

# THE MIRROR

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View of the Dangche School

A. DELL'ANGELO

## Winter in Tibet

### Dangche School nears Completion

by Andrea dell'Angelo, translated by Des Barry

On November 21st, we left for Tibet to undertake our last mission of 1995 to check the progress of the school construction project at Dangche in Amdo, northeast Tibet. Tony Laurent, an architect with a longstanding involvement in the ASIA Project, had already been in Dangche since the middle of October to supervise the finish work on the classrooms and the teachers' living quarters. Tseringtar, a Tibetan scholar from Amdo and the ASIA project coordinator in Tibet, was not with us on this occasion because he was in Norway drafting a version of the Bonpo Kangyur. Phuntsok Wangmo, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's niece and Tibetan doctor, kindly agreed to accompany us as far as Dangche before returning home to Lhasa, after almost two years of living in Italy.

It was the first time that I had been to Tibet in the winter, and even while still in Peking, I realized that the cold would in no way spare us. We spent one night in Peking and left the next day for Zining. At the airport, we

were met by an older woman from Berlin who was connected with the Education office of the Trikk District. Recently the local government had stopped giving us any kind of logistical support, so that we were even without the usual jeep that they had always supplied for us in the past. The jeep had made it easy to get around during our work site inspections.

We left Zining and, as soon as the road began to rise, the countryside was covered with snow. It was icy and cold and the road became extremely dangerous. Nobody uses chains on their tires here, which are usually completely bald so that the vehicle skates forward and you hope that you never need to use the brakes. The more the road rises toward the Pass, the worse the situation becomes. Close to the pass, we found buses and cars stuck in the snow. We prayed that our vehicle would make it over the pass because the idea of spending the night outside, with the temperature at minus 10 C worried us.

continued on page 6

## The Real Mirror is Your Mind

The XII Tai Situpa teaches on Mahamudra at Merigar

by Liz Granger

Six days of teaching given by H. E. the 12th Tai Situpa have just drawn to a close at Merigar. His Eminence gave a clear and detailed commentary on *The Aspiration Prayer of Mahamudra* by the 3rd Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje as well as *The Thirty Seven Bodhisattva Practices* by Acharya dNgol-chu Thogs-med bZang-po. During his stay Rinpoche was accompanied by Lama Lodoe, Lama Tenam, his secretary and assistant, and two assistant monks.

The teachings were held in the Gonpa with His Eminence seated against the background of the painted figures of the Kagyu lineage, Marpa at center flanked on his right by Milarepa, on his left by Gampopa and then red-hatted Situ and black-hatted Karmapa hierarchs. His Eminence began by speaking at length on *bodhicitta* and Mahamudra which he said could not be spoken about separately. He described practice as a river reaching to the ocean of enlightenment and expressed his wish that this teaching would be like drops of rain falling into and adding to this river for those present.

During the teaching sessions Rinpoche concisely and clearly explained and commented on the Base, the Path and the Fruit of Mahamudra according to the 3rd Gyalwa Karmapa's *Prayer*. He taught patiently and with a great sense of humor in his excellent English and gave time and space to question and answer sessions at the close of each teaching. He talked about the five stages of Mahamudra



H.E. Tai Situpa seated beneath the Kagyu lineage masters in the gonpa at Merigar.

LIANN GRAFF

practice dwelling particularly on shine, "resting in peace", *thagton*, "having clarity and awareness of that state" and then observation of the natural state of mind, "looking at what cannot be looked at". He discussed the obstacles which can arise to one's shine practice and the necessity to maintain discipline in post-meditation activities. At another moment he spoke about compassion and devotion being the outcome of a true understanding of Buddha nature and that when one does not have understanding of ground Mahamudra, compassion and devotion cannot arise. As the teachings drew to a close, His Eminence explained that when meditation and post-meditation activities are truly equal, it is no longer necessary to meditate.

After the last session of teaching on Sunday morning, he dedicated the benefit of the days of teaching, not only to all sentient beings but to the well-being of the planet, "we are masters of the planet but not doing too well", to "all religions of the world which are the eyes and heart of many generations of humanity", to the fulfillment of the aspirations of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in a most auspicious way and without obstacles, and to the rapid progress of the realization of those present.

Almost every day during his stay at Merigar, Tai Situpa dedicated an hour to personal interviews requested by many attending the teachings. On the evening of the fourth day, accompanied by his entourage, he saw the Dance of the Vajra performed by twelve practitioners in the crowded Mandala room at the Capannone. On the final day of his visit His Eminence and his followers participated in a Ganapuja organized by the Community.

During this week of teaching, snowstorms and strong winds battled fiercely around Mt. Amata, ending with a balmy spring day. Two of those days had left Merigar snowbound and those attending the retreat bundled up in winter gear and tall boots to climb up the long snowy hill to the Gonpa for teaching. As often happens when the elements make themselves felt on this "fire mountain", the electricity went down for a day and the phones and fax joined them in sympathy, not an uncommon occurrence during the winter months here. But in the end all obstacles were overcome, with the help of two jeeps which permitted Tai Situpa and his entourage to move from Gadeling to the Gonpa.

On the final day of his stay, continued on page 18

## Sky Dancing in the Rain

Australia Retreat • Namgyalgar 1996

by Jean Mackintosh

Life was not easy for the small group of people who gathered together at Namgyalgar to prepare for the December retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The Australian Community is small and there were only a few people on the retreat land and in the cities doing all the preparations. Not only was there a retreat to prepare for, but also the construction of a retreat cabin for Rinpoche, a ten day retreat of both Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance, as well as the Santi Maha

Sangha Base Level Exam and First Level Training in February. We were frantic. How will we make this beautiful but wild land ready for one hundred and fifty people in time for Rinpoche's arrival?

Jim Smith and Joe Zurylo arrived from Tsegyalgar to help construct Rinpoche's retreat house. There were many difficulties to overcome on this project, materials to order and to transport to the house site. The house site is on the side of a mountain and there is no proper road to the site, so grading the existing track and dumping gravel on it was a priority. Rain came, continued

and is still continuing. The track was wet and boggy, trucks became bogged in the mud. We relied on our neighbors, Mal Dibden and Pam and Kevin Hayden to help us. Pam Hayden expertly drove the tractor up the wet track delivering wood to the site after pulling a large timber truck out of the wet field, and all on her birthday. On the night before Christmas, Mal spent many hours slashing the grass in the field and digging ditches to supply the water to Grit's Sky Dance Cafe that was to feed many people with delicious curries and other delicacies during

continued on page 15

### CONTENTS

Essential Tantra .....	2
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu	
Collaboration .....	3
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu	
Rinpoche's Travel Schedule .....	3
Seeing the Face of the Master ..	4
On Keeping Samaya	
Khenpa Namdrol Rinpoche	
Lives of the Great Masters .....	5
Jamgon Kongtrul Lodr Tay	
Giacomella Orofino	
Book Reviews .....	5
Shang Shung Institute .....	7
Reports from Italy and America	
International Community ...	8-10
News	
Tara Mandala Update .....	10
Interview with Anne Klein .....	12
Meeting the Bliss Queen .....	13
Review by Joan Marie Wood	
Reflections .....	16-17
What is the Wound that .....	20
Made this Heart into a Fist?	
John Shane	



An Oral Commentary by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on The Essential Tantra of the Six Liberations, a term of Rigdzin Chanchub Dorje.

From the cycle of teachings called The Self-Liberation of Samsara and Nirvana Through the Manifestation of the Peaceful and Wrathful Divinities. Teaching from Friday, September 29, 1995 at Merigar.

The terms *shine* and *lhagthong* are generally found together, and the *shine* aspect refers to finding a state of calm without thought. In the Sutra teachings it is said that after *shine* one develops *lhagthong*. The Tibetan word *lhagthong* is made up of two syllables: the *lhag* part, which means 'something more', and the *tong* part, which means 'to see'. What this really means is that one develops an experiential understanding of the movement of thought, rather than only remaining limited to the experience of a calm state without thought. While in *shine* you discover a calm state without thought, but this calm state does not represent the totality of our condition. Our real condition is not only the calm state; there is also the aspect of the manifestation and movement of energy. And knowledge and understanding of that movement is called *lhagthong*.

Finding oneself present in the knowledge of the state of *lhagthong* means entering the state of *rigpa*. *Rigpa* is not only the name of a state; it is rather the experience of that state. The experience of *rigpa* can be found in both the state of *shine* (the moment of calm, the emptiness aspect), or it can be found in the experience of *lhagthong* (the movement aspect). Whichever of these two phases we may be in, the experience of instantaneous presence in that moment is called *rigpa*.

The text here says: 'If one understands one, one understands everything'. This is a very famous saying in the Dzogchen teachings. *Chig* means 'single', and this word single is referring to the state of the individual him or herself. *She* means 'to discover' or 'to know'. So the text is saying: 'if one has discovered one's own single state, then one experiences *kundrol*'. *Kun* means 'all', *drol* means 'liberation'. So if one discovers one's single state, one liberates everything. It's not necessary to liberate gradually, first the first thing and then the second, and so on. Just liberating oneself into that single state of knowledge one has liberated everything. And that is what is meant by the knowledge of the primordial state in the Dzogchen teachings.

You can really have this experience if you practice the methods of the Dzogchen teachings well. Many things can manifest as a result of just maintaining the contemplative state. If one's clarity develops a little, for example, one doesn't have to study things from a book point by point, because knowledge arises automatically in contemplation

and one understands. It's not that one is just trusting in whatever arises in one's mind, but one finds that when one reads a text one can find what the text means through understanding the correspondence between the words of the text and one's own experience. So a practitioner can have that kind of experience. And when we find ourselves in this state, all the phenomena or dharma that are in the dualistic condition – which is called the vision of *marigpa* – are liberated.

*Marigpa* is the opposite of *rigpa*. *Rigpa* is the knowledge of the potentiality of our state. *Marigpa* means one who is igno-

This base has its qualifications, its capacity of infinite energy, which can manifest purely or impurely, as samsara or nirvana, in fact as everything, according to conditions.

Generally when we think of karmic vision, we consider it to be something negative, because it is produced by karma and because through our karmic conditioning we transmigrate in samsara. But in truth, the base of samsara and nirvana is the same. As I explained earlier, there is no way we can produce dualistic or karmic vision without also having as one of our inherent qualities our real dimension, or ener-

'movement'. But what is it that manifests through this nature, or potentiality to manifest? What manifests is called our 'energy' (the third of the three primordial wisdoms), and this manifestation includes pure and impure vision, samsara and nirvana, all that manifests from emptiness.

So these are our three primordial wisdoms. They are the characteristics of the base. We all have these three primordial wisdoms from the very beginning. It's not that when we follow the teachings, we practice and we then produce them. We all have them, not only human beings, but also animals. But

through understanding of this knowledge we arrive at the base of all, the *kunzhi*, re-awakening our state of *rigpa*.

Three different ways in which our energy can manifest are spoken of in this context: *dang*, *rolpa*, and *tsal*. When we talk about the manifestation of energy at the level of *tsal*, we mean something that manifests at the level of subject and object: something apparently manifesting outside ourselves at the objective level in a seemingly external world. That is called *tsal*.

But when our own energy doesn't manifest as subject and object, but manifests instead in an apparently internal dimension, this is called *rolpa*. The way that something arises as a reflection in a mirror is analogous to the way *rolpa* manifests. I'll explain what I mean by that statement. If I hold an object in front of the mirror, the object itself doesn't actually enter into the mirror. But through the inherent potentiality of the mirror, which is the mirror's capacity to reflect, the reflection of the object immediately arises. This means that through the cause of the presence of the form of that object in front of the mirror, the reflection immediately appears in the mirror. So the manifestation in a similar way of the individual's energy as an apparently internal image is what we mean by *rolpa*.

