gestures and ritual objects mean? And the skulls in their hair? Or those strange things down there in the left hand corner which look a bit like billiard balls? Oh really! wish-fulfilling jewels, how nice, but what exactly is a wish-fulfilling jewel?

In the midst of so many doubts and curiosities, technically correct symbolic explanations can easily become somewhat divorced from the inner tantric meaning. In *Images of Enlightenment: Tibetan Art in Practice*, Jonathan Landaw's ample commentaries on the reproductions of thirty-two thangkas painted by Andy Weber for the meditation hall of the Manjushri Institute in northern England avoid this pitfall. "Although many books have been written in the past two decades on Tibetan art and culture," the authors write in their introduction, "we found that there was very little source material to which the serious inquirer could be referred. Much of what was available treated the images of Tibetan Buddhist art as if they were lifeless artifacts of a lost civilization. It was rare for us to find anything that conveyed the spark of inspiration we ourselves had found so attractive in this art, or that showed how these figures form an integral part of a spiritual tradition that is very much alive." As the subtitle, *Tibetan Art in Practice* suggests, the entire book reflects the living transmissions of which the artistic representations are illustrations. As a whole, *Images of Enlightenment* could well serve as a concise introduction to the fundamental points of Tantric Buddhism as practiced in the Tibetan traditions. The text is based on teachings received by the authors from lamas of all the



four main schools. Although the specific viewpoint is predominantly Gelugpa, its approach is admirably broad. For the benefit of readers of the Mirror, the following extract is taken from the chapter on the Sambhogakaya aspects of the Buddhas of the Five Families and the transformation into wisdom of the principle forms of passion.

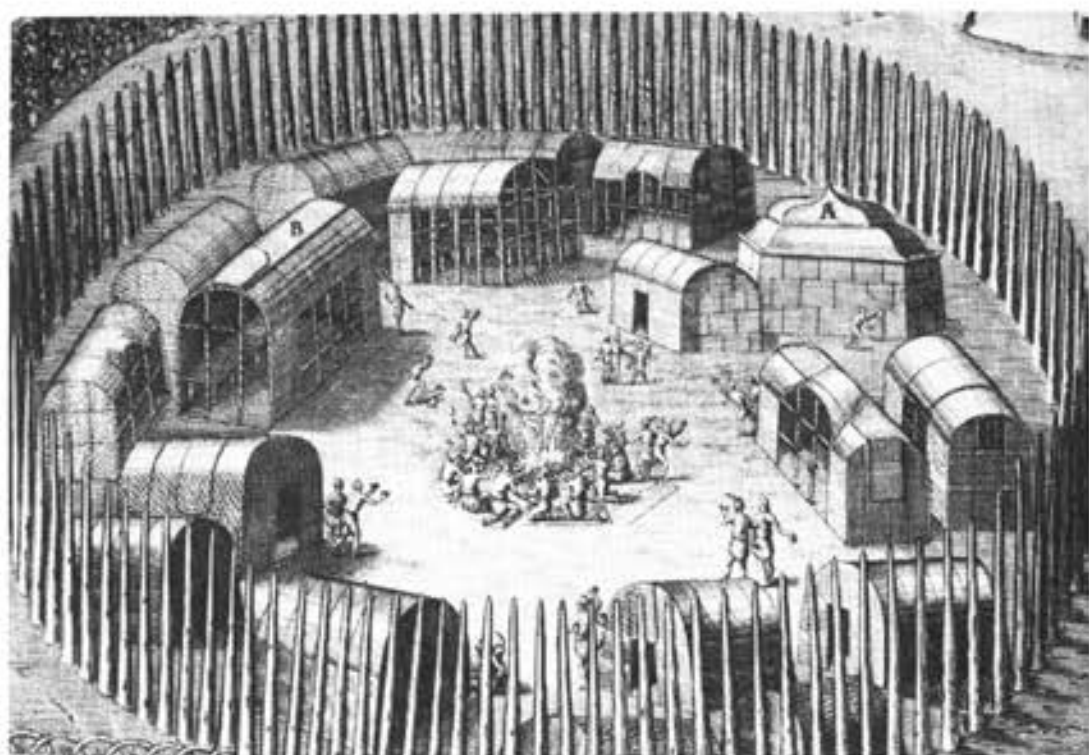
"The colors of the five Buddha families provide a valuable key for understanding on a direct intuitive level what is involved in the process of spiritual transformation. Vairocana (the illuminator), for example, is white, which in Vajrayana is the color associated with both the element of water and the delusion of anger. Just as the color white can be either cloudy or bright, and just as water can be muddy or clear, so too can the energy underlying anger be expressed destructively or beneficially. The practices associated with Vairocana and the deities of the vajra family are designed to tap anger's energy and redirect it in the most beneficial manner possible, along the path of full awakening.

"The transformational practices of the remaining four families of Buddhas can also be understood as untying knotted habitual patterns of egocentricity with their respective delusions and freeing their underlying energies for constructive purposes.

"Ratnasambhava (the Jewel-born) works on our miserly reliance and arrogant pride, the defensive attitude that tries to cloak its insecurity within an imposing disguise of self-aggrandizement or haughty aloofness. Such pride cuts us off others and it is the function of the jewel family to turn its sickly yellow attitude inside out so that the golden light of open-hearted generosity is allowed to radiate evenly to all.

"In a similar fashion the lotus family of Amitabha (Infinite Light) works with the energy of deluded attachment. The color red represents the burning passion we feel for desirable objects, whether people or things, and with this intense passion is often so all consuming that we are blinded by it. Though the agency of Amitabha and the deities of his family, this blinding passion is

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Within the Flow of Time

An Interview with Peter Demitrov on Community Development

Mirror: Peter, over the years you've worked in the area of community development, could you tell us about your work in Canada.

PD: Well, in addition to my work during the 1970's when I worked to halt the construction of huge hydro-electric dam projects built in accordance to the U.S. and Canada Columbia River treaty, and my involvement in stopping dangerous uranium mining and exploration taking place in British Columbia, I worked quite a bit on the community level with indigenous people in here Canada

Mirror: What were some of these projects involving native peoples?

PD: In 1980 the Council of Yukon Indians (CYI), a First Nations Tribal Council in Canada's Northern Yukon Territory contacted me about assisting them in a project involving twelve First Nations villages which make up the council (CYI). While in the Yukon, I was a senior advisor for the CYI on matters related to community socioeconomic development and various aspects of native Indian land claim negotiations. Later I assumed the directorship of a large community development project for the Kaska Indians people who reside in a remote part of the Yukon territory and who live primarily by hunting and gathering and seasonal wage labor.

During the time of my involvement with the Kaska people their largely traditional way of life was being threatened by proposals to build a large mine, hydro-electric dam, a major highway, and a new townsite on their traditional lands. Consequently, they requested my assistance and together with the Chief and Band Council, a community inspired

and controlled project was born.

The Kaska Project which required that I live amongst and collaborate with the people, sought to clarify and document what was of "importance" to the Kaska people, that included their culture, their integrated system of land, plant, and animal use, their unique economy and their dreams and vision for themselves and the future use of their lands and animals. This information was then juxtaposed with the non-Kaska plans for the region so as to gain insight into the impacts that might be experienced by the Kaska people and so that mitigative measures could be designed. The final results, comprising maps, photos, and a two volume report was then toured around to the other Yukon Indian villages, and the process of the community controlled research and development became a model upon which land claim negotiations were based.

Upon completion of the Kaska project, I returned to British Columbia where I again worked in the area of community development facilitating similar community controlled and designed projects for yet another Athabaskan language tribal group, the Carrier Sekani people.

Mirror: Can you share your own views of generally what community development means?

PD: According to my understanding, community is a word that does not designate a static concept. Rather community is a process amongst people that exists within the flow of time, it is constantly changing, and although it is composed of interacting components, communities are an integrated whole, a system with most of the attributes described by the western concept of "systems theory." Generally speaking, communities are trending either along a

pathway of progression towards greater health and creativity, towards conservation-homeostasis, or along a pathway of dissolution, dysfunction and chaos.

Mirror: So how do you actually approach the task of community development?

PD: When I'm invited to work with a group of people, to assist in the process of community discovery and building, I bring an attitude of immense curiosity, openness, and respect. I do not consider myself an "expert" who parachutes into a community to "fix" things. I come with the realization that I'm an outsider who shall eventually leave, and it is my primary goal that I leave the community in a more self-reliant position to guide its own evolution.

When I'm invited to work with a group of people . . . I bring an attitude of immense curiosity, openness, and respect.

I am aware that in working with communities I will be the recipient of psychological 'transference' phenomena and thus I may become a lightning rod for all that is problematical. Alternatively, I may be perceived as reassuring to those who may be voiceless or powerless. From my experience, I understand that through my presence and influence, the life of a community may be altered immeasurably, and thus it is important to balance the act of providing 'directive leadership' and of 'letting go.'

While working with a community I try to understand the direction in which the community is trending, is it toward healthy creativity, conservation or dissolution? While I'm curious of the types of physical structures and essential services available to community members and whether or not they are adequate,

I am nonetheless aware that the existence of such physical features are insufficient by themselves for a healthy community.

Mirror: What do you consider your most important task in assisting a community towards growth and development?

PD: What I try to do is to help a community empower itself by a number of questions.

- discovering whether it is trending toward health, stasis, or dysfunction and dissolution
- gather 'intelligence' about the entire community and identify the importance of various parts toward the functioning of the whole community
- have community members discover patterns of commonality amongst themselves and with others - forming inter and intra community networks
- facilitate awareness of the unconscious positive human resources of the community
- resolving blocks and conflicts between community member
- help to design systems of governance that will reflect the wishes of those being governed, and which is transparent, accountable, and effectively understood by everyone.
- human development training as well as leadership training around the theme of alternatives to violence and abuse.

Mirror: From previous discussions, I understand that you have identified broad thematic areas on which you focus much of your work with communities, can you say a little about that?

PD: The most important aspect in my work with communities is the feeling quality that exists amongst people. First of

Do people work together in a collaborative fashion balancing self-reliance with reliance upon others? An extremely important aspect-- Is there respect and tolerance for difference, or is there prejudice and maltreatment of those with contrary views and lifestyles? Is there violence in the community? Who are the perpetrators and who are the victims?

Are leaders chosen in a fair fashion so as to truly reflect the choice of the people? Are the leaders skilful in consulting with, listening to and activating the creative resourcefulness of the community? Is the process of governance open and transparent and are leaders held accountable for their actions?

To what degree is the community conscious of the people--resources and commonality of interests latent within its membership? Every community has unspoken rules within which it functions, some good, some outmoded, to what degree is the community consciously aware of those rules? What areas of community remain as unconscious 'shadow' for community members and leaders?

Has the community evolved just means to resolve conflict? Is the community in control of the justice process or has that process been usurped by systems outside the community? Is there a process in place to promote community healing, to re-incorporate those who have offended the values and rules of the community, back into the community?

What is the economy of the community? Is that economy largely under the control of community members or is it highly impacted by outside forces beyond the community's control? Is the method of earning a living sustainable with minimal impact upon the natural world? Are community endeavors right livelihood or are they damaging to the physical, emotional, spiritual well-being of the people?

What is the community's culture? Are there a diversity of cultures present within the community? Are there festive days within the community? Are community rituals in place to celebrate the passages of the individual and community life?

How is the community's culture, values and way of organizing economic life transmitted to the youth, that is, how does the community ensure its continuity and reproduction throughout historical time?

Simultaneous with working in all or some of the above areas, development of community must also take place. This involves putting oneself at the service of the community in the role of and *Animateur* or 'Change Agent.' To be a 'Change Agent' for a community requires sensitivity towards those aspects of community that are sacred, such as particular values, activities and 'institutions,' while on the other hand, helping a community work with areas requiring change.

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Blossoming of the Great Flower

Report from Merigar

by Liz Granger

Merigar hosted between forty to fifty people for its intensive ten day practice retreat over the Christmas holiday. The practices were dedicated to the health of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and were those that Rinpoche had suggested would help in the healing process.

Each morning, older practitioners gave full explanations of various aspects of the Mandarava practice such as the meaning, how to sing it, the use of mudra and of the vajra, bell and dadar after which the entire group did the practice. The afternoons were dedicated to Santi Maha Sangha practice and study in two groups related to the two levels, then at 5:30 everyone met to do a group Tun alternating the practice of Simhamukha and Ngaggon with Guru Dragpo Kilaya, the Ganapuja of Jigme Lingpa and the Ngaggon on alternate days. Later in the evening, people met for sessions of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance. During the last day of the retreat practitioners did an intensive Ngaggon practice for eight hours which concluded with the Ganapuja of Mandarava.

Later in January, the Merigar Community was very happy to welcome back Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche who was in residence during January and part of February on his fourth visit to Merigar during which he continued to work on his portraits of the twelve primordial Dzogchen masters which adorn the Temple of Great Liberation. Both a spiritual master and a well-known artist, Choegyal Rinpoche is the

VIIIth incarnation of Drukpa Choegyal Gyamtso, a famous yogi and eminent master of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage.

During the weekend of January 21-22, Rinpoche kindly gave two sessions of teaching at Merigar on "The Dohas of the Mahasiddhas" to a group of well over 100 practitioners. Rinpoche explained that the verses he had chosen were from the songs of the female Mahasiddhas and were held more secret than other songs of the Mahasiddhas. He said that it was possible to have a direct experience from hearing or reading the verses.

The verses were originally held in the secret "archive" of the Dakinis. They were received by Bodhidharma from the original Dakinis through the Dakini, Lekyi Wangmo, who kept the "archive" in the land of Oddiyana. Although they are referred to as an "archive," originally the songs were not written but were part of the wisdom of the Dakinis. They are contained in a three volume text entitled *Chakchen Gyashung*, a collection of Mahamudra texts from both India and Oddiyana of different periods.

Before the teaching Choegyal Rinpoche had prepared five beautiful watercolor paintings of the figures of the "Doha of the Mahasiddhas" under each of which he had calligraphed one of the mystical songs in Tibetan. He generously donated them to Merigar and they were displayed in the Capannone where Rinpoche gave this teaching.

During the two teaching sessions, he spoke on impermanence, the preciousness of a human birth and compassion and mindfulness as being the basis of the path. He also gave advice to the students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu about practice in order to create positive circumstances for their teacher. Mario Maglietti translated into Italian.

During the weekend of February 11th and 12th, Rinpoche gave two talks on the principal points of Naropa's teaching and his lineage. During the first talk, he spoke at length on Naropa's history making use of lively and colorful stories to illustrate it. This was followed on the second day with an explanation of how Naropa symbolically received twelve different teachings from Tilopa over a period of twelve years. Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche then went on to talk about some of the principal points of the Vajrayana view. Once again, the walls of the teaching room were adorned, this time with Rinpoche's vivid watercolor paintings showing different moments during Naropa's life.

At the Temple of Great Liberation as Choegyal Namkhai Norbu has named the Gonpa, visiting Tibetan painters, Tsering Wangchuk and his wife Sonam Palmo continue their precision work on the panels above the windows which depict different lineages of masters. The more than 130 figures are being painted in traditional Tibetan style. At the moment they are working on



Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche working on the panel of the twelve Primordial Dzogchen masters in the Gonpa at Merigar.

portraits of a number of Dzogchen masters from both the Bon and Chod lineages. This panel centers around the figure of Machig Labdron and is flanked by manifestations of Rahula and Sokdrubma. The panel of the Sakya lineage of masters with Sachen Kunga Nyingpo in the center is almost finished, lacking the final touch of putting in the eyes. Both painters are expected to remain for about three more months in order to finish the two remaining panels.

Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche is continuing his work on the panel of twelve primordial Dzogchen masters which he begun on his visit to Merigar in the summer of 1993 at the invitation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. During this visit Rinpoche, was accompanied by his assistant, Lodoe Drimey, a young artist from Norbu Ling, Boudha in Nepal, who works alongside him.

Rinpoche's inspiration for these figures goes back to the memories of his youth before his departure for exile in India when there was a series of thankas of these twelve masters in his monastery at Dugu painted by the II Choegyal, famous master and great painter of the 16th century.

Unfortunately, these thankas were destroyed during the cultural revolution in Tibet. Another source of inspiration is a series of small images by his master, the VIII Khamtrul Rinpoche, a famous painter who used them for initiations, as well as the descriptions and designs contained in the "gonpa book" by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Although some of the figures appeared to be finished, Rinpoche has continued to work on them with his unique style and particular use of color in order to "wake them up" and bring them in tune with the bright shades of color which adorn the Gonpa. His free style, a composition of light, movement and color is reminiscent of the great masters of modern art yet has its roots in the unmistakable and essential quality of the teaching.

New York Gakyil New Mailing Address

Please note the new change of address for the New York Gakyil. It is now:
P.O. Box 1425
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163-1425

Russian Dance Retreats

*Moscow, November 1994 and
January 1995*

In June 1994, we held a second retreat with our precious Master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Moscow where we were so fortunate to receive profound teachings, transmissions, and practices. Now, many new and old practitioners study, do practices, and help each other to clarify uncertain points. We exchange our experiences, resolve questions about details, and share our situations, sometimes difficult, in order to integrate within the context of Dzogchen teachings.

In autumn, we studied Yantra Yoga with Fabio Andrico. Many people took part in the Yantra Yoga



Retreat coming not only from Moscow but from all over Russia to participate in this retreat. In both November and January, we completed two retreats on the Vajra Dance with Adriana Dal Borgo. We had been looking forward to her visit as far back as October 1993, but in those days the political situation in Russia

prevented her from coming. Finally our long awaited retreat for the Vajra Dance was able to manifest.

The premises of a large school hall proved an hospitable environment for more than 50 students, who were anxious for the practice of Vajra Dance to be continued after our retreat with Rinpoche in June.

In the beginning, it was difficult to keep in mind so many complex steps. We moved very much fettered as though we were chess figures. With a lot of patience and love, Adriana would initiate us, step by step, into the Vajra Dance mystery. Groups of twelve people would participate one after the other engrossed by the magic of sound and motion. Quickly the hours and days of the retreat flowed by.

During that time, we

received the sad news of Rinpoche's illness. From that moment, our everyday study of the Vajra Dance was transformed into the Ganapuja of Jigme Lingpa with Guru Dragpur and Ngaggon. We were grateful that Adriana was with us at that hour, difficult for all of us. Together we participated in practicing for Rinpoche's health with all the other practitioners of the Dzogchen Community throughout the world.

The time for Adriana to leave for St. Petersburg was about to come, with another retreat waiting for her. Muscovites didn't have time to study through the complete dance during the November retreat. Therefore, we intended to perfect our knowledge further in January, before Adriana was due to leave for Italy. It was clear that one man-

dala would be insufficient, so we urgently prepared a second one in preparation.

To the best of our abilities we were trying to facilitate Adriana's long winter travel in the Northern countries. After the Moscow retreat she would hold four more - St. Petersburg, Tallin, Vilnius, and Minsk. We would hand Adriana over, as the greatest treasure, from one person to another and from city to city being fully aware of the importance of her mission and the difficult conditions our countries presently endure. However, all these difficulties were justified by our joy of being united and the inspirations and sensations which were generated during the Vajra Dance retreats.

Members of the Blue and Red Gakyils of Moscow: Anna and Natalia Rochegova and Helena Antonova.

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NEW ARRIVALS

*Stoffelina Verdonk and
Laurent Soen are happy to
announce the birth of their son*

Iring Dorus

born 21 November 1994



NEW GAKYILS FOR 1995

SINGAPORE

Yellow Daniel B K Suen
Chua-Lim Lay Kian
Red Wong Hee Kun
Chua-Lim Lay Kian
Blue Daniel B K Suen
Larry Pang
Tah Sin Yong

GAKYIL APPOINTMENTS FOR 1995

MOSCOW

Yellow Alexander Stepanov
Anna Artemyeva
Red Tatyana Gerasimova
Leonid Korolev
Ludmila Kislichenko,
(Secretary)
Blue Nikolai Makcov
Konstantin Shatilov,
(Chairman)
Demity Reznichenko

SPECIAL CALENDAR PRACTICE

"... It is best to do these practices collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters (at the recommended times), but if this is not possible you can do them personally whenever you have free time. The important thing is to try to communicate with all practitioners linked with the same transmission. In this way you develop the potentiality of your transmission and your understanding and capacity to integrate your daily life into practice..."

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu thanks everyone for the practices we are dedicating to his health and well-being during this very difficult time. The most important thing we can do to help him is to keep our samaya as pure as possible and to correct all errors by performing Ganapuja with our Vajra brothers and sisters. Also, in the mornings, we perform the long-life practice of Mandarava and, in the evenings, a Tun with intensive practice of Guru Dragpur, either collectively or personally, according to circumstances.

UNIVERSAL TIMETABLE

Anniversary of Garab Dorje
Wed. 15th March 1995
Anniversary of Padmasambhava
Fri. 7th July 1995

16.30 Fairbanks, Hawaii
17.30 Dawson
18.30 San Francisco,
Los Angeles, Vancouver
19.30 Denver
20.30 Chicago, Mexico City
21.30 New York, Montreal,
Lima
22.00 Caracas
22.30 Buenos Aires
23.30 Rio de Janeiro

Anniversary of Garab Dorje
Thu. 16th March 1995
Anniversary of Padmasambhava
Sat. 8th July 1995

01.30 Reykjavic, Capo Verde
02.30 London
03.30 Rome, Berlin, Oslo,
Paris, Madrid
04.30 Moscow, Nicosia,
Helsinki, Athens
06.00 Tehran
08.00 ODDIYANA, Delhi,
Kathmandu
08.30 Rangoon
10.00 Ulan Bator, Jakarta,
Singapore
10.30 Beijing, Lhasa, Manila,
Hong Kong
11.30 Tokyo, Seoul
12.30 Sydney
14.30 Wellington, Marshall

LOSAR:

TIBETAN NEW YEAR

1st Month, 1st day

Thu. 2nd March 1995

If you know how to do the rite of the *Sang* or the *Riwo Sangchod* it is good to do it in the morning. Otherwise you can do any long-life practice.

1st Month, 4th day
Sun. 5th March. 1995

This is a special day for doing the long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava. It is also a very special day for doing the practice of Ekajati. Therefore try to do the long-life practice, Cycle of Life's Vajra in the morning and the long Tun in the evening. If you don't have this

possibility, you can try to do the long-life practice included in the medium or long Tun, with the rite of Ekajati and recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as much as possible.

1st Month, 8th day

Thu. 9th March. 1995

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

1st Month, 10th day

Sat. 11th March. 1995

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

1st Month, 15th day

Thu. 16th March. 1995

FULL MOON

The first full moon of the Tibetan New Year is the very important anniversary of the Great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje. It is also a special day of Buddha Shakyamuni, the day he performed many miracles, and it is the anniversary of the Master Marpa as well as that of Shenrab Miwoche, the founder of Bon. Therefore, on this day when it is 8 o'clock in Oddiyana, it is good for all Dzogchen practitioners to practice at the same time, practicing the *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, Guruyoga with the White A. You can do this practice collectively or alone.

See the Universal Timetable

1st Month, 25th day

Sun. 26th March 1995

This is the anniversary of the lady Master Ayu Kadro, so it is good to do the *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor* and since this is a Dakini day in general it is a good day to reinforce our energy. Try to do a Ganapuja with the transformation into the Dakini Simhamuka.

1st Month, 30th day

Thu. 30th March 1995

NEW MOON. This is a good day to do *Namchos Shitrol Nalgyor*, the practice of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or personally.

2nd Month, 6th day

Thur. 6th April 1995

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

2nd Month, 10th day

Mon. 10th April 1995

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, so try to perform a Ganapuja collectively, but if that is not possible do the long-life practice, Universal Wisdom Union.

2nd Month, 12th day

Wed. 12th April 1995

This is the anniversary of Dragpa

Gyaltsen (1147-1216), one of the first great Masters of the Sakyapa tradition, so try to do the Guruyoga *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, the Guruyoga of the White A.

2nd Month, 15th day

Sat. 15th April 1995

FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for long-life practices, in particular, the practice of Union of Primordial Essences. The best time for this practice is from 7- 8:00 am.

2nd Month, 20th day

Thu. 20th April 1995

The anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master, Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), a disciple of the first Dordrubchen Rinpoche and a master of Nyagla Pema Duddul. It is therefore a good day to do *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, the Guruyoga with the White A.