Through an understanding of the way our own energy manifests as *rolpa* we can understand the infinite manifestations of realized beings that are represented in the iconography of the teachings. For example, whether we speak of Vajrasattva or of Samantabhadra, the truth is that these deities can arise within ourselves. Why do they manifest in us? Any particular deity manifests in us as a result of the secondary cause of our use of the particular method of that deity. If we never use the method of Vajrasattva, for example, there is no reason why our own energy should manifest as Vajrasattva in us. The meditational deities manifest in us as a result of the use of the method of visualization, in the same way that when an object is placed in front of a mirror the reflection of that object arises in the mirror.

So when we use a method such as that of the *shidro*, which involves the visualization of the one hundred and eight peaceful and wrathful manifestations, we connect with the transmission which we have received, and apply that particular method, visualizing the deities. Then, in the end, our own latent potentiality manifests in the form of the deities we have visualized. The manifestation of the deities within us takes place at what is called the level of energy of our *rolpa*. This is why the manifestation occurs in that way: then we have a third level of our energy called *dang*. Our energy at the level of *dang* is without form or color, yet it has an infinite capacity to

continued on next page

## The Essential Tantra of the Six Liberations

### Part II

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

translated by Andy Lukianowicz, transcribed by Naomi Zeitz and edited by John Shane

rant of that, one who hasn't discovered that. *Marigpa* is often translated as 'ignorance', but we must understand what is meant by this ignorance. In general the word 'ignorance' is not used to denote not having knowledge of the primordial state. What is meant is someone who hasn't been educated or learned the things we learn in school. But in Dzogchen what is meant by ignorance may include even a philosopher who has written hundreds of books. To have written many books doesn't mean that someone is not manifesting *marigpa*. Someone who has never read or written one word, if they have knowledge of their primordial state, is manifesting the state of *rigpa*. So you mustn't misunderstand the meaning of this word ignorance as it is used here.

But when one is in the state of knowledge, one is beyond that. And here the text speaks of our own original face or condition. Knowing this reawakens our state of *rigpa*. The word used here for our original condition is *kunzhi*. *Kun* means everything, *zhi* means the base. This term is also used in the Sutra. In the Sutra, *khunzhi* is the base where all one's karmic traces are accumulated or collected. In Sutra that is what is called the *khunzhi*, the base of all. But that's not what it means here.

Here *khunzhi* means the inherent condition, or base, of both samsara – our experience of transmigration in conditioned existence, and of nirvana – our experience of liberation from that conditioned existence. Both our dualistic experience of subject and object, and our experience of a state beyond subject and object arise from the same base, and that is called the *khunzhi*. In general, its translated as 'the primordial base', and in that base everything is perfected.



L. YSTUJANIN

gy, in the same way that there is no way for a reflection to manifest in a mirror without the mirror having the inherent potentiality to reflect. The potentiality of the mirror to reflect is an analogy for the way in which the potentiality to manifest is an essential part of our own base. When we understand this base we can reawaken knowledge of its function in ourselves.

In the Dzogchen teachings the functioning of the base is explained as the three primordial wisdoms. What this means is that the essence (the first of the three primordial wisdoms) of the base is its aspect of emptiness; when we understand phenomena we come to know that there is nothing concrete, none of them are ultimately real, as I have already explained. But then again, it's not that this emptiness is just a state of nothingness, because emptiness has infinite potentiality to manifest. This capacity to manifest is called the 'nature' (the second of the three primordial wisdoms), which is 'clarity'. The nature of emptiness is to manifest as clarity, by which not just mental clarity is indicated. What is meant by clarity is that uninterrupted manifestation arises from emptiness. This uninterrupted manifestation is also what we mean when we speak of

what we lack is the knowledge of them. That's why we need the teachings. Through the transmission and the methods one can enter into the knowledge of these three primordial wisdoms and their function.

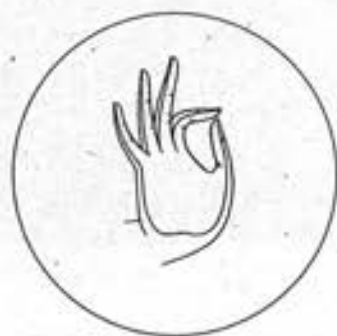
So how can we develop this knowledge in ourselves of our own condition? Following the path, by practising the method of *shine* we come to understand our primordial condition of emptiness. We discover that the state of emptiness really exists. That very knowledge is called the *Dharmakaya*, the condition of emptiness of all phenomena. But then, as I have already said, emptiness isn't just nothingness, there is also the aspect of the 'movement', or *gyuwa*. So one does not only develop the calm state. We discover that the movement, or *gyuwa* is also part of the calm. When one understands this, one understands what is meant by *Sambhogakaya*. *Sambhoga* means something like 'qualification'; *kaya* is dimension. So the various qualifications, pure and impure, all manifest.

Through the path we discover what was latent in us from the beginning as the primordial base. And through our own experience of the condition of our own energy we discover that the state of movement and calm are non-dual. We discover that movement itself is also emptiness, and in its essential condition emptiness is also movement. This is not something that is understood just intellectually, but something that is discovered through one's own experience in practice. We discover that the non-duality of emptiness and movement is present in our real condition, and the recognition of this non-duality of movement and emptiness in each instant is what is called *rigpa*. Through experiencing this for ourselves we acquire knowledge of it, and



manifest in any form. If we don't use a method, this capacity of our energy to manifest is still nevertheless present as the latent potentiality of our state itself.

We can understand this very well by looking at a mirror. We know that a mirror has an infinite potentiality (the *dang* level of our energy) to reflect any form or color whatsoever, but we also know that the mirror itself does not change form or color when it reflects something. It is the reflection in the mirror (the *rolpa* level of our energy) that



changes form or color according to the object placed in front of it (the *tsal* level of our energy).

The mirror in itself, has merely the quality of a potentiality, a capacity to reflect. When a mirror reflects, it is not that the mirror itself takes on the form or color it is reflecting. The form and color depend on the object that is in placed in front of it. Forms and colors of objects are not pre-programmed into a mirror as they are into a computer's memory. Nor is it necessary to program a mirror in that way. If a mirror needed to be programmed we couldn't say that the mirror's potentiality was infinite.

A computer may have a lot of potentiality to manifest many things, but its potentiality is not infinite. It depends on the programs you set up in it. If you could enter infinite programs into a computer, it's potentiality could become infinite, but it is impossible to do such a thing. Nor does a mirror need to do that in order to be a mirror.

So that's what is meant when we say that the individual has infinite potentiality. What manifests through that potentiality will depend on the method used, and the manifestation that occurs is our own energy manifesting as *rolpa*. *Rolpa* manifests without interruption, and the manifestation takes place instantly, and uninterruptedly whatever form, color, size or shape is manifested.

If one is in the state of knowledge, then the *nyamshag* and *jethob* are non dual. What is *nyamshag*? This term refers to a specific meditation practice such as we engage in when we learn a method like *shine*. When we prepare to do the practice, the instructions for the practice tell us precisely how we should sit, how we should control our physical body, and how we should control our energy by employing methods of breathing, fixing the gaze, and so on, and the instructions for practice also tell us how to control the mind, what we should think, and how to apply

the meditation. When we have learned all that and know how to do it, we then apply that practice.

We might, for example, dedicate one hour to doing a *Tun*, and then after that hour, when we finish doing our practice, we recite the dedication, and then we think to ourselves: "Now I've finished my *shine* practice." *Nyamshag* is the name given to the period of time from the moment we begin our formal session of practice up until the moment that we consider we have finished that practice. Since *Nyam* means 'equanimity', and *shag* means 'to leave it in the state as it is', the term itself refers to the fact that we are learning to relax into our own condition within the specific method of practice.

The second term referred to in the text here is *jethob*. *Je* means 'the period of time after'. So, for example, we think to ourselves, now I've finished my practice, I'll rest my legs, and perhaps go to the toilet, or go to eat. That is called the period of *jethob*, sometimes translated as the moment of 'post meditation'. *Je* literally means 'after', while *thob* means 'obtaining something'. So explanations are generally given to the practitioner of what should be done in the phase of post-meditation, in the phase of *jethob*. This explanation will include what the practitioner should do and how they should behave.

In general in the teachings we speak of three things together: *tawa*, *gumpa* and *chödpä*,

*continued on page 11*



Working in the kitchen at Namgyalgar.

J. ZURVLO

## Collaboration

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

translated from the Italian by Andy Lukianowicz

A talk given at the Ganapuja at the closing of Santi Maha Sangha Level II training in Merigar, October 22, 1995.

This is the end of the Santi Maha Sangha second level preparation. What I would like to talk about concerns not only people who are doing the Santi Maha Sangha, but all practitioners interested in the Teachings.

The purpose of following the Teachings is so that one can have an inner evolution. It is especially important for those who are following Santi Maha-Sangha, because they must be able to demonstrate this evolution. But what does this mean, showing an inner evolution? It is something very simple. For example, if we have some problem in society – either something great between one country and another, or something small one between one group or another, or even inside a family – where does it come from? What is the root of the problem? All these problems come from tension, and tension comes from our attachments. Attachment comes out of our egoism. In the Teaching, hopefully, a person is discovering their egoism and overcoming it. Otherwise one says they are practicing and doing retreats, but nothing changes. It just stays the same. Even if someone is doing the Santi Maha Sangha training they don't change. This is the root of our problem. In reality, there is no one who doesn't have that cause. For example, we are trying to do many things together. I always ask you to collaborate. Collaborating means putting aside our egoism a bit.

If you think and remember how we started here at Merigar, in the early years before we built the Yellow House and the sauna, it was impossible even to sleep here. Many people said, 'Let's get a machine to work with.' But we didn't have enough money. I always said, 'Let's work for ourselves.' For years, I was always the first one in line to go work with a pick axe. Many people who have come to Merigar since the early days remember this. The principle is putting the common interest first. Then, we must look at the circumstances and see what is necessary.

We have also started other activities: the ASIA project to help Tibetan refugees, and the Shang Shung Institute to safeguard Tibetan culture. I've always asked everyone to collaborate. Many people have collaborated and now we have reached this point. In the early days we didn't have any way of doing a retreat, so we did it in the open like gypsies.

With great courage we made this Gonpa. We didn't know how we would finish the Gonpa so it would have a roof. Finally, we managed to do it, and this is the outcome of our common effort. Then we thought, when the Gonpa was plain, how nice it would be to have all these paintings. Now that project is more or less completed.

This is called initiative. Initiative for the common good. I have been the protagonist in many of these initiatives and my name is associated with many of these. But I say to you sincerely that you can take away my name. I don't do these things to advertise my name. From the beginning I wasn't interested in advertising my name. I was interested in having something for the Community, for the common good. I've done all of this until now for the good of the Community at large.

From the beginning, when I first had an idea, I didn't know how it would manifest. For example, with the Institute, sometimes it seems it exists, and sometimes not. There are many projects we have wanted to start with the Institute, but the Institute is not my own home. It's just not in my interest. If you are capable of doing something, you can do it very well through the Institute.

The fact is that many people think humans need to live in egoism. So we have to show that 'I've done this.' In the Institute if people's names are not acknowledged, they don't feel very much like collaborating. It seems that everyone likes to do things on their own. I'm not saying not to do things in this case; everything has some benefit.

The principle for now and for the future in the Community is that if there is collaboration it would be better. I am always the protagonist talking about these things.

I learned in the hospital that if you don't manage to overcome a problem in two days, you could already have died. The Institute, the Community, nothing can help. I don't do these things in my interest. It's in everyone's interest. It is very serious when there is a possibility to collaborate. It is better to do one valid thing well than one hundred things that are worthless. If there are many people in the Community who collaborate, there are more possibilities. I think it is very important for everyone in the Community to understand this and remember this. I'm always ready to collaborate and do my best. I don't own the Community. I am someone who is collaborating. Nor can any single individual become the owner. But all of you have the right to collaborate, and you yourselves can benefit. If we know how to collaborate we can contribute to the future, and to future generations.

We must understand what 'all sentient beings' means. It is always very good if the Community and its activities don't become something closed and egoistic. In terms of work here at Merigar we have diverse groups. For example, we have the newspaper, The Mirror, we have our organization ASIA, the work of the Institute, and work through the Community. We've also formed groups to build houses, etc. There are all these groups so people can commit themselves and there must always be collaboration between groups. When we talk about all these groups we need to see them as part of the Community and not as something outside. If it's really a part of the Community, there must be collaboration. You must not think, 'I am not part of Shang Shung Institute. I am not part of Shang Shung Editions' or 'I'm part of the Gakyil, not the Institute or Shang Shung Editions.' It's much better if that attitude disappears. We can do *tröndu*, I will do the *tron* and you do the *du*. It could be useful for the future. If you understand what I mean, then we should all collaborate. If you want good collaboration, each individual must leave their egoism a little bit aside. Then you can really understand what Dzogchen means, and you can understand what that famous 'integration' means in Dzogchen. It is not possible to integrate with such egoism.

Think about these things. As you know, in a few days I'm leaving. Some of you will remain here or you will go off to other towns and countries. It's all the same. We're all living on this earth. As long as we're all alive we do our best, as much as possible in the right way. This is what I've wanted to say. To all those who have collaborated and helped, I want to sincerely say thank you, and please do your best in the future.

### NAMKHAÏ NORBU RINPOCHE 1996 RETREATS

Australia • NamgyalGar  
SMS Base Level Exam Feb 2  
SMS First Level Training  
Feb 7 – Feb 12  
Easter Retreat April 5-April 9  
Japan

Seminar of Teachings  
May 3 – May 6

Russia • Moscow  
Teaching Retreat  
May 17 – May 21  
SMS Base Level Exam  
May 25 – May 26  
SMS First Level Training  
May 31 – June 2

Italy • Merigar  
SMS Base Level Exam  
June 21 – June 23  
SMS First Level Training  
June 23 – June 26  
SMS First Level Exam  
July 5 – July 7  
SMS Second Level Training  
July 8 – 10  
Teaching Retreat  
July 19 – July 28  
Teaching Retreat  
August 14 – August 18  
SMS Second Level Exam  
September 27 – September 29  
SMS Third Level Training  
September 30 – October 2

See international communities  
insert for contacts.



# Seeing the Face of the Master

## On Keeping Samaya

by Khenpo Namdrol Rinpoche

translated from Tibetan by Ani Jinpa and  
Ngodup Dorji, transcribed by Elise Stutchbury

An excerpt from a teaching given by Khenpo Namdrol at  
Merigar on July 26th, 1995.

Within the different practices of the secret mantra Vajrayana, in the different tantra, it is explained that there are certain ways of keeping Samaya, and within these there are several different versions of numbers of Samaya to keep. Today I will explain in accordance with the Anuttara (*Guhayagarbha Tantra*) secret mantra Vajrayana, fifteen different ways to keep Samaya, although there are many other explanations that could be given.

In the unsurpassed tantras of the secret mantra Vajrayana there are two types of Samaya that are mentioned. One is the Samaya that we have to keep and the other is the Samaya in which there is nothing to keep or not keep. Today I will explain the five root and ten branch Samaya. Firstly, one must never reject or give up the view of the secret mantra Vajrayana. As I explained yesterday, the view is the truth that everything is pure, equal and non-dual. Once we have been introduced to that view then we should remain in that view as much as we can. As you know, in Dzogchen the view is rigpa. It is especially true for Dzogchen practitioners that once they have been introduced to the view of rigpa then the most important thing is to remain in that view. Furthermore, if we practice through the Development Stage (*kyerim, bskyed rim*), visualizing deities, then also we remain in that view.

Then the view must also be maintained as we move into the Completion stage meditation (*Dzogrim, rdzogs rim*). So the first Samaya is that we must practice as much as we can, maintaining the view of the unsurpassed secret mantra Vajrayana. If one has not yet had the introduction and is not yet able to enter into the nature of mind, then having great faith and devotion towards that view will suffice.

The second Samaya is that we must have great faith and devotion, as well as respect, towards our root master who is the person who has given us the empowerments (*wang - dbang*); who has explained the tantras (*gyud - rgyud*); and who has given us the precise and important oral pith instructions on how to practise (*mennag - man ngag*). Such a master is the most important master for us.

Most of you are disciples of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche from whom you have received these three important transmissions. He is your root master and has been kind and compassionate to you by teaching in these three ways. He has the qualifications through having given the three types of transmissions: *Wang*, *gyud* and *mangag*, of all the three different types of master. Now there is also a fourth important type of master, to whom we confess if we have broken our Samaya of the secret mantra Vajrayana. So these four together are the four types of masters whom we respect and have faith and devotion towards in the secret mantra Vajrayana. Furthermore in the fifth category there is another type of master from whom we may not have received teachings, but who is in our area, and to him also we should be respectful. This is a general master. Then also there is the master who teaches Sutrayana. That is the master who is a guide, and this is the sixth type of master. So altogether there are six different types of master, but the four most important for us are the first four.

Now I will give some examples in order to explain clearly how to respect your Master. It is said that we should regard the general Lama or teacher in our area as the King of the region. The Lama who is the guide who teaches the Sutrayana, we should regard as an uncle. The master who has

given us empowerments we should respect and regard as our own father. Just as among our own relatives we are more respectful to our own father, then also among Lamas we show the greatest respect towards the Lama who has given us the empowerments. The Lama to whom we confess all breakages of Samaya, we respect like our own mother. The master who has explained the tantras to us we should regard as being as important to us as our own eyes and so respect him accordingly. We should regard the master who has given us the pith instructions as being as important to us as our own heart, and so respect him accordingly.

It is said that compared to making countless offerings to the Buddha it is actually more important and beneficial to have respect for our own master. It is also said that it is a greater fault and more dangerous to be disrespectful towards our own master than to be disrespectful towards the Buddha.

The reason for this is that our master has been immeasurably kind to us, by giving us the teachings, and so on, and of course our master has many great qualities, particularly those mentioned above. So for example, although the Buddha has countless qualities, he has not been as personally kind towards us as our own master. We should think of how we regard our parents, who even though they have been extremely kind to us don't have the great qualities of our master. But our own master not only has these great qualities but is also extremely kind to us. What is this kindness that our master has shown to us? He has shown us the method or means (*thab - thabs*) to get out of the sufferings of this existence. So it is clear that to always and continually respect the master who has given us the teachings is the Samaya. Even if it is not possible for us to always have great faith and devotion towards the master, we should never disrespect him. Indeed there is no greater fault than to be disrespectful towards the master. This is taught in the Tantra *Damtsig Nyengyud* (*Dam tshig snyan rgyud*), which is an explanation of Samaya.

Also in *gondue* (*dgongs 'dus*) it is explained that even if we just call the Lama, we should address him very respectfully. This is especially important for a Dzogchen practitioner as well as for someone practicing the secret mantra Vajrayana, as we should regard the teacher as the Dharmakaya. Mingling the Lama's mind with one's own mind is the essence of doing the practice. We should not consider that the master who taught us is merely someone with a human body, a face, two arms and legs and so forth. The nature of mind is the master, and the nature of our mind and the essence of the Lama's mind are the same. All phenomena are like the nature of the Dharmata, and thus the same as the nature of the master's mind. If one is a genuine practitioner one is able to see all phenomena as the nature of Dharmata - this is the nature of mind, there is no distinction. This is just like the space inside and outside a room - there is no distinction. So it is with the Dharmata - there is no distinction. As we remain in the state of meditation watching the nature of mind we will realize there is no mind, but if someone considers phenomena outside as something different or separate, this then, this is not fine. We should regard the Lama's mind and one's own mind and all phenomena as the same - the Dharmakaya. When we see the nature of our mind then we can say that we have seen the face of the master. When we see all phenomena as the nature of Dharmata then we can also say that we have seen the face of the master. In that way, whatever we perceive is the essence of the master.

If you perceive your master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche as an ordinary person, in human form, with a normal ordinary physical body, just flesh and blood, then this is of no use especially when you visualize all phenomenon in the form of your



Khenpo Namdrol Rinpoche at the Gonpa in Merigar.

E. STUTCHBURY

master. If you visualize in this way then you'll never get it.

For example, now I am giving teaching. If you had to consider me to be as your master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche then it would be difficult because I have a different form and build from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and a different age and so on. So thinking in this ordinary way it is difficult. But if you consider that the essence of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's mind and the essence of my mind are the same, then in the same way you can consider that the essence of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's mind and the essence of all phenomena are the same. But for us, since we are all practitioners of Dzogpachenpo, it is said in the instructions of Dzogpachenpo, that whatever we perceive we should perceive as the Master. We should really understand the meaning of this.

The third Samaya is about our practice and visualization, after we have received the empowerments. We should practice correctly, using the correct mudras, attributes and so on. We should also do the visualization correctly and recite the mantras in the correct manner, precisely as we have been taught. Mudras can also be understood as different gestures of the hands. Once we have visualized ourselves as the deity, there is great benefit in using mudra or hand gestures and visualizing the seed syllables on the fingers and so on. There are many different mudras related to the five Buddha families.

We should also meditate every day, performing the sadhana of our yidam deity, reciting the mantra and performing the mudra. However, if we really are unable to do every day then we must at the very least do properly once every two months. For instance it is very important and also very good to do the *Gana Chakra Puja* on special days. But if that is not possible then at least we should do a *Gana Chakra Puja* once every two months, not less than that. Because if we cannot stick to this limit of once every two months then we are really in danger of breaking our Samaya.

So this is the third root Samaya.

The fourth root Samaya pertains to being kind to all of our Vajra brothers and sisters who like us are genuine practitioners of the secret mantra Vajrayana. In the same way that we can distinguish between different types of masters so we can distinguish between different types of Vajra brothers and sisters.

1. General Vajra brothers and sisters - we can consider all sentient beings in this way, because all sentient beings are pervaded with the Tathagatagarbha and have the potentiality to attain Enlightenment. This then applies not only to all human beings but to all animals in general and we should have loving kindness towards them all.

2. Distant Vajra brothers and sisters - all Buddhists.

3. Close Vajra brothers and sisters - those with similar tantric views and conduct, all those who have taken teachings with one master are close Vajra brothers and sisters. Those who have taken initiations and empowerments together and have the same master are part of the same Mandala and with them we have a very close connection. Those who have taken initiations from another master and are not from the same Mandala are distant Vajra brothers and sisters as distinct from the close Vajra brothers and sisters.

5. Inner Integrated brothers and sisters - those who have received empowerments under one guru, one mandala. Of course in general we should develop loving kindness towards all practitioners of the secret mantra Vajrayana, whether male or female. This is the fourth root Samaya.

The fifth root Samaya is that we should not disclose or explain the teachings of the secret mantra Vajrayana to others not suitable to receive them. The profound view and profound attitude and action of the secret mantra Vajrayana should be kept hidden. It is said that through one's practice that signs will manifest. However, one shouldn't show these unless it is necessary.

continued on page 19



# Lives of the Great Masters



## Jamgon Kongtrul Lodr Taye 1813 – 1899

by Giacomella Orofino

In 1848 Jamgon Kongtrul Lodr Taye, after having received from his master Jamyang Kyentse Wangpo the Kalachakratantra and many other teachings, said:

"Nowadays, even well-known lamas and geshe have only a partial understanding of a few texts of their own systems of tenets. Apart from that they have a little insight, appreciation or comprehensive understanding of the variety of the Buddha's teachings. Most people have little familiarity with the teachings and often do not remain impartial. Those in positions of power, despite lacking the eye of dharma, speak forcefully of the superiority or inferiority of a particular teaching. Not to speak of appreciating other systems, they are apprehensive even of their own system. They are as full of suspicion as a blind yak that runs from its own imagined fears. In my own case too, although I cherished the Dharma wholeheartedly, I was not mentally strong enough to make my own decisions. Consequently, I was unable to fulfil my aspirations. But from this time on, the lotus of unbiased devotion towards the wide variety of teachings and their teachers blossomed and my understanding gradually developed. Thus, my not having committed the heinous deed of discarding the Dharma is due only to the kindness of this precious lama."<sup>1</sup>

These few words can be considered the manifesto of the *ris med* movement, the great movement of non-sectarianism that flourished in Tibet during the nineteenth century inspired

by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodr Taye himself.