2nd Month, 25th day

Mon. 24th April 1995

This is a Dakini day so try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters.

2nd Month, 30th day

Sat. 29th April 1995

NEW MOON. On this day, which is the birthday of the great tertön, Loter Wangpo, try to do the *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, Guruyoga of the White A.

3rd Month, 4th day

Wed. 3rd May 1995

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

3rd Month, 10th day

Wed. 10th May 1995

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava so try to do the long-life practice, Universal Wisdom Union, early in the morning or at sunset. If you have the possibility it is beneficial to combine this with a practice of Ganapuja collectively.

3rd month, 15th day

Sun. 14th May 1995

FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for long-life practices, and in particular for the practice of the, Union of Primordial Essences. It is best to do it early in the morning if you can. This is also the anniversary of the day when Buddha Sakyamuni first gave the teaching of Kalachakra so it is good to do a Ganapuja or long Tun in the evening.

3rd Month, 25th day

Wed. 24th May 1995

This is a Dakini day as well as the anniversary of the fifth Dalai Lama, a great tertön and practitioner of Dzogchen, so it is a good day to practice *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, Guru Yoga with White A, in the morning and Ganapuja with an intensive practice of Ekajati in the evening.

3rd Month, 30th day

Mon. 29th May 1995

NEW MOON. This is a particularly good day for practicing the Purification of the Six Lokas. As it is also the anniversary of the great tertön and Dzogchen Master, Sangyas Lingpa, try to do the *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*.

4th Month, 6th and 8th days

Sun. 4th June 1995 and

Tues 6th June 1995

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

4th month, 7th day

Mon. 5th June 1995

This is the anniversary of the birth of Buddha Shakyamuni, an important day for all Buddhists, so try to a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

4th Month, 10th day

Thu. 8th June 1995

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. If you can, try to do a Ganapuja, otherwise you can do the long-life practice, Universal Wisdom Union.

4th Month, 15th day

Tue. 13th June 1995

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of the Parinirvana of Buddha Sakyamuni, as well as an important day for the long-life practice, Cycle of Life's Vajra. Therefore try to do this practice early in the morning, and in the afternoon or evening do a Ganapuja.

4th Month, 25th day

Thu. 22nd June 1995

Dakini day. This is the anniversary of Ngor Chen (a great Master of the Shakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the Guruyoga, *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*, collectively if possible or otherwise alone.

4th Month, 30th day

Tue. 27th June 1995

NEW MOON. This day is the anniversary of Nyagla Pema Duddul (1816-1872). He was one of the Masters of Changchub Dorje, the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma *Tsedrub Gongdus* which two of his disciples, Ayu Khadro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Therefore you should try to do this long-life practice, *Tsedrub Gongdus*, *Union of Primordial Essences*. The time to do it is the early morning. Later in the day or in the evening you can do the Guruyoga of the White A, *Agar Lama'i Nalgyor*.

5th Month, 1st day

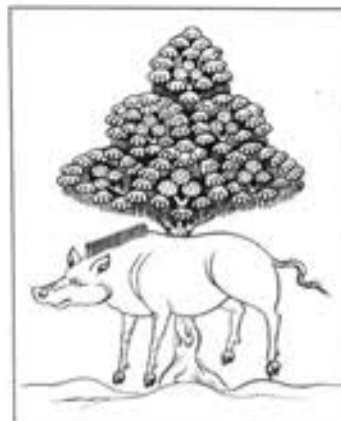
Wed. 28th June 1995

This is the anniversary of Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1870), a Nyingma Master of Dzogchen, one of the most important Rime masters of the XIX Century. Try to do a practice of *Akar Lama'i Nalgyor*.

5th Month, 11th day

Sat 8th July 1995

Though many masters affirm that the date of the anniversary of the birth of Padmasambhava is the tenth day of the sixth month of the Tibetan calendar, the great master Jigme Lingpa confirms that the tenth day of the fifth month according to the Tibetan calendar is the anniversary of the birth of Padmasambhava. This year there is no 10th day of the 5th month so we celebrate on the 11th day. This year, when it is 8.00 am in Oddiyana, on



Saturday 8th July, we Dzogchen practitioners all over the world will perform the practice of Guruyoga with Tundrin or Tungsas, according to our opportunities, and those who have the possibility can also add Ganapuja.

See the Universal Timetable

5th Month, 14th day

Tues. 11th July 1995

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 15th day

Wed. 12th July 1995

FULL MOON. This is a special day for the long-life practice of Amitayus, so you can do the long-life practice, Union of Primordial Essences early in the morning. If you cannot do it at that time, it is still good to do it later in the day. It is also the *Dzangling spyi-bsang* (Lit. smoke puja of the world in general) so if you know how to do it, you can do the rite of the *Riwo Sangchod* in the morning.

5th Month, 25th day

Sat. 22nd July 1995

This is a Dakini day and an important day for the practice of Mandarava. If you know how to do it you can do a practice of *Riwo Sangchod* in the morning.

5th Month, 30th day

Thu. 27th July 1995

NEW MOON. This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the Purification of the Six Lokas either collectively or alone, preferably in the early morning. Otherwise you can do a medium or short Tun.

6th Month, 4th day

Mon. 31st July 1995

This is the anniversary of the Dharmachakra (the first turning of the Wheel of the Dharma): the first time that Buddha Shakyamuni gave the teaching of the Four Noble Truths to his disciples at Sarnath, after his illumination. To honour the Lord Buddha on this special day you can do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

6th Month, 10th day

Sun. 6th August 1995

This is a special day of Padmasambhava and also the anniversary of Yeshe Tsogyal the main consort and disciple of Padmasambhava so if you have the possibility, it is beneficial to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra brothers and sisters, if not, you can practice Guruyoga with Padmasambhava and the long-life practice, Universal Wisdom Union.

6th Month, 14th day

SPECIAL CALENDAR PRACTICE

Wed. 9th August 1995

This is the anniversary of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339), a famous master of Dzogchen upadesa. On this day it is good to do *Agar Lama'i Naljor*, Guruyoga with the White A.

6th Month, 15th day

Thu. 10th August 1995

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of Gampopa, the main disciple of Milarepa. Therefore it is an excellent day to do *Agar Lama'i Naljor*, Guruyoga with the White A. It is also a good day to do the long-life practice of Amitayus, Union of Primordial Essences.

6th Month, 25th day

Sun. 20th August 1995

This is a Dakini day, so it is a positive day for reinforcing the function of our energy and creating a vital contact with the energy of the universe by doing a Ganapuja with our Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby you can do a medium Tun on your own. In either case, when you transform into the Dakini Simhamuka, recite her heart mantra as many times as possible.

6th Month, 30th day

Sat. 26th August 1995

NEW MOON. This is a very important day to do purification practices, especially the Purification of the Six Lokas. If you have the chance, you can also do a short, medium or long Tun.

7th Month, 9th day

Sun. 3rd Sept. 1995

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

7th Month, 10th day

Mon. 4th Sept. 1995

This is the anniversary of Jomo Menmo (1248-1283), a very famous woman tertön and reincarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal. She was the consort of the great tertön, Guru Chowang. It is also a very special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Therefore it is an ideal day to do *Agar Lama'i Naljor* in the morning and a Ganapuja and Long-life practice associated with Padmasambhava, Universal Wisdom Union, later in the day.

7th Month, 15th day

Sat. 9th Sept. 1995

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso and Pema Karpo, a famous 17th century Drugpa Kagyu master. Therefore it is an excellent day to practice *Agar Lama'i Naljor*, the Guruyoga with the White A, early in the morning if possible, or later in the evening when you are free. It is also an excellent day for the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava, with a Ganapuja if you have the possibility.

7th Month, 25th day

Tue. 19th Sept. 1995

This is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of Pagmo Drugpa (1110-1170), the chief disciple

of Gampopa. Try to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby, you can do a medium Tun on your own. In either case, when you transform yourself into the Dakini Simhamuka, recite her heart mantra as much as possible and then do an intensive practice of Ekajati.

7th Month, 30th day

Sun. 24th Sept. 1995

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

8th Month, 10th day

Tue. 3rd Oct. 1995

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

8th Month, 15th day

Sun. 8th Oct. 1995

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

8th Month, 19th day

Thur. 12th Oct. 1995

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th Month, 25th day

Thu. 19th Oct. 1995

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

8th Month, 27th day

Sat. 21st Oct. 1995

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th Month, 30th day

Tue. 24th Oct. 1995

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

9th Month, 4th day

Fri. 27th Oct. 1995

The anniversary is on the 3rd day of the month but since there is no 3rd day in the 9th month this year, we do the practice on the 4th. This is the anniversary of Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa (1729-1798), a great Dzogchen master who was the author of many books, among which is the *Longchen Nyingthig*, which he wrote after having contact with Longchenpa through visions. Therefore, on this important day, you should try to do *Agar Lama'i Naljor*, the Guruyoga with the White A.

9th Month, 10th day

Thu. 2nd Nov. 1995

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

9th Month, 15th day

Tue. 7th Nov. 1995

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

9th Month, 22nd day

Tue. 14th Nov. 1995

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

9th Month, 25th day

Fri. 17th Nov. 1995

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

9th Month, 30th day

Wed. 22nd Nov. 1995

NEW MOON. This is a good day to do *Namchos Shitroi Naljor*, the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible. The best time for this practice is around 8:00 pm in the evening.

10th Month, 10th day

Fri. 1st Dec. 1995

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

10th Month, 11th and 14th days

Sat. 2nd and Tue. 5th Dec. 1995

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

10th Month, 15th day

Wed. 6th Dec. 1995

FULL MOON. This day is considered to be the day to honour the Lord Buddha in general, and it is one of the best days to do the long-life practice with the Dakini Mandarava particularly. Therefore try to do the long-life Cycle of Life's Vajra. Generally the best moment to do this kind of practice is at 7-8:00 am in the morning. But if you don't have this possibility, then do it in the afternoon or later in the evening when you are free.

10th Month, 25th day

Sun. 17th Dec. 1995

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

10th Month, 29th day

Thu. 21st Dec. 1995

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

Fri. 29th Dec. 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

Sun. 31st Dec. 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

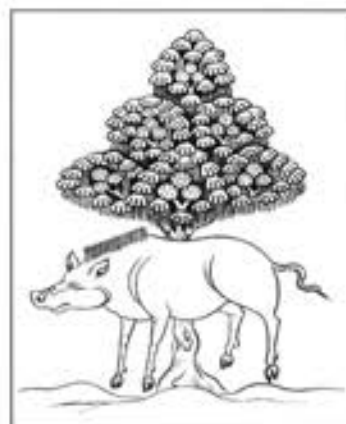
Fri. 5th Jan. 1996

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

11th Month, 25th day

Mon. 15th Jan. 1996

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 Simhamuka, 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

Sat. 20th Jan. 1996

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

12th Month, 10th day

Tue. 30th Jan. 1996

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 Idrabhodi. 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

Wed. 31st Jan. 1996

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

12th Month, 15th day

Sun. 4th Feb. 1996

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

12th Month, 18th day

Wed. 7th Feb. 1996

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 Lama'i Naljor*, Guruyoga with the White A, either collectively or personally.

12th Month, 25th day

Wed. 14th Feb. 1996

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

12th Month, 30th day

Sun. 18th Feb. 1996

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

NEW TIBETAN FIRE MOUSE
19TH FEBRUARY 1996



Panoramic view of the Continental Divide from the uppermost peak of the Tara Mandala retreat land

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on Tara Mandala

Tara Mandala was created by my student, Tsultrim Allione who over the years has followed many teachers in different traditions such as Gyalwa Karmapa, Abu Rinpoche, Lama Yeshe, and others. In particular, she studied and learned all three series of Dzogchen teachings from me over a period of many years. Therefore, I consider her one of my oldest students.

Recently she created Tara Mandala. The purpose of Tara Mandala's Colorado retreat land is to provide a place for in depth meditation and retreat for practitioners of Dzogchen, especially my students. It is her intention to offer intensive group retreats of varying lengths, including one day, weekends, ten days, one hundred days, etc., as well as opportunities for longer periods of practice for groups and individuals.