This great scholar and spiritual master was born in December of 1813 at Rong-gyab in Kham, eastern Tibet. His parents were Sonal Pel, a lay tantric practitioner of the Bonpo religion, and Trashi Tso. However in his autobiography, republished in India in 1973, Kongtrul says that his natural father was Yungdrun Tenzin, a prominent Lama of the Kyungpo clan, whose lineage was in danger of extinction. The Kyungpo clan is one of the most important clans of Tibet whose descendants include some of the most outstanding figures of both the Buddhist and the Bonpo tradition, such as Milarepa, Kyungpo Nalbyor, the first Karmapa, Dusum Kyenpa and the treasure discoverers Loden Nyingpo and Trashi Gyaltsen.

From his childhood, Kongtrul demonstrated a great propensity and interest for the religious life. He was trained in the Bonpo tradition by his adoptive father and when he was still very young became very expert at religious dance and paintings. In his adolescence he studied herbs and minerals becoming, later on, one of the best physicians of Tibet. 1827 was a period of turmoil for the Sde-dge region that reduced the area to poverty. In that same year Kongtrul's father, Sodnal Pel, was imprisoned for political reasons and his mother encouraged young people to enter the monastic life.

Shortly after, he was sent to She-chen monastery where he was trained by the great master

Gyurmed Tutob Namgyel. There he received an in-depth education in the Buddhist sciences and in 1832, was ordained Buddhist monk according to the *Mad lugs* (the eastern tradition), a tradition followed by both the Nyingmapa and Gelugpa schools.

In 1833, Kongtrul had to move to Pelpung Monastery as Wongen Trulku, the brother of Situ Rinpoche, had asked him to become his secretary. Later on Wongen Trulku insisted that Kongtrul retake ordination as a monk following the *sTod lugs* (the western tradition) because he didn't recognize the validity of the Vinaya vows previously taken by Kongtrul.

Kongtrul was ordained a monk by the ninth Situ Pema Nyinje who would be one of his most important masters. During the ordination, however, Kongtrul didn't have the feeling that he was receiving the Vinaya ordination anew. He was upset by the pettiness and sectarianism showed by the Pelpung monks and this episode of intolerance became important in the future development of his thought of non-sectarianism.

In those years, the monks who had distinguished themselves as scholars, unless they were recognized as reincarnations, were taken from the monasteries to become secretaries to the local landlords and governors. As Kongtrul's reputation as a brilliant scholar had started to spread, the Pelpung's authorities managed to recognize him as the incarnation of Bamten Trulku, a learned monk from the region of Kongpo that had served the great Situ Panchen during his youth and great childhood. This is the reason why he came to be called "Kongtrul": the incarnation from Kong po. Nevertheless in his autobiography he describes the event of his recognition as a trulku with sadness and dismay, with the consideration that the world is nothing else but a deceitful place.

However he never called himself Kongtrul, never signed any of his works with this name and simply used for himself the name Jamgon Lama.

During his life, however, he was regarded as a Manjusri emanation as well as the reembodiment of the great translator of the VIII century, Vairocana. By the age of thirty Kongtrul had received countless teachings and empowerments from masters belonging to several traditions.

In 1842, he entered the traditional three-year retreat, in a small meditation hut that had been built for him an hour's walk from Pelpung monastery, in a place called Tsadra Rinchen Drak. This remained his principal residence for the rest of his life. It was there that he spent all the rest of his life writing, practicing and teaching.

His major literary works are traditionally known as the *Five Great Treasures (Mzod)*

continued on page 14

# Book Reviews

**The Path to Enlightenment**  
by His Holiness the Dalai Lama  
Edited and translated by  
Glenn H. Mullin  
Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca,  
New York, 1994

*The Path to Enlightenment* falls into the category of *lam-rim* teachings. *Lam-rim* means "stages on the path", or, more appropriately, "graded way". This refers to the foundation of the inner development that permeates Tibetan Buddhism as a whole. *Lam-rim* or "graded" path suggests a way to be travelled following precise steps that respect an order of priority and time. With its connotation of "graded" as opposed to "sudden", it reflects the typically Indo-Tibetan style distinct from the Ch'an or Dzogchen approach. Nevertheless, it should not be dismissed by any Dzogchen practitioner. Its principles and related meditations are essentially similar to those required for any inner development and *Santi Maha Sangha* training.

*Lam-rim* came to denote a set of teachings intended for practical meditation that integrates the emptiness teachings of the *Prajnaparamita* and the altruistic orientation advice given in Maitreya's doctrines. That is why Nagarjuna (the philosopher who pioneered the teachings on emptiness of the Middle Way) and Asanga (the compiler of Maitreya's experiential doctrines) became closely associated with its lineage of transmission. *Lam-rim* also works as a catalyst for the vast, complex, and often seemingly contradictory Buddhist teachings that are difficult to navigate from within, so that these are understood as consistent personal advice. It represents the quintessence of the learning, pondering, and living experience of the great masters of India. They were faced (Atisha, in particular) with the need to teach a comprehensive yet practical approach to Tibetans, many of whom did not have the vast learning of monks in Indian institutions. The teachings changed from a scholastic approach to a meditative one. In Tibet the *lam-rim* teachings are present to some extent in all traditions, but were best represented by the progenitor of the *Gelukpa*, the *Kadampa* school. Their name appropriately means "Buddha's Words as Instruction", and they were known for the stern asceticism of their early masters.

Although it has an exceptional quality, the *lam-rim* category of teaching unfortunately developed a somewhat standardized form that sometimes undermines the freshness of its impact and limits it to a rigid structure. The proliferation of Tibetan texts of this kind, with a little variation among them, limited the impact of *lam-rim*. I wonder why Tibetan teachers continued to write their own personal versions when exceptionally inspiring works had already been written by great

meditation masters with a gift for the pen and for expression.

I recall an occasion when Kalu Rinpoche, following an "Italian-wedding-style-five-hour-long meal" in northern Italy, taught on the subject of *bodhicitta* (a major aspect of the *lam-rim* teachings). He presented an expe-



riential approach which was devoid of the rigidity of "graded" steps. He blended it with a "pointing out" of the mind's nature. His scanty words, dry and not coordinated by the net of logical presentation, were like arrows piercing the heart. I was struck by how a teaching could be so inspiring without being structured into the *lam-rim* style of presentation.

The gradual approach taught in the *lam-rim* is useful to curb the tendency of the mind to jump to higher teachings. The limitation is that the practitioner must climb a set of steps, one after the other, in a precise order and this can be frustrating if the practitioner's experience and development do not follow a gradual pattern. I recall Lama Yeshe saying, "Do not take the *lam-rim* approach strictly. Sometimes, you may need to jump over some steps; at other times, you may need to go back to lower steps." A practitioner may realize a principle of the teaching when practicing something higher or completely different from the particular "stage" of meditation intended to comprehend that principle. The scriptures on the stages and paths, with their precise and rigid distinctions of levels of development, always struck me as unreal. It doesn't seem that the experiences and realization of a practitioner have to follow this order. Also, unlike the teachings that emphasize the ultimate emptiness, the nature of the mind, or the primordial state, a precondition for the *lam-rim* system is the firm belief in reincarnation. Without such a belief, one simply cannot take up the beginning *lam-rim* meditations. The strong emphasis on reincarnation can act as a deterrent for the many Westerners who, though interested in the 'quest for truth', are not initially committed to believe it.

This book records the Dalai Lama's oral commentary on the Third Dalai Lama Sonam

continued on page 15



## Winter in Tibet

continued from page 1

Luckily, we had an excellent driver who, after many a scrape, managed to get us over the most difficult sections of road. In the end, it took us ten hours to complete a journey that takes three hours in fine weather.

Muslims and Buddhists have lived close to each other for centuries in this region, and the atavistic aversion they feel towards each other has fed popular fantasies that have given birth to an infinite number of tales and legends. Our driver told us that three days before our arrival, a bus was stuck in the snow and a sick old man died in it. The other passengers, who were Muslims, ran out of food after two days, and so they ate the old man. We couldn't help but smile at this macabre story, hoping that it was only a figment of local imagination.

At the village, all our friends on the committee were there to meet us along with Tony. After a month in this place without being able to communicate with anyone other than with hand signs, and without having bathed as well, Tony had already taken on the appearance of the Noble Savage described by J. J. Rousseau in his writings.

The next day, we went to visit the building site. The classrooms and the teachers' quarters were almost finished. The workers were engaged in painting the doors and windows, and in the classrooms. Tony had to work hard to get the results he wanted. In China, there is no concept of creating a careful finish or paying attention to detail. When they began, the workers wanted to slap on the paint as quickly as possible, leaving drips and dirt everywhere. At each stage, Tony had to insist that the work be redone in order that it be done well. Unfortunately, despite our supervision, and because of the cold, the paint did not dry well at all. We had to postpone the final detail work until next April, and we held back three percent of the final payment in order to guarantee that the work will be done.

One evening, while we were eating, we were told that a famous Dzogchen master called Padma Tunbo had arrived at a village about twenty kilometers away and we decided to go there the next day.

The following day, we took Latrim Bum's jeep to go to the village of Druggyi (Serpent's Mouth). When we arrived at the village, a young friend of Ceran Bum (Tseringtar's brother) invited us to his house. "The Master", he said, "has gone up the mountain to consecrate a site for a retreat cabin where a young practitioner hopes to spend a long period of time."

We asked Ceran Bum to tell us about the construction of a stupa that we saw being built at the entrance to the village. He told us that, a few years previously, a great Master of the Nyingmapa School, the Tertön Jigmed

Phuntsog, had had a number of dreams in which he was instructed to build four large stupas in Tibet which would bring happiness and benefit to the whole country. When he went back to Sertak in the district of Golok, Jigmed Phuntsog had asked his disciple, Tulku Chosgyi Nyima, to look for a good site for the construction of the first of the four stupas.

The disciple left and travelled all over Tibet, from east to west, looking for the right place. In the end, finding no place that



Master Hotu Zamba A. DELL'ANGELO

corresponded to the signs that his Master said would indicate such a place, he returned home. After a while, the Master called on him and said that he was to set off again on foot, using neither horses nor cars. The Master said that on the day that Tulku Chosgyi Nyima's shoes wore out, he would be in the exact place where he was to look for the signs that would indicate where the first stupa was to be built. So the disciple set out once more to look for the site and he walked and he walked until one fine day his shoes suddenly broke. As soon as he realized what had happened, the disciple stopped. It was at Druggyi and that night, in a dream, he received the precise instructions on where to build the first stupa.

When we arrived, the stupa was already under construction and when it is finished the base will be thirty-six meters wide and the structure forty meters high. Inside there will be twenty-one copies of the Kangyur, three of the Tangyur, with fifty-four statues of the Buddha. On the four sides, there will be statues of Padmasambhava, Kuntusambo, Manjushri, and Avalokitesvara.

In order to finish the construction, the project needs almost \$200,000US and Tulku Chosgyi Nyima is presently travelling all over Tibet, trying to raise the money. If anyone would like to help in the construction of the stupa of Druggyi, they may send a contribution to ASIA; we have agreed to help collect the funds necessary for the completion of this project.

As it was getting late and we decided that we would go looking for Padma Tunbo, a famous master from Golok. After more than an hour's walk, we arrived in a high mountain valley. In the center of the valley, the people of the village had erected a small tent and the Master was explaining to Tulku Chosgyi Nyima how and where the retreat house should be

built.