The Retreat programs will occur in three tiers: longer group retreats of up to 150 during the summer months. Participants would either camp on the land or stay in the nearby town of Pagosa Springs, Colorado. This type of retreat follows the model of Tibetan summer teachings where a tent encampment is established in a meadow or near a sacred power place. During this retreat, initiations and teachings would be given. Afterwards, the community would disperse to practice the teachings on their own.

Secondly, on the retreat land, Tara Mandala would establish a Tibetan style *Drubkhang*, a retreat facility for 21 practitioners and a teacher to do long residential retreats. This facility will have a kitchen, communal bathroom, and individual rooms. This could be a place for the development of Dzogchen practice retreats with the close guidance of a retreat master. This type of retreat could be used in the Santi Maha Sangha training.

Third, individual hermitage cabins will be built for the benefit of those wishing to do solitary

practice, and dark retreats. There would also be cabins set up for couples with individual rooms and shared kitchen /bathroom space.

The land at Tara Mandala is extremely well suited to Dzogchen practices. There are many places for Longde practice, vast sky views in all directions, enough privacy and isolation to do the external rushan, and profound silence, very difficult to find these days. The Vajra Dance can be developed there as well. The elements are in balance and there are no hostile neighbors. In fact, the closest neighbors turned out to be a doctor who has just given some of her land to a group of Tibetan monks.

So this is how Tara Mandala will evolve its programs for the future. Of course, the Gakyils of the Dzogchen Community and Tara Mandala are different organizations, but in a real sense, they belong to the same family. This is because our principle relies on the teaching and the transmission and Tara Mandala is a mandala which follows my teaching and transmission. Sometimes within our international Dzogchen Community, the Gakyils of various countries are not always the same because the Dzogchen Community is not structured as an hierarchical system, therefore, all Gakyils function autonomously. This is true for Tara Mandala which is also in that condition.



In conclusion, all the people in the Dzogchen Community should know that Tara Mandala is within our family for us to use and to collaborate together with. This relationship is very useful for everybody.

With all my best wishes and Tashi Delegs to all our Dzogchen Community practitioners in the world.

Yours forever,

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

TARA MANDALA 1995 PRACTICE PROGRAMS

**Friday, May 5 through
Sunday, May 14**

Long-Life Practice of
Mandarava and Vajra Dance
Retreat with Tsultrim
Allione and Prima Mai

**Monday, May 15 through
Friday, May 19**

Personal Rushan Retreats

**Saturday, May 20 through
Sunday, May 28**

Semdzin Retreat

**Wednesday, July 12
through Tuesday, July 18**

A Dzogchen Retreat on The
Nature of Mind with
Tsok Nyi Rinpoche

**Tuesday, August 1 through
Thursday, August 3**

Long Life Practice of
Mandarava with
Tsultrim Allione

**Friday, August 4 through
Sunday, August 13**

10 Day Tantric Practice
Retreat featuring
Mandarava, Simhamuka, and
Chod practices with
Tsultrim Allione

For other programs featuring
Native American Elders,
Permaculture, and
Performance Art,
please contact:

TARA MANDALA
PO Box 3040
Pagosa Springs CO 81147
Tel: 303-264-6177
Fax: 303-264-6169

Interview

continued from page 6

Mirror: As a 'Change Agent' or *Animateur*, how do you work creatively with indications of the collective shadow or negativity which, as an outsider you may be able to see, but which the community itself may be blind to?

PD: This is a deep subject and not worthy of a pithy response. Basically, the community *Animateur* must comprehend in addition to the particular mainstream values which are the dominant cultural modes of organizing social and economic relations – the flipside, those issues or individuals within the community on the fringe or even outside which represent difference – different eyes, different language, mental processing abilities, values and beliefs, behavior patterns, emotional expressiveness, and so forth. While working with a community I try to discover these holders of difference as well as those who hold the predominant culture and bring them together to explore their differences so that mutual learning can take place.

Generally, if a person or community remains ignorant of their shadow or is in denial of the existence of a personal or collective shadow, then there will be a tendency to project those unwanted aspects onto other persons or societies who do not carry the collective values of the particular group. This not only disempowers those individuals but may actually lead to conflict and war. The thing I find useful is to get away from seeing so dualistically because it is not as if the shadow is a separate and distinct thing with clear boundaries, rather it is well integrated within our psyches. However, our lack of awareness and consciousness of its attributes can make us oblivious to its powerful influences in our lives. So what I try to do is take the view that in order to actualize our full personal and community potentials, we must become alive and aware not only to the innate intelligence of our wild natures which includes our physical bodies but also the untapped inner resources of personal and community life. This requires a persistent curiosity and energy to travel into realms of the unknown, to confront fears and entrenched ways of being and doing in order to access the fullest intelligence and life energy. This approach includes dwelling in simple presence balanced by the hard work which must be interspersed with community rituals and fun. As I said, it's a profound topic. While I can speak intellectually, much of the value remains experiential.

Peter Demitrov is a grassroots lawyer, who has a Master's degree in community and personal development. He works on behalf of human rights and the plight of refugees as well as in assisting communities.



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PRACTICE AND STUDY

Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga

VAJRA DANCE IN HAWAII

Between Mauna Loa and the sea is a road that snakes through flowering coffee and macadamia. Early morning light glances off black pumice earth and every other bend brings you fact to face with the enormity of the ocean below. I noticed this on the way to the mandala where 18 of us gathered to learn the Dance of the Vajra. Prima Mai taught for 10 days beginning February 1, 1995. We concluded with a Ganapuja on February 10, which auspiciously was a special Guru Rinpoche Day, celebrating his aspect as the prince of Orgyen. Rinpoche sent precious gifts of *Dudza*, the *Togdral* mantra mandala, and *Nongdo*, touching us deeply with his thoughts for us, even as he lay so ill.

When the elements display in Hawaii, it is with such fierce gentleness that one is often caught mouth open in wonder. Not just one rainbow but a pair arched over the white stupa, one arm on the land, while the other lost itself in the cobalt of the Pacific Ocean. One day a wind came roaring up the mountain from the sea, charging into the screened mandala room just as we began the Ngaggon. Porpoises, much to Prima's delight, allowed some of our group to play with them in Keala Keku Bay.

Learning the entire Dance of the Vajra in ten days demanded commitment from our group. I was reminded of a pod of dolphins. Those who learned the fastest encouraged and buoyed up those of us with far too many left feet. At times it seemed like a marathon.

Because of the tirelessness of Prima Mai and those who worked with us between sessions, we were able to complete the dance instruction. Watching

Prima Mai, whose integration of the exquisite beauty and harmony of this practice, strengthened our resolve, sent some of us outside to paint string mandalas to keep the practice going in such strange places as hotel rooms in between flights home. With gratitude as deep as the Pacific Ocean, we thank Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for such a gift and Prima Mai for bringing it to us.

Susan Indich

YANTRA YOGA IN SANTA FE

In mid-November, Fabio Andrico taught Yantra Yoga to thirteen people, mostly Dzogchen practitioners, in an accommodating space called the Upaya Center which suited our needs with a carpeted room and large solar windows. It was a stressful week, knowing of our precious Teacher's ill health, and perhaps most of all for Fabio, who has known Rinpoche for seventeen years. Despite the turmoil, we all practiced Mandarava vigorously and faithful dedicating our efforts to Rinpoche's healing, and had several Ganapujas which resulted in a harmonious and unified atmosphere for us.

Fabio stayed at Annie and Windy Dankoff's house. Being a very conscious cook, he took over the kitchen and instructed us in low-fat cuisine. We joked that maybe he should start cooking classes as well as Yantra Yoga. We also had a special class in Kumbaka which was very helpful. Due to the interest in Yantra Yoga at present in Santa Fe, we anticipate his return to teach here again. The opportunity to learn Yantra Yoga is a rare and sacred one which I hope I have conveyed in this brief communication.

Annie Dankoff

VAJRA DANCE COURSES with Prima Mai

TARA MANDALA
May 5-14
TSEGYALGAR
June 8-14

YANTRA YOGA RETREATS with Fabio Andrico

MARCH 10-20
TOKYO, JAPAN
Contact: Tetsu Nagasawa
MARCH 22
GREECE
MAY 2-13
TALLIN, ESTONIA
MAY 19-29
MOSCOW, RUSSIA
TENTATIVE
MAY 31-JUNE 3
TARA MANDALA
June ?-Santa Fe
JUNE 23-JULY 2
TSEGYALGAR



California Study Group preparing for the Foundation level exam held in Conway, November 1994

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All Santi Maha Sangha texts are also available in Italian from: Shang Shung Edizioni, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

Merigar Easter Retreat April 12-19, 1995

There will be Vajra Dance courses for beginners and more advanced practitioners led by Adriana Dal Borgo; a course of Yantra Yoga with Fabio Andrico and practice of the Seven Semdzin of the Dzogchen Upadesha.

Participants are required to contribute 200,000 lire towards expenses. There will be the usual

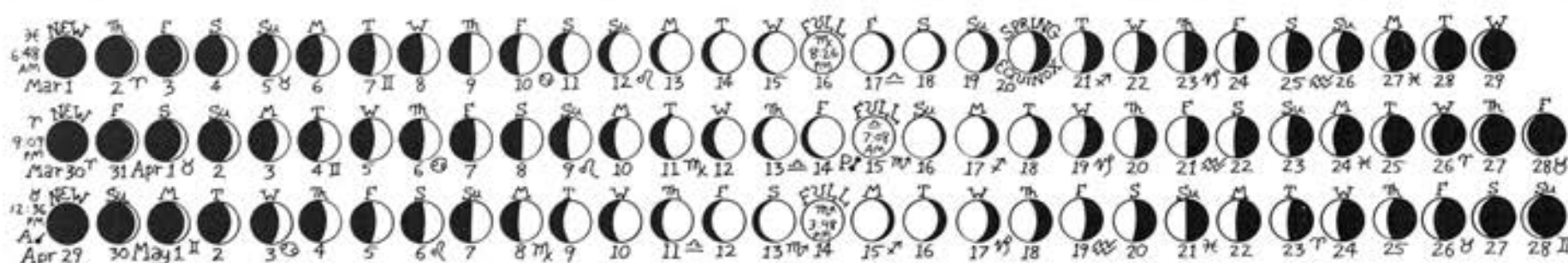
discounts for members of Merigar: 30% ordinary members and sustaining members gratis. We can provide a child-care service if enough people book for it in advance.

For information, contact the secretary at Merigar: Tel 564 966941 or Fax 564 968110.

*In the Clear Flaming Space
where nothing burns
the Golden Jewel Master points out
ever so politely
that our hair is on fire.*

*Mountain, lie down!
Flatten the course of your steep spine stream
for the precious Jewel-bearing bubble.*

Carol Fitzpatrick
November 5, 1994
SMS Level 1



Full 1995 Lunar Calendar available from Snake & Snake Productions, Route 3 Box 165, Durham, NC 27713 for \$2.50 each

In the Eye of the Hurricane

by Michael Katz

In coastal New Jersey, there are periodically hurricanes whose winds are awesome. They leave miles of beach eroded, boardwalks washed away, and huge trees uprooted. Nevertheless, my clearest childhood memory of these storms is the eerie quiet and calm which characterizes the eye of the hurricane. For a brief period as the epicenter of the storm passes over, the winds drop to nothing, the horizontal sheets of water stop and everything is silent.

When I would leave my parent's house at these times, in search of adventure, there would already be fallen trees, and broken power lines. A menacing silence punctuated the minutes, and then the hurricane's winds would rage anew. I am recalling the eye of a hurricane and the feelings it evoked as I sit watching television with Rinpoche.

We are on the 48th floor and there are panoramic views of Manhattan's East Side. There is a big tug boat pushing a barge on the East River. The Con Edison power plant near my house five miles downtown, but easily visible is spewing smoke. The sun is setting, and already hundreds of lights are apparent amongst the miniature buildings below us. Except for my television, loaned along with every article of furniture in the apartment all is quiet here too. We are far above the cacophony of the city, and the template glass insulates even more. For a moment it feels like a cocoon here, but in truth it is more like the eye of the hurricane.

The first time I saw Rinpoche at the hospital he was attached to an intravenous and very weak. When our eyes met, it was one of those poignant moments that are inexpressible in words. I felt very badly.

The next time I went, his family was there, and he was stronger. We walked around the cancer ward seven times. For those first few weeks, it was like that, some good days, some very bad days. One quickly becomes accustomed to the sounds and sights of the cancer ward.