We approached Padma Tunbo and, after offering him kata, we stopped to speak to him. The first thing he told us was that during a visit to New York, he contacted Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to inquire after his health. Then he explained that Tulku Chosgyi Nyima, for whom he was building the retreat house, had taken a vow that he would go into retreat on that mountain for eighteen years after he had completed the construction of the stupa of Druggyi. We invited both Masters to the school at Dangche in order to consecrate it. They accepted the invitation and we arranged the event for that very afternoon. Phuntsog, Tony and I stayed on the mountain for a few hours after that and then we returned to Druggyi village. Immediately, we left for Dangche by car to prepare everything for the Master's visit.

In Dangche, we were invited to the temple where many practitioners gathered for the event. Everyone was very kind to us and we even spoke with an old *Togden* (yogi) who realized that he had met Phuntsog on a previous occasion. We had quite a lot of work to do at Dangche in order to prepare for the Master's visit.

In the early afternoon, Padma Tunbo arrived with Tulku Chosgyi Nyima. We had prepared something to eat and some offerings in one of the classrooms. After drinking tea, the Master made a tour of the whole school and consecrated the grounds. He promised that he would return to Dangche to give teachings. Before leaving, he said to us, smiling: "I am a very simple person, I don't need any special welcome or big preparation. Don't worry. I'll see you soon." We made him an offering of 1000 Yuan for the stupa construction.

The following days went by very quickly. It was cold and though it snowed a few days, the sun melted the snow immediately. The rivers were already iced over but the real winter's cold had not yet set in. There is a Tibetan saying that the real cold comes in the eleventh month and that in the first few days, it freezes the earth, then it breaks the rocks, and finally it even bends iron. Work generally stops on the 30th of November and does not start again until April because the earth is frozen for those months.

The people of the village worked day and night because the date of completion on their contract with ASIA was for November 30th. On the 29th of November, a commission made up of the district chiefs, engineers from Zining and those in charge of various district offices were to come for an inspection and evaluation of the buildings before they were turned over to ASIA and the village.

Meanwhile we began to plan a program for 1996. It was also necessary to organize various payments in settling up the work already done and to lay out deposits for the work that was to come. Everyday there were more problems that had to be solved,

inspections to be made, and measurements to be taken to determine where the next buildings were to be built.

While we were dealing with all these technical problems, Phuntsog was working tirelessly, seeing more than thirty sick patients a day, alternating this with translating for us. One of the gravest problems she encountered was sickness caused by alcoholism. Young people start drinking at an early age and, by the time they are thirty years old, their lungs and livers are in a deplorable condition. There are no doctors in the village, so Phuntsog proposed a project to develop a traditional medical practice here.

Two rooms will be built in the school where physical examinations may be done. Then a small bank account needs to be set up in the amount of \$5,000US. With the interest on this money, it would be possible to pay two doctors to work at the village that Phuntsog would find in Lhasa. As for medicines, Phuntsog promised the local people that she would come in the summer in order to train the farmers in collecting and drying medicinal herbs. Once dried, the traditional herbs will be taken to Qabcha. Qabcha is the district headquarters, and site of the only hospital of traditional medicine. There they have agreed to support the project. The next step is to find the \$5,000US necessary to ensure that the people of Dangche not only have a means of education, but also at least a minimum of health care.

On the 29th of November, Tony left for Peking to fly out to Australia. He got up very early in the morning so that no unforeseen obstacle would prevent him from returning to so-called civilization, and force him to stay another week at Dangche where the cold war was getting worse day by day.



Stupa of Druggyi A. DELL'ANGELO

The next day, we went to the building site to meet with the various district chiefs who had come to inspect the quality of the work that had been done. The twelve classrooms were complete, as well as the twenty-two rooms for the teachers' quarters. The delegation was headed by the District Director of Education, and the Inspector from the Department of Buildings, who had been overseeing the project. In the course of a few hours, it was agreed that the electrical circuitry, the painting, and the doors and windows would be redone in April. The meeting concluded with a banquet at the house of Hambo. Then, after eating and drinking, the various officers went home.

Our new work contracts for 1996 consist of four contracts with the Village Committee for

the construction of twenty-four rooms for one hundred and fifty children from nomad families, three bathrooms, a kitchen, a refectory, and a main entrance made with inlaid wood. We left about \$15,000US in deposits for the first four contracts. The next payment of about \$22,000US will be payable in July when the next ASIA mission goes to Tibet. An additional \$20,000US will come due in October 1996 and the final \$5,000US will be paid in April 1997. ASIA's plan is to finish the main school buildings by November 1996, excluding a two-story building which will be built in traditional style and will house the cultural center and library. This building will be constructed in 1997. It will cost about \$35,000US. The school will be fully completed by summer 1997, and will be officially inaugurated at that time. Now that the workers have gone, the empty buildings will be taken care of by our village committee. Ceran Bum, Latrin Bum, Gyantanbo, Haishan, and Hamba will take turns sleeping there to prevent vandalism or theft. Work will begin again in April.

The evening before we left, the village organized a party in honor of Phuntsog. Everyone danced and sang all evening. Early the next morning, we took leave of all our friends and set off for Qabche. It was Padmasambhava Day and we wanted to see Hotu Zamba, a famous Nyingmapa practitioner who was a disciple of the previous Dordrubchen Rinpoche. Hotu Zamba has spent most of his life in retreat. He lived in a little village not far from Qabcha, together with his disciples. Most of his disciples have lived in strict retreat for many years. When we arrived, Hotu Zamba was in retreat and no one was allowed to see him. One of his disciples, whom we had met the previous summer, went to tell him of our arrival and after a while returned and told us that the Master would meet with us. After speaking, the Master spoke with us. Phuntsog and I decided that we would spend the night in that place to receive the initiation of the *Shitro of Rigzin Dusba* the next day. That evening, while we were drinking tea, the Master invited us to his room and offered to give us the initiation of the *Kadro Kagyan*.

We spent the night in the monastery. It was very cold and in the morning it was snowing. At about nine o'clock, the others arrived from Qabcha. Tseringtar's mother had come with them. We returned to the Master's room and received the *Shitro* empowerment. When the teachings were over, Hotu Zamba asked if we would help to build a school for the children of his village. The cost would not be more than \$20,000US. The school would be under his direct control and connected with the larger school at Dangche which could be used as a training center for Tibetan schoolteachers.

In the afternoon, we left

continued on page 13



# SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE

## The Digital Dharma Project: Archiving the Teachings

by Enrico Dell'Angelo, Mauro Nascari and Alex Siedlecki

**O**n behalf of the international Dzogchen Community the Istituto Shang-Shung has been developing a program – authorized by a previous official agreement with Merigar's Gakyil – to organize and coordinate the activities of the Merigar Archive. Among the many activities and challenges connected with a media-library of this kind, such as the preservation of documents, stock-taking and cataloging, the crucial problem that comes to light is the actual maintenance of the tape library. The tapes that have been given priority are the tapes of original recordings of retreats, practices and Teachings given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (and by other Masters) both at Merigar and all over the world. The archive contains an invaluable heritage, of the utmost importance for mankind in general and for practitioners in particular, and could be lost forever. The oldest among the tapes (those of the end of the '70s and '80s) are running into danger of demagnetization, which means that they will no longer be available for listening in the near future.



It is not difficult to imagine the actual loss we will face when this precious treasure of Teachings has irretrievably vanished. What will we do when all the documentation of Rinpoche's voice no longer exists? His well-known, colorful stories about historical Masters' lives, his own experiences of practice and his advice on how to practice? What will we do when we have lost the precious Santi Maha Sangha Teaching or the recorded melodies of the practices? Will we trust our memory? If so, will we be sure that everything will be correctly handed down to posterity? It is our own responsibility to answer the above questions, since one of the main commitments we have made is to preserve and to spread the Teaching.

For many of the recordings, the risk is already extremely high and we must act at once. The first tapes, for instance, of retreats from 1976-77 show signs of advanced demagnetization and are already quite incomprehensible at certain points.

Now that Istituto Shang-Shung is in charge of the coordination and supervision of Merigar's Archives for the international Dzogchen Community, it is responsible for the documentation of the Teachings, in

the form of books, photos, videos and audio-recordings.

The audio recordings contain a complete inventory of retreats, conferences and practices (both by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and by other Masters) that is already available and will be published by next spring. Beginning with 1996, a long work of tape cataloging by subject will begin. Nevertheless, if the tapes are not saved now, there will not be anything to save in a short while.

In order to have quick and durable documentation of all audio recordings, a project called "Digital Dharma" will begin by next spring, aiming to copy in five years' time on digital medium (DAT and Audio-CD) all the Teachings kept in Merigar's Audio Tape Library. In the project, a complete account of results from research undertaken by Istituto Shang-Shung has been presented in order to explain, on the technical side, why CDs and DATs are preferred to magnetic tapes as new recording mediums. It also contains references to budget and phase-by-phase articulation. Since it is impossible to explain here the entire project in a detailed way, anyone interested can ask for a written explanation at the addresses below.

Since the digital medium is considered the most appropriate for saving tape recorded Teachings, it is important to act quickly

to seek the necessary funds for the project to begin. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has recently expressed his ideas about not only involving Merigar and other Gakyils, but due to their already numerous financial commitments, directly involving individual Community members in the project. Istituto Shang-Shung does not have the funds necessary to carry the whole project to completion with few members, little money and commitments to important projects such as the Vairocana Translation Project and Library cataloging.

The Istituto will direct the Digital Dharma Project until its end. It has and will continue to contribute to the purchase of some machinery, as much as possible. So it ultimately depends on everyone's cooperation. We are appealing to this to see the project through. The outcome, on behalf of our own and future generations of practitioners, is of inestimable value. There are three different ways to participate in the project:

1. A contribution of \$100US per year for the next five years (1996-2000). For those who choose this option, Shang-Shung Istituto offers an Audio-CD of practice a year.
2. A contribution of \$500US per year for the next five years. For those who choose this option, Istituto Shang Shung offers an Audio-CD of Practice a year plus a CD-ROM.

3. Personal engagement for the organization and continuation of small projects, on one's own initiative, to support the Digital Dharma Project. For those who choose this option, Istituto Shang Shung will offer a number of Audio-CD and/or CD-ROM proportional to the contribution given.
4. Sound technicians, computer or software experts are welcome to offer technical contributions.

We sincerely hope that this project will be fully realized, so that by the year 2000 all the teachings given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other Masters will be adequately archived. It could be a good omen for the development and dissemination of the Teaching in the new millennium.

Special thanks to Costantino Albini for technical assistance, and Dimitri Fieri, who has donated bottled olive oil (available next spring) to be sold through the Istituto.

If you want to collaborate in any of the above-mentioned ways, please contact us:

Merigar Archive telephone: 39-564-966940

Istituto Shang Shung telephone: 39-564-966941 and fax: 39-564-966846 or write to the following address:

Archivi di Merigar  
Loc. Podere Nuovo  
58031, Arcidosso, GR, Italy

## Board of Directors' Meeting Tsegylgar, November 1995

by Woody Paparazzo

**T**he Shang Shung Institute of America's Interim Board of Directors held a series of planning meetings in Conway, Massachusetts for three days in November. The purpose of the meeting was to clarify the Institute's goals, to work out the organizational structure, and to begin to identify action-plans to implement these goals. Joan Marie Wood facilitated these planning meetings, drawing upon her considerable experience from similar sessions with other non-profit groups.

It was a very interesting experience to go through this process of shaping and focusing the diverse views of a group of people until a common understanding was reached. In October, 1994, Rinpoche came to Conway and inaugurated the Institute which generated a great deal of energy and ideas. Of course, the Institute in Italy has already been actively engaged in many projects for several years. It seemed everyone had come away with a general understanding of what the Institute was about and a sense of its direction – that this understanding was shared by all and there was fundamental consensus. But, several months of international e-mail correspondence proved that our ideas and presumptions were not necessarily consistent.

It became obvious that a face-to-face, continuous discussion was the only way to make progress and we organized this planning meeting. We needed to articulate as carefully as possible the purpose of the Institute. This seemed so simple as to be trivial. But not so! Each word and phrase, when carefully analyzed, revealed layers of questions and issues which needed to be discussed and agreed upon. Over the course of three days, we continually returned to this task devoting many hours to it. The result is one simple sentence, but behind it lies a great deal of effort and collaboration. Our final draft of the Institute's purpose is in the box to the right.

We went on to finalize the legal structure of the Institute which follows a fairly standard model for a non-profit corporation in the United States. The Board of Directors makes over-all policy decisions and has the responsibility of overseeing the Institute's activities. This board is elected once a year.

The second major component is a special class of members of the Institute designated as Voting Members. This group is appointed

by the Board of Directors after consultation with Rinpoche, and, at its annual meeting, this group of Voting Members elects the board of directors for the following year. In this way, Rinpoche has indirect input over the Institute's activities without being personally involved. The Voting Members are a larger group (about twenty) who need not have any day-to-day involvement with the Institute but who possess a familiarity with Rinpoche and the Community. They also have an understanding of the Institute's guiding principles – so they can act as a check on the Board of Directors to ensure that the Institute's activities are consistent with Rinpoche's vision.

A third component is the Advisory Board. This is a smaller group of persons, appointed by the Board of Directors, which possesses particular experience, skills, and knowledge, upon which the Board of Directors may rely for advice.

There was substantial discussion about what the criteria should be for selecting individuals to serve in these various capacities. It was decided that the current Interim Board of Directors (Lauri Marder, Jim Valby, John Shane, Joan Marie Wood, Enrico Dell'Angelo, and Woody Paparazzo) would comprise the initial Board of Directors with the addition of

Georgette Kelly. We believe she will contribute much required energy and experience in the fundraising area. Others were also considered, and will be contacted about their willingness to serve, should more directors be needed or in the event of vacancies.

The Directors drew up a list of proposed Voting Members and members of the Advisory Board who are now being contacted to determine their availability. Officers of the corporation had to be selected in order to establish its legal existence. These positions were felt to be somewhat temporary. After further discussion and evaluation, others may be willing to take on these positions.

It was also decided that Rinpoche would not be designated President, as he has been in the Italian organizations. That title has different implications in the American legal system and Rinpoche has expressed his desire to be only "indirectly" involved. We felt that there were sufficient safeguards in the organization's structure to ensure that the Institute would clearly reflect the view of Rinpoche. His official title is Founder so that he is not burdened with the role of corporate officer. For purposes of initiating the organization, Lauri Marder is President, Jim Valby is Treasurer and Woody Paparazzo is Clerk.

Another area of discussion

*continued on page 17*

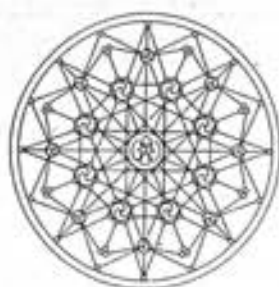
### PURPOSE

*To foster the knowledge and understanding of Tibetan culture and traditions, encouraging cooperation among interested groups and individuals, thus keeping alive the essential values of these traditions.*

### OBJECTIVES

- To help Tibetans maintain, share, and live within their culture, and to generate income
- To help implant Tibetan culture back into Tibet, including liaison with A.S.I.A.
- To discover the cultural environment within which the teachings successfully flourished
- To provide a resource for people with an interest or connection with Tibetan cultures, to maintain a contact and refresh their inspiration, memories and values
- To continue research and translation, and further develop an archival facility to help maintain a reliable and accessible knowledge base
- To establish a facility for the teaching and demonstration of arts, skills, language, medicine, etc., and to make it available to others for related conferences and activities
- To cooperate with other related organizations involved in similar activities, especially Istituto Shang Shung





# I N T E R N A T I O N A L COMMUNITY NEWS

## From the Merigar Gakyil

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the fund for Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche during his ill health. These contributions helped to meet the expenses incurred during his illness and healing process.

We would also like to inform everyone that part of the remaining amount has been put into the "Health Fund For Norbu" in America. The rest will be invested here in Italy to guarantee a type of security for Rinpoche for the future which will be at his complete disposal.

If you wish to send a contribution towards this cause, the accounts are: (c/c 3990 Cassa Risparmio di Firenze, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy for contributions in lire; c/c 3004 Cassa Risparmio di Firenze (at the same address) for contributions in dollars.

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

## Concerning Rinpoche's Health and Long Life

by Verena Smith



This is a request and invitation to consider Rinpoche's health when offering our generous gifts. In the Orient, a beautiful custom exists of offering gifts of health to the Master's family members and friends. Instead of chocolate bars, elaborate rich sweets or alcohol, why not offer a beautiful specimen of a ginseng root, or an elegant package of medicinal tonification herbs wrapped festively for whatever the occasion may be? Rinpoche is at all times too generous to refuse any of our gifts and

under our gaze he will always accept the treats offered to him.

It was more than one year ago that Rinpoche was diagnosed with leukemia. The battle with the disease has been an exhausting one. Chemotherapy took its toll, and Rinpoche has had to deal with deep malaise and overcome kidney failure, fevers and profound fatigue.

It has taken many months for him to regain his strength. On the journey to recovery, appropriate diet, adequate exercise, many supplements, herbal medicine and acupuncture were among the tools used in a steady measure for him to regain his health.

Rinpoche has returned from his very serious illness with deepened vigor and strength and a sense of great urgency to accomplish his goal: to preserve the transmission and purity of the Dzogchen teachings. As he mentioned at the Namgyalgar retreat in Australia, he needs a minimum of eight years to complete the *Santi Maha Sangha* trainings alone.

For the benefit of all, we wish for his lotus feet to remain firmly on the earth for a lot longer. All the more reason to fully support Rinpoche in maintaining his health. Rinpoche's blood pressure activity needs to be aided through a low fat and low sodium diet. Rinpoche's blood pressure can become seriously disturbed by improper diet.

When Rinpoche is a guest at your Gar or retreat center, please offer him your practice, something you've made, some strengthening medicinals, donate prayer flags for his long life, plant a tree in his name, sponsor a piece of a translation or whatever you enjoy. He will appreciate any effort you make.

Please do not feel you have to treat him to sweets, alcohol or other heavy, rich delicacies. He really doesn't need them. If you should cook a dish for him please keep these guidelines in mind: preferably organic food, lots of vegetables, slightly bitter, dark green leafy vegetables, lightly cooked, some lean meat, fresh fish, all prepared using very little fat and no salt. When the climate is warm, salad is appropriate. Some 2% fat milk and some yogurt as well as occasional parmesan cheese are the forms of dairy used. Some crackers and no salt corn chips and rice cakes can be offered as snacks.

This is the way we can assist in supporting Rinpoche's health and his very long life.

Verena Smith is a Doctor of Chinese Medicine living in Amherst, Massachusetts. She has been treating Rinpoche consistently in conjunction with the chemotherapy and other forms of treatment he has received since his diagnosis of leukemia in October of 1994.

## Tibetan Medicine

### Sixth Course Held at Merigar

by Eliše Copello

The sixth Tibetan medicine course was one of the main events in a busy month of activities at Merigar. During the first week of December, students gathered to receive teaching on Tibetan medicine in the sunny, bright and cozy atmosphere of the veranda at the "Yellow House". The same friendly faces were there, eager to deepen their knowledge of the field. The same smile and kindness of Dr. Pasan Yonten were there as well, always open and ready to answer all possible questions and share his experience of medical practice in both the East and West.

The course has become a regular feature of the Shang Shung Institute. Everybody hopes these seminars will continue in the future and explore other aspects of this very ancient healing science – so vast and profound that it really takes several years to grasp. We had learned previously that the four main methods used to treat patients are: diet, behavior, medication and

external therapy. This time, Doctor Pasan Yonten gave further explanations on the dietary system (which had been the central subject of our previous course) and then moved on to external therapy. He devoted three full days to moxa practice with long detailed explanations on how and where to apply the cones or the stick, according to organic problems or energy imbalances. He finished up with golden needle therapy.

Other days focused on weight gain or loss and the serious problems of anorexia and bulimia so prevalent today in the West. He helped us to understand the profound root of this disease and he suggested treating it both from a psychological point of view and by applying proper medication and moxa treatments on specific points.

Much time was given to practice and everyone was involved in preparing moxa cones, selecting the right points for specific disorders, and applying



The doctor applying moxa. P. PAPPONE

them to each other under the supervision of the doctor, who was constantly checking and supervising them.

One evening a public talk on Tibetan medicine and its possible integration with Western medicine was organized by the Shang Shung Institute and the Dzogchen Community in the Arcidosso Town Hall, in cooperation with the town council. The audience was very fascinated by the subject. Several questions were asked at the end of the lecture, some by local doctors who expressed their interest and desire to hear more about Tibetan medicine. Maybe a little seed was planted. Who knows how it will sprout?

## Shamanism

### A First Meeting at Merigar

by Giovanni Arca

The Shang Shung Institute opened Merigar's doors to the Buryatian shaman, Nadia Stepanova in early December. She explained what shamanism is, answered numerous questions and treated many of the thirty or so people present – a large number of whom were members of the Dzogchen Community. It was a rare opportunity for many people to meet a shaman for the first time and experience the ancestral dimension of her visions and her profound perception of reality.

Nadia Stepanova received a standard education, graduating in pedagogy. She is a mother, a grandmother and is fully integrated into modern society, so in some ways perhaps she is the ideal ambassador for her people. At the same time, she is the strict custodian of her tradition strongly defending the shaman's identity and role.

In Italy, shamanism is practically unknown. The media only takes occasional interest in it and, outside a certain circle of interest or an academic environment, few people know anything about it. Fortunately, Constanzo

Allione, film maker, disciple and "manager" of Nadia Stepanova, has learned quite a lot from many years of travelling around the world documenting shamans of various traditions. He thanked the Institute for introducing the shaman to the community. We hope that the Institute will welcome other representatives of these traditions in the future.

With apologies to those with more knowledge, here is a little information on Siberian shamanism as presented by Nadia Stepanova, along with some impressions. One does not become a shaman; one cannot learn how to be one. One is born a shaman. One can "discover" one's identity as a shaman at a certain point, with a developing awareness of having always been a shaman. In Buryatia, the shaman is totally integrated into society where he or she is recognized as having a role alongside that of the doctor and the lama. Nadia Stepanova also continually works within the medical system; doctors ask her assistance when they feel the possibilities of cure by official medicine are insufficient or exhausted. Intervention by the shaman



Nadia Stepanova LIZ GRANGER

can also follow successful therapy in order to heal the non-physical components of the individual. However, one should not consider the shaman a healer or a sensitive. Nadia Stepanova repeated this point, explaining that being a sensitive is different, more "limited" than the condition that pertains to the shamanic nature.

In fact, the shaman acts on all levels of existence, both animate and inanimate, "seeing" the nature of things, "entering" into the intimate part of their fundamental structure, discovering the profound interdependence of phenomena in its links of cause and effect. He or she is the highest exponent of ecology, the custodian of universal harmony, the "wizard" of antique and modern memory – almost the representative of a "transversal" race which is present in all peoples and which survives the weakening of our ancient perceptive faculty and the degradation of a harmonic relationship with the physical world, mind and energy.



## From Switzerland

### YANTRA YOGA COURSE AND COMMUNITY MEETING

The Dzogchen Community of Switzerland gave a Yantra Yoga Course in early December for the second time, in Bern. We were very fortunate to have Laura Evangelisti come to teach us again.

During the three days, we had lessons in the morning and in the afternoon. Laura showed us a series of loosening-up exercises and the Nine Purification Breathings. She also taught us the basics of Tsijong, Lungsang Tsandul, and the first and second groups of positions. She explained to us the real meaning of Yantra Yoga and made it clear that it should not be mixed up with other traditions of Yoga.