In the beginning there was so much to do, other masters to contact with requests for prayers, practices to be organized, committees to research alternative treatments, discussions about food. Endless discussion as to where and what to rent for him. We were well into negotiations for a large house with multiple picture windows overlooking the Hudson River, just outside the city, when his kidneys failed. The first in a series of seemingly endless complications to the Retinoic Acid treatment.

He was immediately forced to re-enter the hospital, and recognizing that minutes could mean life or death we narrowed our search for an apartment to areas five minutes by taxi from the hospital.

It was another long up and down period in the hospital before he would recover enough to be released again. Finally it came, in time for his birthday, and there was a small celebratory dinner. It should have been festive but Rinpoche's health was deteriorating again, this time a very discouraging bout of pneumonia. The second readmission prompted frantic calls, strong emotions, much second guessing. I remember this as one of the low points.

There were enormous complications in attempting to rent an apartment. Would we take a lease? In whose name? How long? Simultaneous to these discussions there were whole days when Rinpoche would barely speak and his skin was ashen grey. We were now practicing four nights a week. At first Guru Dragpur and protectors practices, later Simhamukha and the *Dogpa*. From his hospital bed, Rinpoche thanked everyone for their practice.

I watched Khenpo Palden Sherap do a powerful ceremony at Rinpoche's request for the purpose of overcoming obstacles and returning negativities to their source. Situ Rinpoche, Dzogchen Rinpoche and other lamas visited the hospital. Practice in New York immediately took on new meaning.



Rinpoche at work in his apartment in New York City

Attendance at the organized practices increased dramatically, as did the number of group practices. The rhythmic intonation of the bell reverberated with near hypnotic fervor into the New York City canyons outside of the downtown lofts where we gathered. A one pointed chorus of the *Dogpa* mantra echoed night after night. With the same care, usually reserved for a military expedition we made final plans to gather all the furniture that people had donated.

Tensions eased as tests became more positive and finally indicated remission. Rinpoche was released for the third time in time for Christmas. His favorite nurse, a good-humored and deeply compassionate woman, served dinner that day in a wild red Santa Claus cap. Rinpoche smiled broadly when he saw her. Far into the night and then all day before his release, the community moved all the donated furniture into the apartment.

Slowly Rinpoche has settled into a routine, practice in the morning, writing after lunch, swimming in the late afternoon when possible, a movie after dinner. We watched "Terminator" 1 and 2. He saw the "Emerald Forest" twice. The cute bundle of fur who is his new pet alternately naps and chews on his feet. Medications and treatments are also very much a part of his routine. At an appropriate point Rinpoche agreed to allow the New York community to visit him collectively. Forty devoted and concerned people arrived, many with gifts. We sang some songs, drank tea, and enjoyed being with him until he became tired.

The weather this winter has been extremely warm. I'm not really surprised as Rinpoche told me some weeks ago that this

would be a mild winter. Sometimes the panorama of this penthouse aerie is obscured by fog as if we are in the clouds, at other times there are clear skies and magnificent views. Occasional snowflakes blowing against the windows have filled Rinpoche with delight.

As I sit here, Rinpoche is midway through the experimental antibodies treatment. Everything is looking positive still we are all nervously anticipating the chemical therapy phase of the treatment. That is why the feelings I had, when the eye of the hurricane and its eerie calm silenced everything, are resurfacing now.

I feel certain that Rinpoche will recover from his illness and that it will signify a deepening of our experience of practice and the overcoming of major obstacles which had previously hindered our community. Remembering the passing of many great teachers: Dudjom Rinpoche, the Karmapa, Kalu Rinpoche, Trungpa Rinpoche, Khyentse Rinpoche, we are so very fortunate to have Rinpoche with us. May we always have contact with the Great Masters!

New York City
February, 1995

Michael Katz was requested to write about his experiences for the *Mirror*. He has taught Yantra Yoga in New York City for many years. He edited, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's, best seller, *Dream Yoga* and the *Practice of Natural Light* published by Snow Lion.

Sacred Principles

continued from page 3

son, in our training, we practice cultivating compassion beyond our limitations. Otherwise our compassion, our love, might always remain limited. For example, a mother has compassion and love for her children; but she never loves anyone else the way she loves her children. In the same way, when someone falls in love they are at that moment conditioned by their emotions and never love anyone else in the same way. That is what we mean when we speak of our compassion being limited.

So when we cultivate Bodhicitta, it means going beyond these kind of limits. Limitations are characteristic of our dualistic vision. From the beginning we have our narrow ego, our sense of 'I', and even if we expand our thinking a little to speak of 'ourselves' - where first we said 'I,' now saying, 'we,' and developing things along those lines - we nevertheless always remain within defined limits. Through the teaching, through developing real knowledge, we can go beyond that. That is how we proceed when we cultivate Bodhicitta, working with our intention, with our thought, to diminish our attachment to ego and develop the intention to put others before ourselves, benefiting them. The Bodhicitta principle is a fundamental teaching of the Mahayana. If we ask: "Why do we follow Mahayana teachings? What do we practice in the Mahayana?", the answer is very simple: we observe what our intention is, and we try to cultivate a good intention in everything we do. That is the total practice of Mahayana.

Edited by Barbara Papparazzo
and John Shane

The preceding teaching is from a talk given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at Tsegylgar in October, 1994.

(Part II of this talk, On Contemplation and Dedication of Merit will follow in the next issue of the *Mirror*)

Robin Cooke

continued on page 18

Book Reviews

continued from page 5

transmitted into clear-sighted warmth of true loving compassion. Such altruism is exemplified by Avalokiteshvara, one of the foremost members of Amitabha's lotus family and the very personification of enlightened compassion.

"As for jealousy, when this extremely destructive emotion arises, it eats away at our insides

and we feel as if we are turning green . . . But the green is also the color of abundant growth, the selfless outpouring of Mother Nature . . . This same inexhaustible energy resides at the core of our being but to release it we must first direct our attention away from the gnawing concerns of our petty ego. This we can do by relying on the practice of the action family of Amoghasiddhi (unobstructed Accomplishment), enabling us to accomplish whatever is necessary to bring about

benefit for others.

"Finally there is the family of Aksobhya (the Immovable) whose blue color symbolizes spaciousness and the all-encompassing wisdom that directly comprehends the ultimate reality of all phenomena. Just as apparently substantial clouds are observed to arise from and eventually dissolve back into the clear blue sky, so too our supposedly concrete conceptions of "this" and "that" arise from and dissolve back into clear, unob-

structed nature of mind itself. In the open and spacious view of the wisdom aspect, all notions of separate selfhood are seen as illusory. But to the mind conditioned by ignorance, this spaciousness poses a great threat. We become terrified that we shall be swallowed up and annihilated in a vast amorphous nothingness, and in fear of this we cling to our individual ego identity more and more desperately. Seeking to protect ourselves, we turn away from everything that

might be a threat to our fragile ego and sink into a dull blue state of narrow minded stupidity. For enlightenment to be achieved, the energy supporting this frightened stupidity must be liberated and allowed to radiate outward until it becomes as expansive as space itself. This is accomplished through the practices of Aksobhya, the Buddha of the all-encompassing center."



Chinese Ox

continued from page 1

calculations derived from neighboring countries, along with the practical application of their principles. From this base the present day Tibetan astrological system derives which is a combination of white and black systems.

The method of divination called the "Chinese Ox Prognostic" taken from the astrological calculation known as, *Nucleus of the Kulika (rig ldan snying thig)* is a way to determine yearly events using the metaphor of an ox, a shepherd and a dragon, in relation to Elemental Astrology. (Only the dates of the beginning of the year and the first hints of the seasons are determined with white astrology.) In Tibet, it is widely used by local farmers and nomads. However, it is well-known that this prognosis gives useful advice on the nature of a particular year which is relevant to everybody on our planet. It is clear, makes use of simple words and is easy to understand.

As the first breath of the spring begins, on 19th of the 12th lunar month, corresponding to the 20th of February, the events related below are established in this way:

Because in the year 1995 the color of the ox is white like a conch shell, late autumn crops could be damaged by early frost, and in general all through the year lightning and hail will be abundant.

Because the color of the head of the ox is green, in the first month of each of the four seasons stormy winds will rise intensely.

Because the color of the horns, the ears, the mouth and the tail of the ox are white, high mountain places will be swept by spring frost and hail.

Because the upper part of the body of the ox is blue, rain will be abundant in the middle month of each season.

Because the belly and the legs of the ox are red, rain will be scarce in the last months of each season in the valleys, and the land will become dry.

Because the mouth of the ox is shut and the tail swings to the right, the cattle of the nomads will not reproduce in great number, and people in general will give birth to few children. In spite of this the fortune and prosperity of people will increase.

Because the shepherd who leads the ox, this year, is an old

man, old people will be prosperous and lucky but the young will experience problems and difficulties. In particular, it will be a negative year for children.

Because the shepherd's hair hangs in two plaits in front of his ears, one to the left and one to the right, inauspicious signs will manifest in every country.

Because the dress of the shepherd is blue and his belt yellow, it indicates that this year will yield good profit for the business man and for anyone who engages in trading; there will be no rivals or enemies.

Because the shepherd's whip is made of Indian hemp, thieves and robbers are to be expected.

Because the shepherd wears his left shoe but keeps the right one attached to his belt, on the

but cereals will take a long time to ripen.

From the first breath of Summer up to the first breath of Autumn, nine days of the lunar calendar will be lost. This indicates that there will not be great heat throughout the year.

I, Phuntsog Wangmo, of modest intelligence who holds only nominally the title of Tibetan doctor, wrote this at request of my vajra sister, the yogini, Liz Granger.

If some contradiction, incoherence or repetition pollute what I write,

It is only the mistake of myself the writer,

You, impartial judges, show them to me and with respect I will ask your pardon.



Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo working on the astrological calendar

left hip, this indicates that female energy will be more active and the male energy latent. As a consequence wars and enemies are fewer this year.

Because the shepherd precedes the ox, spring will come early and animals will reproduce on a medium scale.

Because the ox are ten, the fields will yield good and abundant crops.

Because the ox is accompanied by only one dragon, the amount of rain will be medium.

Because the first day of the first lunar month is a water dragon day, crops will be attacked by insects and all types of beans will not grow well.

There will be providential rain in the fifth and sixth lunar months (August and September).

The metaphor of a man possessing five things, associated with the water dragon which is the first day of the year, symbolizes that one's wealth will remain undivided, thus there will be prosperity and no famine.

Seeds will sprout quickly

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, was born in 1963 in Lhasa, Tibet. Following her general education she entered the Institute for Traditional Medicine, an ancient and renowned school of Tibetan Medicine founded by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1917 and led by the exceptionally gifted doctor, Khyenre Norbu. There she completed the five-year course of study to qualify as a doctor. Following her graduation, she studied Tibetan Astrology under the tutelage of Abbot Tsewang Namgyal and Tsultrim Gyaltzen and specialized in the divinatory art. After brilliantly completing all her training, she went to Eastern Tibet where she collaborated in the projects of the Italian association, A.S.I.A. During her time there she practiced medicine visiting patients at Galengting (near Derge) and taught various academic subjects to students as well as caring for many other responsibilities. While residing in central Tibet, she taught medicine at the University of Medicine in Lhasa during the winter. At the invitation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, she is now staying in Italy where she teaches Tibetan Medicine.

Namkha

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ment has as its neighbors the other three aspects of the individual, namely the Capacity, the Body, and the Fortune. Their locations are then established by making little crosses with shorter sticks. The aspects of the Mewa are represented symmetrically in the lower part of the Namkha. All the junctions of the sticks should, of course, have the relevant syllable representing the element written on them.

THE THREADS

Thread is a symbol of the continuation of energy and the color of the thread represents the element of the energy concerned. We know that the five elements in Tibetan astrology are represented by five different colors, hence the five colored threads are required in making the Namkha. The use of the thread is not limited to the construction of Namkha; there are many rituals in Tibetan traditions in which threads are used. It is a way of representing the flow of energy. The real condition of energy is not color, but the energy manifests as a particular color. We already know which color represents which element in astrology: green for wood, red for fire, yellow for earth, white for metal, and blue for water. In this way, we have all the material representation for the harmonization process.

THE HARMONIZATION PROCESS

When two elements, such as fire and water, are put together, there is conflict, because they have inherently opposite characteristics. The way to harmonize such a situation is to use an "intermediary" element. Using the example of fire and water, we can see that between them is the wood (or air element). Wood is the mother of fire and is also the son of water. This means that wood is harmonious with both the conflicting elements capable of mediating the conflict.

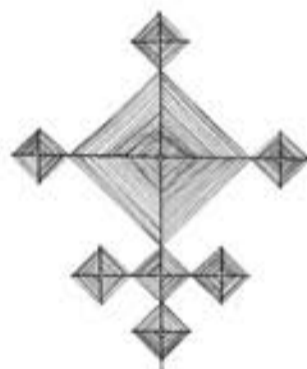
NAMKHA

All aspects surrounding the Life elements of the individual are to be harmonized with the life element itself. So, Capacity, Body, Fortune, as well as the Life element of Mewa are to be harmonized with the individual's Life element; similarly the external energies represented in the lower part of the Namkha, the Mewa Capacity, Mewa Body, and the Mewa Fortune are to be harmonized with the Mewa of Life.

Normally the progression of elements from one to another is according to the mother-son relationship, i.e., the change element is from wood (green) to fire (red), fire to earth (yellow) and so on. So, the functioning of the life energy of a person is represented by threads continuing five colors in this order. If a person's Life element is Fire, then the flow of life energy is represented

by red, followed by yellow, white, blue, and finally green thread, forming a complete forward cycle. The whole of this sequence is repeated three times because the Life aspect is the most important.

If there is an imbalance between the Life aspect and a secondary aspect in the Namkha, the progression of the elements is reversed. If water is to be harmonized with fire, then the representation of water will be blue (water), followed by white (metal), yellow (earth), red (fire) and green (wood). Notice that both elements finally arrive at the "intermediary" element of green (wood), which is exactly how it should be. If this does not happen, and the fifth color is not green but, for example, yellow, we put the intermediate color, which is red, in this case, in order to reach the green. If the two elements are harmonious to begin with, because either they are the same, or they have a mother-son relationship, then there is no need to reverse the order. The color of the threads with which the harmonization process concludes, represents the mother element of the Life element and so it goes around the entire Namkha. If the Life element is Fire, for example, then at the end of the construction, when all the



neighboring elements have been harmonized, green thread will be used to surround every single aspect represented in The Namkha. This is because the mother element, air, gives birth to and protects the Life element, fire, and is considered positive for the Life of the individual.

WORKING OF THE NAMKHA

It doesn't take long to construct a Namkha. However, it remains just a material object until a ritual is done to authenticate it. Basically the rite involves first using mantras to purify any mistakes we may have made in its construction, then inviting the three roots to come and stay in the Namkha, and then further use of mantra to turn the material representation of energy into reality. Once, authenticated, the Namkha can be placed somewhere in one's home. From time to time, it is useful to do a short Namkha rite to "recharge" the construction. Perhaps one can enjoy a more harmonious and peaceful life thereafter.

Forests

continued from page 1

main valley before dark. Our Chinese counterparts were already very worried when we finally returned, in the dark, at 10:00 pm that night.

In looking at the vegetation, one obtains a good over-all sketch of the climatic conditions of the Tibetan Plateau. The steady decrease of annual precipitation, due to the increase of continental climatic conditions, from the Southeast (>1500 mm/60in.) to the Northwest (<100mm/4in.) is matched by the decrease of biomass and biodiversity. While the Southeast, especially along the deeply dissected fringe, has dense lush forests, with conifers over 60m in height, the less mountainous Northwest (Chang-tang) is characterized by an extremely sparse high altitude desert vegetation. In between these extremes, can be found the whole range of vegetation zones. With decreasing precipitation and temperatures, the forests become sparser and less rich in species. Slowly they are replaced by scrub and grasslands which give way to a scanty desert vegetation. In addition to the precipitation factor, there is also a rise of the elevation zones on the plateau due to the rise of the landmass itself. For example, on the fringes of the plateau, forests grow up to "only" 3800m, while highland forests, manage to climb up to 4700m. An often quoted example in vegetation science for the highest treeline in the world are the forests around Dzogchen Monastery in Derge, which is near Galengting, where A.S.I.A. is supporting the construction of a small school and a hospital.

The Southeast of "TAR" (Tibetan Autonomous Region; Kongpo, Zayul, Poyul and Chamdo region), West-Sichuan, former Kham, and Northwest-Yunnan (Dachen Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture) contain China's largest forest area. Impressive old growth forests, very rich in species and composition, are found along the fringe of the Southeastern plateau, while following the river valleys up onto the plateau (Northern-Kham and Chamdo region) the forests are less luxuriant due to harsher climatic conditions. In this region most forests nowadays are found on Northern slopes while the Southern slopes are grasslands. For example, this is easily observed driving North along the headwaters of the Min River, North of Sungpan, where the valley widens and gives space for vast grain fields and lush pastures. The mountains seem free of forests, except for rare patches. Travelling South along the same stretch of river, looking at the Northern slopes ahead, one sees dark forests.

Only recently has research shown, that these Southern slopes were originally forest-clad too. They are the favorite grazing grounds in winter,

because snow melts right away, while the shady slopes keep their snowcover throughout the winter. Probably the Southern slopes were burned as is still practiced in some areas. In addition, the forest's ability of self-regeneration is lost through the destruction of seedlings by grazing animals. Thus far, it was believed that the sunny slopes' climatic conditions were too extreme for forest growth. But in many locations, there are still small trees or little groves left which testify to the existence of former forests, since where one tree grows, a forest can grow.

Traditionally the forests of the Northern slopes supplied construction timber, which was extracted by selective cutting and fire wood. Only directly around settlements and camps did this practice lead to a serious reduction in biomass and biodiversity, often replacing spruce-fir forests with sparse pine stands.

In Amdo, deforestation is documented for 5000 years by pollen-analysis, in which plant pollen found in a place of sedimental organic material (eg. peat) are determined and counted. The different ratio in the layers sedimented through centuries allow reconstruction of the surrounding vegetation at the time of sedimentation. Now, besides rare patches of forests, there are only grasslands and shrubs left. Around Labrang Monastery a patch of spruce "has been planted by the Lama" reported Kuo and Cheo in 1941 stating that "it is a noteworthy fact since spruce has never (before then) been adopted in treeplanting in China!"

In Central Tibet, forests are no longer to be found, although there must have been widespread sparse juniper forests. Only one tiny juniper stand near Reting

forests have been reduced nearly by half! And this through "planned" commercial timber extraction and not through population pressure like in the Himalayas. It is very difficult to find reliable figures which quantify the forest destruction that just started in the sixties. Especially for the region of TAR, figures and information are rare. For example, the forest statistic from 1987, gives the same figures for forest areas as the ones from 1973! While some areas, due to inaccessibility, have been spared from heavy destruction others have been completely depleted of their forests. In Aba (Ngawa) Tibetan Autonomous Area in NNW-Sichuan (NE-Kham) for example the forest area has been reduced by 68% in recent years.

This does not even mean that former virgin forests have been clear cut and replaced by seedlings; since unfortunately reforestation remains the exception, although it is required by law. It is estimated that the ratio between cut and planted tree is 10:1. How many of these trees planted will actually grow into trees is uncertain. The survival rate of seedlings in other parts of China, which don't have such harsh climatic conditions, is between 30% to 70%. So even if there is reforestation, regrowth is not guaranteed due to the loss of the forest canopy, which considerably improves the microclimatic conditions.

Large scale clear cutting, as practiced widely, inhibits natural regeneration. And as deforestation of the past has shown, once the forests are destroyed most of them can not reclaim their former grounds. The negative consequences like floods along the rivers in Kham and in the low-



In the foreground, larch-juniper forests with some firs on the ridge; in the background, are clear cut areas

Monastery has survived human impact, because traditionally forests are protected around sacred sites. Everywhere else in Central Tibet the traces of heavy natural degradation and erosion are strikingly present. Quick reforestation of these slopes is impossible.

Just as in most places in this world, processes which used to take millennia or centuries, now happen within decades or even years. Since the modern world made its way into Tibet, the

lands, heavy erosion, debris-flows, landslides, loss of top soil accumulated over millennia, dried up springs etc., need not be explained here, but the climatic importance of the forests of Tibet needs to be emphasized. The Tibetan Plateau is a major factor in the global circulation, especially in regard of the seasonal route of the jet stream and its influence on the onset of the Indian Monsoon. A considerable change of the region's climate through wide scale deforestation brings



Spruce-juniper forest with traces of human impact in Zitshu Degu

the risk of unbalancing seriously global climatic patterns.

There are several factors causing this short-sighted destruction. Deforestation is unfortunately a very common phenomenon in China. Many other forest areas, like in Heilong Jiang (Amur) in the Northeast, are being depleted in a similarly tragic way. Timber is a key commodity and supply is short. Consumption is much higher than natural regrowth. In East-Sichuan, which has 110 Million inhabitants and hardly any forests left, the demand for timber is increasing with the booming economy. The mountainous western part, where mostly Tibetans live, includes the poorest districts of the whole of China. Timber sales are the most important cash revenue in the Tibetan Autonomous Districts. Since the former subsistence economy no longer exists, nowadays, cash is needed for survival. Working as a logger remains one of the few opportunities for local people to make some money. Asked by a journalist about their view regarding their involvement in the destruction of their "own" local forests, a Tibetan answered hesitantly: "What shall we do? We have to feed our families." The local administrations, who sell the timber, earn badly needed money since farmers and nomads are normally not taxed.

Although this problem has been recognized even in Beijing, forest destruction is not being stopped; the annual production in West-Sichuan has been at least 2.3 times that of the natural reproduction. The Luhuo (Drango) Forest Bureau (near Kandze/Garze) for example harvests three times the amount of the annual production just to pay for its 2500 workers! He

Bochuan, writing on the Chinese ecological crisis, comes to the conclusion: "If the unrestrained activities of local and provincial (= state) enterprises and greedy individuals continue at this rate, the western Sichuan Forest will not last more than 13 years." This estimation might be too pessimistic, but it is clear there is no more time to waste.

But the problem is not timber production, it is the absence of sustainable management. Dong Zhiyong, former Chinese vice-state-secretary of Forestry, admitted, "Administration of forest industry has not conformed to natural and economic principles." East Tibet has to use its resources and China badly needs the timber. The momentary abuse can only be ended by introducing proper forest management methods based on ecological and economical principles. There has been a wealth of experience gained in sustainable high mountain forestry in the Alps in recent decades. The transfer of knowledge should be possible, since the basic features of the forests are very similar. In the Alps as well as in East Tibet spruce-fir-forests are predominating. Besides this it is necessary to mark out forest reserves, which protect intact virgin forest areas and their wildlife.

Over exploitation has to be stopped as soon as possible. The momentary workforce needs to be trained and employed in reforestation. Here A.S.I.A. can be of great help initiating programs. The schools under construction right now can integrate ecology and environmental issues in their curriculum and function as a role model. The pupils can be taught how to plant trees and how to ensure their survival. Training locals in forest

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Threads of Luminosity

Mending the Net of Samaya

by Tsaltrim Allione

Samaya is a word that is tossed around a great deal within our community. Particularly now, when Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has said that broken Samaya is a factor which affects his health. We can't talk about the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism without the concept of Samaya coming up. But what is it really?

In looking up the Tibetan word for Samaya, *Damtsig* in the Chandra Das Tibetan/English Dictionary, *Dam* means sacred or holy and *sig* means word. It says: "word of honor or solemn vow." In *The Crystal and the Way of Light* Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche describes a scene in his youth when he needed to recite certain mantras and texts in order to keep his samaya commitment for teachings he had received, struggling to read them through the light of burning incense. Then he says, "I didn't understand at that time how to maintain commitment by applying the *essentials* of practice, and I interpreted and carried out all instructions very literally."

Later, Rinpoche understood that to keep Samaya in the Dzogchen sense, was not dependent on outward forms or repetition of mantras but holding open all the lines of transmission with which the practitioner is linked. This can be accomplished through Guru Yoga and keeping one's state of presence in all aspects of daily life-- whether one is eating, or walking, or sleeping. This is not in contradiction to more literal approaches but cuts to the core of the issue and supports in a profound way the true purpose of Samaya.