Between the sessions, we enjoyed quite a lot of time together. Friday evening was Rinpoche's birthday and we did a Ganapuja. After the Ganapuja all of us loudly wished a "Happy Birthday to you, Rinpoche!"

On Saturday we went to the Thun, about a twenty minute drive from Bern, to have Tibetan food in a Swiss restaurant. Though the restaurant is run by a Swiss person, a Tibetan lady named Lhamo from Amdo cooked a large variety of Tibetan specialties which we relished. The simple but very Tibetan decor of the room made us feel as

if we were somewhere in Tibet.

The Yantra Yoga course was very useful for the thirteen participants. All of us went home with a strong intention to practice regularly so that it will become a part of our lives. Let's hope that it will not be merely intention!

During the lunchbreak on Sunday, we held the annual meeting of the Dzogchen Community. It was precisely one year after the legal constitution of the Dzogchen Community of Switzerland was established. Max Roth, a red gakyil member, conducted the meeting and informed the assembly about activities during the past year and plans for the future. During 1995, we tried to keep practitioners informed of various teachings given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Switzerland, updated everyone on activities, retreats, and courses in Merigar and Europe and distributed book lists and information about Shang Shung Editions and Tsaparang. We also decided to organize a third Yantra Yoga Course in 1996, probably in Zurich or nearby.

A new Gakyil was elected (see page 11). Regular practice meetings will be organized once a month in Zurich. Whoever would like to participate in these meetings, as well as in Yantra Yoga, please contact the secretary, Christina Von Geispitzheim, for details at 028/673826.

## About the Vajra Dance

### World on a String

by Prima Mai

**W**intertime. Because of a lack of central heating and since I can't get the fire going well today, I am having breakfast with a cold nose. However, in a few days I will be fortunate enough to leave the cold Italian winter for the Australian summer, and attend Rinpoche's retreat as well as to teach the Vajra Dance. After having traveled continually for three years, I have had a short break of six months in my apartment in Arcidosso. It felt good to be in a familiar place, to be surrounded by one's own things, and involved in sharing some deeper relations with others.

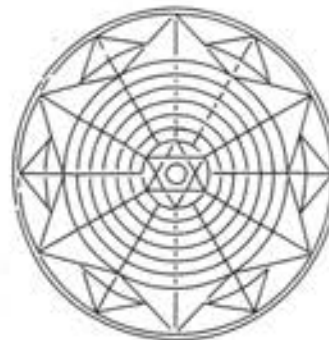
On the other hand, the restlessness of three years of moving is hard to calm down. As a German native, Italy is also not the place where I find my roots, although it seems such a place doesn't exist anymore. Sometimes when driving on the highway somewhere, there are moments of reflection on the illusion of life. Cars pass everything with no chance of entering, but give the illusion that it is possible to be everywhere. Similar to life, the life that simply passes by, showing us the varied possibilities of things one can do. The more things one tries to reach on this "life's highway", the more it seems one loses the sense of what actually is beneficial to enter. There is, in reality, no satisfaction in anything, because there is always this idea of the existence of another thing. It is like the funny picture of the dog biting its own tail and spinning around on itself, trying to get at something illusory outside, when it is nothing other than its own tail.

I would like to share several things related to the Vajra Dance. Slowly we are starting to also have courses for advanced practitioners. During the summer in Merigar, everyone enjoyed the courses which created more continual dancing together. I really hope we can deepen our understanding and technical knowledge of the Vajra

Dance, but it seems difficult to overcome habits in movement and timing of the dance. For those practitioners, it is important to dance together and with each dance to observe one's own timing and movement and the unified movement of this practice.

Although many practitioners are interested in the Vajra dance and have attended a course, there are still only a few practitioners who really remember and practice the Dance. This primary reason for this is the lack of time for practicing, sometimes related to the difficulties in finding a space for the Mandala, or simply because of poor coordination among practitioners. But it is a pity, considering the effort in spending many days learning the Dance only to forget it because of lack of practice.

I would like to share a simple solution that was developed by Bodhi Krause, a practitioner who lives close to Tsegylgar. He invented a simple system for preparing a useful practice Mandala. This



Mandala cannot replace the actual mandala, but it is perfect for memorizing and practicing the steps and movements. It is a cord mandala and I want to explain how you can make one yourself.

#### MATERIAL

First you should find meters of white cord (I would suggest a diameter of approximately 1 cm.; you can use mountain climbing cord) then you'll need four spray bottles of paint: blue, green, yellow and red. Finally, you will need a small ring made of either plastic, metal or wood for the center of the mandala.

#### CONSTRUCTION

Find a space where the Mandala can be laid out, placing the strings as precisely as possible in the right position. Now, as if you were drawing lines, attach the two double triangles at the borders of the central red triangle/blue thigle sections. Look at a colored drawing of the Mandala in order to understand how it goes. First you use just a normal small cord to get an idea of how much cord will be needed. Buy the cord (more than you think you will need) and color it red. After having attached (sewed) the cord of each triangle, cut the rest and seal the ends. Attaching a double triangle helps also for laying out the Mandala in the right position, and it somehow authenticates the Mandala.

Also you can try to indicate the triangles outside the Mandala. I haven't tried this myself but I believe it is possible and gives an even better orientation. In this Mandala there won't be an indication of the thigles, but only the twelve lines coming out from the center of the Mandala and maybe the double triangle, however through correct coloring one can somehow see the invisible

*continued on page 10*

## Vajra Dance Schedule

### Australia - Spring 1996

**Byron Bay** - mid-February - Dance of Six Lokas with Prima Mai  
Contact: Harry Atkinson, Tel: 61 66 793 117 (register by 2/5/96)  
**Namgyalgar** - late March - Vajra Dance with Adriana dal Borgo  
Contact: Angie Gilbert, Tel and fax: 61 44 737303

### Santa Fe - June, 1996

The Santa Fe Dzogchen Community will host a Vajra dance retreat in June, 1996. For information, contact Lidian King at 505 988-5995.

## Yantra Yoga Schedule

### Australia - March, 1996

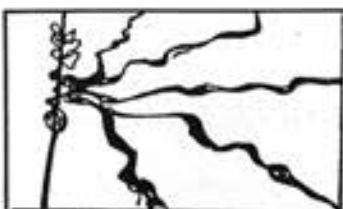
**Melbourne** - March 16 - 24 (evenings and weekends)  
Contact: Alan Bamford, Tel: 61 3 9484 0907

**Sydney** - March 26 - April 3 (evenings and weekends)  
Contact: Tenzing Tsewang, Tel: 61 2 517 1002

### Tokyo - April 27, 1996

There will be five-day courses of Yantra Yoga taught in Tokyo, Japan with Fabio Andrico beginning April 27, 1996. For further information, contact:

Tsugiko Kiyohashi, 5-11-23 Shimomeguro, Meguro-Ku, Tokyo,  
Office Tel. 81-3-3712 7507, Tel/Fax 81-3-3716 7248 or  
Tetsu Nagasawa, 7-17-4 Higashi Oizumi, Nerimaku, Tokyo,  
Tel/fax 81 3 39248965



## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MANDARAVA

A pilgrimage to Tso Pema and Maratika with

TSULTRJIM ALLJONE  
March 25th - April 20th 1996  
For information call  
800-688-9851 or 513-767-1102

#### PREPARATION OF THE STRING MANDALA

To prepare a cord mandala, cut the cord into 12 equal pieces of 4 meters in length. Each will have to be attached to the center ring, each one representing one of the 12 mandala lines. The next step will be to measure each one of the twelve cords in order to define the length of different sections that will be sprayed with the corresponding color. Starting from the center, the length of the different sections are:

Blue center point:	Since the ring actually leaves an empty space, it would be appropriate to place a blue sphere in the center of the ring itself.
First white thigle:	The first 22 cm. of the cord are to be left white.
Second thigle:	The following measure is 55 cm. This thigle contains the double triangle. The double triangle should be attached first to understand which parts of the cord are to be sprayed yellow, followed by green or red indicating the green fields or red triangles. See explanation for attaching the red double triangle below.
Blue thigle:	33 cm. spray blue
White thigle:	Continue leaving 33 cm. white
Yellow thigle:	Continue spraying 33 cm. yellow
Red thigle:	Continue 33 cm. red
Green thigle:	Continue 33 cm. green
Blue thigle:	Continue 33 cm. blue
External white triangle:	This section corresponds to the 6 cords having the central green sections.
Yellow/red triangle:	Attention: this section corresponds to the 6 cords with the red central triangle, not to the 6 having central green sections. On each of these 6 cords leave 99 cm. white.
External blue thigle:	Complete with spraying 11 cm. blue.

Then cut any leftover portion of the cord. It might be useful, depending on the type of cord, to seal the ends with flame or glue. The simplest way to do it, is to just have the twelve cords coming out of the center of the Mandala. However, for a more complete Mandala and a better orientation, I have also tried attaching by sewing a central red double triangle in the center.



# Tara Mandala Update

by Lynn Bishop

The Tara Mandala Sangha and the New Mexico Dzogchen communities in Santa Fe and Albuquerque have organized bi-monthly regional practices this winter. On the first Sunday of each month, the groups will meet and practice in Santa Fe and on the third Sunday of each month in Pagosa Springs. Contact Lidian King at 505 988-5995 in Santa Fe and the Tara Mandala office at 970 264-6177 in Pagosa Springs for locations and details.

We have been busy finalizing our 1996 retreat schedule which will be included in our upcoming annual newsletter to be mailed in early February. Highlights of our schedule include:

## MARCH 25- APRIL 20

*Pilgrimage: In the Footsteps of Mandarava to India and Nepal*  
led by Tsaltrim Allione

This 27 day pilgrimage will focus around on the practice of "The Sphere of the Vital Essence of the Vajra or The Long Life Practice of the Immortal Dakini". We will travel to the cave of Maratika where Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche discovered this mind treasure in 1984.

The other major pilgrimage site will be Tso Pema, the birthplace of Mandarava. It is here that Mandarava and Guru Rinpoche were burned alive by Mandarava's enraged father, only to emerge later

from the flames in union, unscathed and forming around them the lake and floating islands that still exist today. We will be in retreat at Tso Pema during the full moon and total lunar eclipse.

Other plans for this journey include an audience with H.H. the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala and a visit to Tashi Jong for the extraordinary Lama Dances celebrating Guru Rinpoche. The group will also receive teachings from Lama Wangdor and Ontul Rinpoche at Tso Pema and in Kathmandu from Tsok Nyi Rinpoche and his father Ugyen Tulku, one of the greatest living Dzogchen masters.

Retreat prices, further details and other summer and fall programs will be announced in our upcoming Newsletter.

## HELP FOR THE AUSTRALIA CABIN

The Namgyalgar Dzogchen Community extends thanks to all the people who have offered assistance and collaborative effort to build a house for Rinpoche here, especially Jim Smith and Joe Zurylo from Tseggyalgar, Gerry and Sean from New Zealand and Jeff from America. It is a huge project complicated by rain and difficult site accessibility. The project continues, and we urgently need collaboration, donations and help. Anyone wishing to come to Australia to assist, especially carpenters, can contact Angie Gilbert, tel and fax: +61 44 737303. Donations can be made by international cheque/draft to the Dzogchen Community of Australia (for Rinpoche's house) and posted to the Treasurer, The Dzogchen Community of Australia, PO Box 14, Central Tilba NSW 2546, Australia.



## World on a String

continued from page 9

thigles. It helps to have a drawing of a colored Mandala and/or one can draw this Mandala first on a piece of paper following these instructions. This Mandala is a great help and can be used independently everywhere, it is very light to transport, can be used in the garden, in the forest or on the beach. It can even be used on uneven ground.

Another beneficial possibility for memorizing the Vajra Dance is the video of the Vajra Dance. On every occasion, I try to collect donations to realize this project, in the hopes that we will have a video that will clearly show the precise movement, timing and footsteps of the three Vajra Dances. In the future there will be a video in which Rinpoche explains the theoretical part and also dances a previous version of the Vajra dance while singing the Song of the Vajra. The video is important to precisely preserve the steps to avoid the risk of future doubts between Teachers and to find easy clarification or confirmation.