In describing the person who should give instruction to the dying in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, it says, "... it is best if his principal guru from whom he has requested the teaching can be present, but otherwise a dharma-brother with whom he has taken the samaya vow, or a spiritual friend in the same lineage." This indicates how our relationship to our Vajra sisters and brothers is second only to our relationship with our Guru. A deep Vajra sister and brother connection inspires awakening both through the depth of that relationship and the capacities of the practitioners. It's not as though students go from complete ignorance to complete enlightenment. If we can open to the possibility that our Vajra sisters and brothers have some awakening and hold that vision this will help each other to develop.

Samaya seems to have different interpretations according

to who is defining it. I've gone through lots of different phases trying to understand it. When I was first pregnant twenty years ago, I had just received a whole series of empowerments from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. At the end of the three months, I was given a series of mantras to recite daily for the rest of my life to keep the samaya for all the empowerments. At first that seemed simple enough, but then I started to experience incredible drowsiness at night and several nights konked out before saying them, and awoke the next day with pangs of guilt. Of course, once my daughters were born within a year and a half of each other, my whole practice was completely disrupted, and I surrendered to the needs of my children. I considered myself a Samaya breaker. There was a constant demand on my time day and night. Then, when I took the Vajrayogini Abhisheka from Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, again I made a commitment to daily practice. By this time the girls were no longer babies, so I could do it with them crawling all over me.

Later I got pregnant with twins and went back to sleep deprivation. Eventually through a disillusionment with my Sangha in America, I stopped doing that practice and did no practice for a while. However, I continued to think deeply about Samaya and how to go through doubts without breaking Samaya.

After a year, I met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and began practicing in the Dzogchen community. Rinpoche always stressed the importance of getting along with Vajra brothers and sisters as part of maintaining one's Samaya. But how do we always get along? If conflict comes up should it be resolved outwardly or should we just keep trying to be harmonious?

Perhaps at times we need to resolve conflict with open communication to clarify deeply held resentments and/or misunderstandings. Sometimes in an effort to keep everything calm on the surface and to avoid conflict and to keep Samaya, resentments can be pushed underground where they can ferment causing even more damage than if expressed directly and respectfully to the other person with an openness to hear the other's point of view.

At other times one can heal differences by going deep within one's self through seeing one's own ego attachments, deeply

ingrained patterns and using the conflict as an opportunity to see oneself more clearly. So these more esoteric methods can be a rich source of growth for the Sangha. When community members experience conflict which as human beings will naturally arise, but then resolve it and go on together, this shared experience can build community as well as inspire mutual awakening. What does not build community is the age old social vendetta of talking about someone behind their back instead of directly trying to resolve the conflict. Backbiting is one of the most destructive patterns for undermining one's Samaya. Sometimes we tend to do this when we have a conflict where it seems a direct communication might be too threatening and exposing but, in fact, once we sit down with somebody often things dissolve in a way that if, we didn't make the initial effort, would never have had an opportunity for resolution. Resentments can be held for years and years and may be based on the simplest misunderstanding and moments of weakness.

All these personal experiences and searchings have lead me to my own understanding of what it means to keep Samaya and what it means to break it. I see Samaya visually. It is luminous threads that stretch between teacher and disciple, and from disciple to disciple. These luminous threads are born from the awakening that is experienced in and around these relationships. It grows from flashes of innate awareness and transmission manifesting from the guru's energy and the lineage of Rigdzins and wisdom beings. It grows from sitting in the same room with others who enter this space. When these threads are nourished through practice and holding each other in a sacred way, seeing each others Buddha nature, Samaya is healthy. These cords become tracks of luminosity that bring blessings and spiritual development to everyone. If the threads are healthy there is tremendous benefit to everyone in the net, but if they are not then there is disturbance for everyone in the net.

When a teacher gives a transmission, links are made with the Master to everyone present. The recipients also are indissolubly linked through the depth of communion and intimacy that is experienced at that moment. The Teacher is giving life essence, the most precious core of being when transmission takes place. Ordinary places

become divine mandalas, ordinary people dakas and dakinis, the bond is stronger than any other bond, because it goes so deeply into the core of our being. Because this event has occurred it must be respected and maintained. The recitation of mantras is one way this is done. Each time the practice is done, the link to that experience is rekindled and the link with the teacher revitalized. This is important, for if the teaching is not respected and nourished it drains energy from the teacher who is at the heart of the net.

When we hold the vision of the Buddha essence of our Vajra brothers and sisters we keep Samaya. When we contain each other in this loving recognition, or if we fall from it and try to restore it as soon as possible, we strengthen the whole network and give life essence support to the guru.

The Teacher protects the students with awareness. Likewise the students protect the Teacher with awareness. Each time we develop greater understanding and break through habitual patterns and karmic traces we build Samaya. Even if we have doubts about each other or the teacher or teachings, we can still primarily hold the understanding of the preciousness of what has been shared and Samaya will remain intact.

If we cut the connection and rudely deny what we have received and shared, or throw away teachings as worthless, or put aside one teacher for the new one in town who we think we like better, not holding tenderly with naked awareness the earlier relationship, then the consequences and disturbances reach to the very core of our Vajra being. Thus there is the concept of Vajra hell. It is the pain experienced when this deepest intimacy is broken.

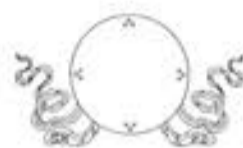
I remember a friend who was having a rough time with her husband. Another friend advised her, "Whatever you are going through and however terrible he may seem, try to hold the vision of his essence while experiencing all the rest."

By doing this she was able to hold him in her heart and work on the problems, and eventually their marriage became better than ever before.

The connection we share between Vajra sisters and brothers is even more long lasting than that of marriage partners lasting until complete awakening. It doesn't mean there isn't conflict, disillusionment, or dislike, but fundamentally we hold each other and the practice in a gentle sacred way. While we are most concerned with the health of Rinpoche and doing the many practices to help his healing process, perhaps we can check up on our relationships with each

other and try to heal any problems we have among ourselves knowing how important it is for him to be held in the loving net of his students' Samaya.

Tsaltrim Allione is the author of Women of Wisdom and the founder and director of Tara Mandala, a retreat center located in Southern Colorado.



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I am kneeling on the ground, it's dark, but the birds are beginning to sing. I am kneeling on the grass outside a big yellow house looking into a bowl, a big bowl full of water. In the bowl the stars are reflected. The dawn is beginning to break, the first rays of sun are streaking the sky above the horizon, I feel cold, but it's all right, there is no sense of danger, no fear, only a sense of awe, of wonder, a clear sharp awareness that no thought disturbs. I am looking up at the sun which is coming up over the mountain where the mist is slowly thinning. I know now that it is the first day of Losar, the Tibetan New Year, and that this water has been left outside under the stars for me to wash with at dawn, as is the Tibetan custom.

I look down at the bowl of water in the first light and there is the face that I have struggled so hard to accept all my life looking back at me framed by stars, my dark curls, now streaked with grey tousled in the wind.

I look at my face and see it changing. "It's only a mask," I think, to myself, "why not take it off?" I put my hands down to take it off where it is reflected in the water. My face comes away in my hands, and now that my reflection is no longer in the way, the water is clear with the stars still reflected in it. I look down deep into the water, past the stars, into a swirling sky.

I can see many things reflected in this bowl, many things, many people, faces, places, drift by, some familiar, some I don't know. I shift my focus and yes I can see very well. It's hard to look into this bowl, hard to look into this water, I am a little afraid of what I might see.

It is 1984. I am at a retreat in Devon, England, a retreat which is just coming to an end. "Time always goes ahead," Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is saying, laughing as he turns to me where I am sitting beside him on the small raised platform translating for him day after day as I often did when he still needed translation from Italian into English. Then, turning back to the room crowded with those attending the retreat, he pauses playfully, breaking into a broad grin, and says: "And now John Shane will finish what I have to say!"

There is complete silence in the packed hall. I am caught between acute embarrassment and a feeling of being flattered at being included in this way in what is happening at the retreat, always feeling something of an outsider no matter how much I seem to others to be on the inside. I know from the number of times I have translated Rinpoche's concluding remarks exactly what he is going to say and yet I am completely thrown off balance by Rinpoche's prank of asking me to complete the last part of his talk without him saying it first. I am too aware of my own imperfections to believe that I would be anything other than a very poor substitute for Rinpoche at the best of times;

but the whole situation is so hilarious that I too burst out laughing and the room erupts into laughter as I begin to recite the words that I have repeated so often translating them sentence by sentence in the pauses Rinpoche would leave for me to speak between his sentences.

"It's enough to look at a clock," I wag my finger at the clock on the wall in imitation of Rinpoche. "Its hands always move forwards, they never go back . . ." and so I continue until I finish my little resume of Rinpoche's usual talk on the implacable nature of impermanence, the necessity for us to practice right away, and the need for collaboration between students.

Rinpoche's great compassion and presence enable him, of course, to make such a talk fresh no matter how many times he may have repeated it for the benefit of various groups of his students, but his ability to openly laugh at himself has always increased my already great respect for him.

The merriment in the room at the retreat in Devon does not subside until some time after I have finished speaking, and then there is one of those silences that no one rushes to fill: a silence filled with understanding and with a sense of the deep connectedness of those present.

I am looking across the crowded room, and I see the faces of many dear friends, Vajra sisters and brothers. Each face is radiant, more relaxed, more open than when the retreat began. Most of us are young, only a few older faces with more lines of experience etched on them. I wonder where we will all be in ten years time. Across the room I see the face of Lorena, smiling, her beautiful eyes full of her sharp intelligence . . .

Lorena, Lorena Walker, she had a degree in philosophy and was a practicing acupuncturist. I look away from the water in the bowl that reflects the stars and up towards the stars themselves, up toward the top of the mountain still swathed in mist, and I remember: Lorena has died in this last year after a long battle with cancer, a battle which she entered with a true warrior spirit, and fought to the last with the dignity and courage of a true practitioner. When her husband Tim told Rinpoche of her death, Rinpoche said that he had dreamed she died in a state of presence. Ah impermanence! Not just a concept, not just a philosophical notion, my own generation now, yes, we who thought ourselves so young, some of have us have left this dimension already, some in this last year. Gina too, Gina Tuell, another

long-time practitioner, who edited Rinpoche's book 'The Song of the Vajra'; she died this summer of cancer, though unlike Lorena she lived to see her daughter grow to be a mother. Lorena left two young children, a daughter Skye and a son, Trinlas. Gina died soon after the end of the retreat at Merigar with Rinpoche. She was so glad to spend her last days in his presence, and Rinpoche indicated that some of her ashes should be placed in a stupa, a very positive sign. Of course, there were births too, comings as well as goings in this last year, but nevertheless the loss of my dear friends stands out in my mind. The sun is coming up now, and I have to

because I have not taken the exam this time. With my father in law's illness and my own health problems, I did not have time to memorize everything and so I am not attending the first ever small retreat for the First Level training that is taking place now in the Gonpa. I see the students who are attending the retreat coming out through the glass doors of the Gonpa. I notice how joyful they seem. I make a strong intention to complete the Santi Maha Sangha studies and take the exam at Tsegylgar at Conway in the Autumn.

I look away at the sun touching the top of the mountain. How wonderful, how marvelous, to be

Mudra of Samaya

Gesture of Commitment

by John Shane



force myself to look down into the water . . .

The room at the retreat in Devon is silent. No one moves to go out to lunch. Looking towards Rinpoche, all the faces of those present are transfixed, eyes steady and unblinking. Transmission of something beyond words can take place in such moment, transmission of the state of knowledge in which the Master dwells, a transmission which can be received by a student who is open and prepared to receive it, and which then must be developed through the student's diligence in applying what she or he has received from the Master.

I pull my eyes away from the water and look at the sky, now changing from black to blue. The stars are fading. I think back over the Tibetan year of the Dog, now ending: my forty ninth year – according to Tibetan astrology a dangerous year – in fact a year in which my wife's father died aged only 66 and in which for a few months I faced the threat of a serious illness myself. Fortunately the results of the early tests proved to have been misleading and more tests proved the diagnosis of heart problems to be a false alarm. Nevertheless for some months the doctors had thought I was in bad shape. I think too of Rinpoche's illness, and look back down, down into the water . . .

I am at Merigar. It is the summer of 1994. The Santi Maha Sangha exam has ended in the last few days, and I am walking down the hill towards the Gonpa, feeling sad and a little left out

alive, to live to see another year! How wonderful to be able to continue to receive teachings and to practice them! So good to see the increase in diligence in study, practice and collaboration which the first two retreats that have included foundation level exams of the Santi Maha Sangha training have developed in the Community. Not that our Community wasn't serious in its commitment earlier in its history, or that those who have not participated in the Santi Maha Sangha training are in some way lacking in either transmission or commitment, but for those who have taken the training it has been like looking at a landscape that you have seen for many years through a lens that has been subtly refocused to reveal an increased sharpness and precision in the view of what lies before and behind us, and in our relationship to the present moment.

Behind us lies the extraordinary history of the teachings and of the lineage of Masters who have transmitted those teachings down to the present day; before us lies the wonderful panorama of study, practice and attainments which it has been our good fortune to have Rinpoche unfold for us with his ever generous personal example, explanations and writings. And the present moment, constantly changing yet ever the same in its unique newness, is where we commit ourselves to putting into practice what we have learned, relaxing in the undistracted awareness that is our inherent nature from the beginning. I look back at the water in the bowl, and see a flow of images of events of our Community's life in the last year . . .

I see the painting of the murals at Merigar, moving towards their conclusion, problems with stabilizing the paint base being resolved, Masters and other painters coming from India, from Buryatia to complete the work. I see the Tsegylgar school

building purchase being completed in Conway, Massachusetts, the school being renovated, and then inaugurated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and the Santi Maha Sangha exams taking place there.

As I watch it now all the hard work that took so much time and effort to complete seems to go by in a flash. And then I can see the land in England that was purchased – Rinpoche blessing it – and I can see the buildings that await reconstruction there, the Australian land being purchased and the funds being raised to build on it, and the inauguration of the Tara Mandala land in Colorado.

O and I see Shang Shung Edizioni moving into their smart new offices in Italy down the mountain from Merigar in the town of Arcidosso, and I see them continuing to expand their publication program. And the Shang Shung Institute in Italy holding courses in Tibetan medicine at Merigar, and the project to create an archive of Tibetan art on CD ROM developing well. And then the inauguration of the Shang Shung Institute in the United States of America, with its offices and library at the old school in Conway.

Images flash by of the Vajra Dance continuing to be updated, the teachers of the dance circling the world as if it were a Mandala – which of course it is – and the Yantra Yoga teachers, too, continuing to perfect their understanding of the subtlest points of the practice and preparing the long awaited definitive book on the subject from Rinpoche's manuscript.

And then I can see this newspaper, The Mirror, transferring its publication base to the USA, aiming to develop the paper and to serve its readership better.

The bowl, the water, the stars, and my own form reflected in the water. I dip my hand in the bowl to splash my face with the water: it's freezing! The stars are leaking through my face, there is only eternity here, now at the turning of this year. I can see what I want to see . . .

Then there is a lulling, rocking motion and I am on horseback; I seem to have been riding like this forever. I am surrounded by mist, but I am higher up the mountain now, there are clouds below me and ahead of me a figure astride a white horse, turns in the saddle to face me. I see his face: it is stern, resolute, full of grace and power, with a slight smile.

Then he is gone again ahead of me around another bend in the track that climbs up and up, and when I turn the corner he has disappeared among the trees, always ahead of me, always the rocking motion, lulling me, almost as if I was afloat, on a ship out at sea but it is only the steady gait of my horse, just keeping on walking on, always onwards. I am alone, and the other presence, the fierce one, the one I must not look at, but sense out of the corner of my eye, is beside me, but I under-

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Riding a Wave into Life

by Emily Coutant

Emily Coutant is a thirteen year old girl from Vermont. She attended Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's March 1993 retreat in Greenfield, Massachusetts. On Monday through Saturday, she works three hours each day at the Franklin Farm, a neighboring dairy farm.



I remember walking into the milking barn finding it in full swing. The steady buzz of the milking machines and the hokey twang of the local country and western station comforted me. David Franklin, owner of the Franklin Farm, and some of his buddies were standing in a circle gossiping. David handed me a coarse, stiff paper towel. He asked me to wipe a cow. Wiping means getting the manure and dirt off the teat. Wiping also involves stripping. Stripping means squirting some milk out by hand so the cow knows she will be milked soon. Stripping lets the cow know to relax and let her milk down.

"Oh gosh, I can't do this. It's too hard. I'm going to look like an idiot in front of all those

people." I thought. I bit my lip, squeezed the teat, and prayed. My freezing hands shook with embarrassment. All of a sudden, I felt something warm trickling through my numb, red fingers. Could it be? The milk was flowing in a steady stream. I wanted

to holler, to draw attention to myself. That moment was my first victory in the barn.

Since that day in October, I've become part of the amazing Franklin Farm. On a typical day at the farm, I drop my book bag and my whole school identity. I become a smelly barn girl. Like Superman, I slip into my red and blue coveralls, my rubber boots, my fuzzy green gloves, my neck-warmer, and hat.

I march into the milking barn and herd the cows into the barn and into their stalls (iron yokes used in the milking and feeding process). Some of them need you to guide them into their stalls with a "dainty" tap. Then I drag the wheel barrel out to the bunk to get bunk mix for the young heifers. Bunk mix

is a combination of haylage and silage (rotted hay and corn). It smells like sour salad dressing. I spread the bunk mix around their feeding place. The young heifers don't like to be seen eating so they wait until I'm out of sight. Next, I heat the milk for the calves or hutch babies. I pour 4 scoops of milk into a bucket and put it into a bigger bucket of hot water. After that, I give grain to some older heifers. When they see me coming, they get all rambunctious and start jumping around. They're not shy at all about eating; they fly right in.

The fresh cows need to have their stalls bedded and must be fed hay. They sway their heads from side to side as if to say, "I hate being pregnant. Get me out of here!"

The older heifers need bunk mix and bedding, they're pushy and they talk back like ninth grade girls. The next and last of my chores is the calves. They are all old enough to drink warm milk out of a bucket. When they see me coming, they start to chirp like toddlers saying, "I want it. Gimme milk." After I feed them, they suck on the bars of their hutches. Sometime I let them lick my salty hand.

On Fridays, I stay late to help Asa, one of my barn friends, finish the milking. We chat about music and snowboarding while floating around the barn, wiping, milking, and dipping cows.

You've never seen teamwork till you've been at the Franklin Farm. David and Mary Ellen Franklin keep the whole system going. They work things out even if it's hailing dinosaurs. While I'm busy with my chores, John and his twin brothers, Neil

and Paul are tearing around the barn on their tricycles, laughing. Half a dozen barn cats huddle together on their crate waiting for their own dinner or a brazen barn rat. David or Mary Ellen work through their milking pattern. They have to concentrate on their task.

Lots of kids like to hang out and help at the Franklin Farm because they're such a happy family. There are always projects to complete. David and Mary Ellen always say, "Well, what will our strategy be tonight?"

I wanted to work at the farm because I saw how healthy, strong, and content the Franklins are. I thought that I was everything but that. Being at the farm has taught me alertness, responsibility, and to expect the unexpected. It also feels great to be needed.

It was also perfect the night the calf got born right in front of me. The cow, #11, was wide eyed and breathing heavily. After awhile I saw two perfect hooves shoot out, then a nose. I was cheering her on, "Go 11, just a little more!" The calf looked like a perfect little diver riding a wave into life. What can I say? The barn is my connection with the real ways of the world.



Emily getting bunk mix for the young heifers

Mudra of Samaya

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stand now it is there for my protection and will do me no harm. The trees become thicker, the path is steep, the peak seems near but then far at the same time: how is this possible? I want to follow, to follow you, you with the stern countenance, the kind eyes, mysterious horseman, I want to follow you wherever you go. Don't leave me here, don't abandon me, I don't know how to reach the top of this mountain alone . . . I'm afraid of losing you forever.

Then as suddenly as he disappeared he is there again in the middle distance. I can see him through the mist riding on up ahead of me. He turns his horse and faces me, as if he had heard my thoughts. His eyes blaze at me as he lets go the reins for a moment raising his hands in a slow solemn gesture that I recognize immediately. Making his two hands into fists, he places the right fist over left one at the level of his heart: the Mudra of Samaya! Involuntarily I find my hands making the mudra too as if returning his salute, and with this exchange of promises of commitment he turns his horse and is gone again in the mist. I turn, still making the mudra, to face you and bow my head in New Year greeting.

I cannot know what joys and sufferings you have encountered in the past year; but wherever you are and whatever changes you may be passing through, I know that your Vajra sisters and brothers would want me here to offer you, on their behalf, their love, their support and their encouragement.

Poet and author, John Shane is an editor 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.

Book Reviews

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CHO-YANG. Number Six.
Edited by Pedron Yeshi and
Jeremy Russell.

An occasional publication of the Department of Religion aids Culture, Central Tibetan Administration of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala, H.P., India. \$17.95 per issue.

This highly professional magazine combines clear writing, authentic content and a striking, often beautiful, visual presentation. It will interest the student of dharma, the scholar, and the general reader as well. The present issue contains a wealth of profusely illustrated material; an article by H.H. the Dalai Lama on "Generating the Mind of Enlightenment," thoughtful interviews, including one with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche on his activities, his outlook and the Dzogchen teach-

ings, and chronicles of other important lamas. Noteworthy are a series of enquires and articles on Tibetan nuns, including those inside Tibet today. A brief but scholarly study explains the stupas and chortens of Buddhist Asia, and an essay by a group of lamas describes Tibetan methods of divination. There is a touching memoir, "A Tailor's Tale," by Gyeten Namgyal, one time Namsa Chenmo or "Great Master of Clothes" at the Potala. Told with simplicity, his life and times from Lhasa under the 13th Dalai Lama through the recent difficult decades, is a fascinating human and historical document. There are several articles explaining Dharma themes, a suite of photographs on the sites of ancient Shang Shung, and a detailed account of the 1993 Conference of Western Buddhist Teachers. Each single issue is an introduction, necessarily incomplete but powerfully evocative, to the past and present of Tibetan culture and religion.

Barrie Simmons

Forests

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management and in reforestation techniques can create many new jobs, helping to provide an alternative to the momentary situation. This will not only create employment right now, but for the future as well. In addition, the establishment of decentralized small scale saw mills would stimulate local economic circulation. This would offer new jobs and provide extra financial resources for the local administration which could be used for needed infrastructure improvements.

The present situation clearly demands a change for the good. In Tibet and Asia, because two thirds of the world population live along the rivers which originate in Tibet, the forests fulfill a crucial ecological function. For the local people, they could provide a reliable resource if managed in a sustainable and economically appropriate way.

The alarming destruction of the forests cannot be neglected any longer. Starting reforestation once they are gone would be very difficult, arduous and extremely costly. It is not enough trying to quantify the destruction and getting depressed with each update. It is high time to act and help find new approaches. The forests of Tibet must be saved now or it will be too late. Already A.S.I.A. has been requested to help in nature and wildlife protection issues regarding Riwoche area near Chamdo. The contacts made during the 1993 A.S.I.A. survey need following up in order to prepare a feasibility study to present to the European Union or any other possible donor. A.S.I.A. is committed to future projects which focus on ecological and environmental issues integrating sustainable management strategies, and intends to start training programs relating to environmental issues. A.S.I.A. can provide the necessary context to get

involved and help secure the future of the East-Tibetan forests, which fulfill important ecological functions and provide shelter for infinite beings as well as timber and a means of right livelihood for many humans.

Whoever is able and willing to contribute or help A.S.I.A. to move in this new direction is welcome to contact A.S.I.A. At this stage we need to find interested people and organizations or foundations that can be contacted for providing the necessary funds to implement this work in East Tibet.

Daniel Winkler is a geographer and forest ecologist, who specializes in the forests of East Tibet. He is a member of A.S.I.A. with whom he is coordinating a planned environmental project. Contacts: D.Winkler, Volkartstr.42, 80636 Munich - Germany, Tel/Fax: 49/89/12391228 or A.S.I.A. headquarters: Via della Nocetta 65, Rome 00164, Italy, Tel/Fax: 39/6/66161749.