I want to ask everyone who is interested in this project to help in its realization. You can primarily help through donations given to either of the following:

- New York Dzogchen Community Fund Account  
Acct. no.: 2115-4259-09  
528 Broadway  
New York, NY 10012 USA
- Vajra Dance Video Project  
National Westminster Bank  
Acct. No. 4910,12  
CAB:72160.5-ABI:1030  
Monte Dei Paschi Di Siena  
58031 Arcidosso (GR) Italy

Before Rinpoche left for Thailand, we talked about the future possibilities of teaching the Vajra Dance. It is necessary that more practitioners take

responsibility for teaching the Vajra Dance in their home area, like Stoffelina Verdonk does already. Of course, one should know precisely the male and female parts of all three Vajra Dances and have harmonious movement and the capacity to teach others.

Mainly the bigger Gars and smaller Community groups living close to each other would benefit from a practitioner who is committed and living close by, who could lead practice retreats and give teachings of the Vajra Dance. If someone is interested in taking more responsibility, please contact me through Merigar or Compuserve E-mail: prima mai 76544,2306.

This summer I revised the little booklet on the arm movements for the three Vajra Dances. It is available through Shang Shung Edizioni, Merigar, 58031, GR Italy. It is called *The Short Explanation of the Arm Movements and Mudras of the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra, of the Liberation of the Six Lokas, and of the Three Vajras*. I would like to correct a small error in the explanation of the Male part of the Vajra Dance.

SA: right opens

SA: left closes, then palm opens (korbe)

-A: right closes

-A: both open, this has to be changed into left opens

-A: mudra

I hope this small amount of information will bring us to the Mandala more often and help support Rinpoche's Teachings. The Vajra Dance is still at the beginning of its progress, and I hope it can find a beneficial, stable place on earth which ultimately depends on our practice.

## TARA MANDALA RETREAT SCHEDULE

### MAY 24- JUNE 2

*Dakini Doha Retreat and Stupa Building with Choegyal Rinpoche*

This ten day retreat will focus on the Dakini Doha teachings which will be integrated with time periods of stupa building as a group.

Tsaltrim Allione will teach and lead the following retreats this summer:

### JUNE 21-23

*Long Life Practice of Mandarava: Lung and Explanation*

### JUNE 24-30

*Mandarava Practice Retreat*

### JULY 5-7

*The Practice of Simhamukha: Lung, Transmission and Explanation*

### JULY 8-14

*Simhamukha Practice Retreat*

### JULY 19-24

*Chod Teaching and Practice Retreat*

This retreat will take place at Lama Foundation in San Cristobal, New Mexico near Taos.

### JULY 25-26

*Chod Pilgrimage on Tara Mandala Land*

A two day practice retreat where participants will hike to different views of the land each morning and evening to practice Chod.

### AUGUST 2-11

*Family Practice Retreat*

A first for Tara Mandala, the Family Retreat will provide a separately programmed retreat for parents and three different

age groups of children. The adult program will focus on the five Buddha families, six paramitas, and the four immeasurables. The children will enjoy the land, and create an art/theatre project connected to a Mahasiddha story. There will also be Santi Maha Sangha study for interested children.

### OCTOBER 25-27

*Wild and Wise  
A Celebration of Women in Buddhist Practice*

This program will benefit Tara Mandala and Spirit Rock Meditation Center. A Friday evening concert will be held at the Berkeley Theatre. The weekend retreat will be held at Spirit Rock in Woodacre, California near San Francisco. The weekend will feature teachings by Tsaltrim Allione, Joanna Macy and Yvonne Rand.



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## Shang Shung Edizioni

by Enzo Terzano

After several months of study by a commission headed by Matteo Silva and nominated by the Gakyil of Merigar, Shang Shung Edizioni is under new management in both the administrative and editorial areas. This change is due to an economic deficit which has arisen in the last few years. The new editorial director is Prof. E. M. Terzano, assisted by Tiziana Gottardi. The new director is preparing a project to restructure the publishing house, which will be explained in an interview to be published in the next issue of The Mirror.



## Six Liberations

continued from page 3

which mean, respectively 'view', 'meditation' and 'conduct'. The *chodpa*, which explains how one is to behave in daily life, also related to *jethob*, so that when, for example, an explanation is given of how we should carry out a practice of transformation there will also be an explanation of how the practitioner should behave in the post meditation phase, in the *jethob*. First of all one carries out the transformation, and visualizes oneself as the deity, developing the sense that one is the deity. But then there are different ways in which one applies the *jethob* at different levels of tantra.

In the Yogatantra, the whole visualization is dissolved back into the seed syllable and then that too disappears into emptiness. But in the Anuttaratantra, or higher Tantra, after you have completed the formal session of practice, everything around you is still seen as the mandala of the deity, all sounds are heard as the mantra of the deity, all the thoughts are considered the state of mind of the deity, and so on. That is the correct way of behaving of the *jethob* of the Anuttaratantra. And the practitioner tries to remember to behave in that way at all times.

As regards the *jethob* in the Dzogchen teachings, masters give their students the advice to try not to get distracted at any time. Some people even get distracted while they're practicing contemplation. But usually people are a little less distracted during the moment of the formal session of practice. But as soon as they finish doing the practice, it's very easy for them to get distracted. So the instruction for the *jethob* in Dzogchen is to try not to get distracted and to continue in the state of presence.

But when one has real knowledge and finds oneself in that state, then it becomes *nyamshag nyimed* which means 'non-duality of *nyamshag* and *jethob*'. Another term for this same state can be 'total contemplation'. For a practitioner who is in this state of total contemplation there is no distinction between *nyamshag* and *jethob*, between meditation and post-meditation. Such a practitioner is always in the state of total presence.

Then one can speak of *tingdzin chenpo*, 'Total Contemplation'. And if one has reached that experience, then one is in the single state, the state of *rigpa*. That is the state of Samantabhadra, the primordial state.

We generally give a name to the primordial state, we give a name to this condition. But the reality is that we have to actually reach and get into that state, the state whose condition is perfected from the very beginning. This means that our own condition is perfect from the very beginning. That condition, self perfected from the beginning, is

what is meant by the term 'Dzogchen'. Many people translate Dzogchen as 'The Great Perfection'. But the use of the word 'great' in this context is not really correct. When we say 'great', it automatically implies 'small', and how can there be a small perfection? It's true that in general the Tibetan word *chen* does mean 'great', but the meaning of *chenpo* isn't only 'great', it can also mean 'total'.

So Dzogchen really means 'Total Perfection'. This describes the reality of our true condition. You mustn't speak of Dzogchen as if it only referred to the teaching that has that name. People generally say things such as: "I follow the Dzogchen teachings", or "I'm a Dzogchen practitioner", and so on, as if they regarded Dzogchen to be only the teachings with that name. It is true that Dzogchen can mean a teaching, and if we speak specifically of the Dzogchen teaching, then of course one must understand that what is being referred to is a teaching. But if we just use the term 'Dzogchen' on its own, it is not so clear what is being referred to. Are we talking about the teaching of Dzogchen or the state of Total Perfection of Dzogchen?

The truth is that Dzogchen is really our own state. But since we don't understand that, since we don't find ourselves in the state of Total Perfection, then we need the Dzogchen teachings whose methods exist to enable us to discover our state of Total Perfection. Dzogchen is nothing other than we, ourselves: our own totally self-perfected state.

Then there's another term that indicates that from the very beginning we are enlightened or realized. But again, the word 'realized' is not so precise, because to say 'realized' implies getting somewhere, doing something. But in the state of Total Perfection there is nothing to realize in that sense: from the very beginning our condition is already totally perfected.

The same is true when we speak of 'enlightenment': there is in fact nothing to enlighten. If we take a lighted lamp as an example of the condition of our state, there's nothing to enlighten in a lighted lamp: it's nature is already light, enlightenment. That is how our state actually is, already illuminated, like a lamp that is already lit from the beginning. So there's nothing to enlighten.

Why, then, do these terms like 'to attain realization', 'to reach enlightenment', and so on, exist? In the Dzogchen teachings it is explained that even though our condition is enlightened from the very beginning, we have nevertheless fallen into *marigpa*, and lack the knowledge of our real condition. This

lack of knowledge is what has created dualistic concepts. Instead of understanding our real non-dual state, we interpret reality as divided into subject and object. And as soon as we enter into that concept, that already is *samsara*, and we begin to create all kinds of karma, creating all the potentialities of karma.

We create one karmic seed and then another, and then another, so that everything becomes continually heavier for us, and we create more obstacles and more *marigpa* – more fundamental misperception of reality. We're always going in that direction, lacking the knowledge of our own true condition. The teachings exist in order to enable us to reverse this continual descent further and further into ignorance. Through the teachings, instead of falling further into the usual *samsaric* vision, we turn our situation around.

And the way we talk about turning this situation around in the Dzogchen teaching is called *ru-log*. *Ru-log* means when you are going in one direction, and you turn around. Turning back one finally finds the origin, and that origin is the state of *zhi*, the primordial base, that we talked about. One reverses one's *samsaric* vision and finds oneself in the condition of the base.

The process of purifying and eliminating all the *marigpa* we have accumulated, can be called 'realizing ourselves', or 'enlightenment', but that fact is, nothing has ever changed from the very beginning in our true condition, in our primordial state. That is what is meant when we say in Dzogchen that our state, our true state, has always been perfect from the beginning.

But we have to understand the method by means of which we can find ourselves in the true condition that really was fundamentally pure from the beginning. That is the final purpose of the Dzogchen teachings. And that is what is meant when we speak of our condition being 'enlightened, or perfected, from the very beginning'. When we actually find ourselves in that condition we don't rely on effort or anything like that. In fact in relation to the Dzogchen teachings there are said to be 'ten things that no longer apply', ten things no longer needed in the state of Dzogchen. In Tantrism, for example, the practitioner visualizes a meditational deity. But in Dzogchen, the form of the deity is unnecessary. Another of the ten things that no longer apply is the principle of karma, and the list goes on.

This certainly doesn't mean that at the relative level these things don't exist and are not useful. But in the state of Dzogchen itself, these things no longer apply. This is like the situation in which we have a phys-

ical body and suffer hunger which we know is ultimately unreal hunger, yet we nevertheless also know we have our karmic vision so, even though we intellectually understand the unreal nature of things, they nevertheless exist for us at a concrete level.

But when one really has knowledge of the principle of Dzogchen, when one has the state of Dzogchen, then one is beyond these ten things. It means that we no longer need these things – in fact for the person who has knowledge, they no longer exist.

When we talk about the vision of beings, in general, we talk about three types of vision – *samsaric* vision of ordinary beings, the vision of practitioners on the path, and the vision of realized beings. The first of these visions is that of a being who is in *samsara*, and who is totally conditioned. For such a person everything they see is karmic vision. They produce karma, accepting and rejecting things, and suffer through their attachment.

A practitioner who is on the path, on the other hand, may intellectually understand that all phenomena that arise to him or her are unreal, and so at least during the moment of practice when they're in a state of contemplation, they will no longer be conditioned by dualistic vision. Their vision is based on their experience. Some practitioners may develop experiences through the method or practice, and thus their vision is different from the karmic vision of ordinary beings.

The third kind of vision is that of totally realized beings. For such beings everything is pure vision, all dimensions are a pure dimension. Why is that? Because they don't have any karmic causes to have karmic vision. And they have *tagpa rab-jam* which means 'infinite pure vision'.

But there is one point that you have to understand concerning this pure vision of enlightened beings. Since there's no karmic cause, we say that they don't have impure vision. But that does not mean that an enlightened being can't see impure vision. They can see it, but they don't have to see it through the karmic causes. They are not conditioned by the vision.

A totally enlightened being has all the qualities of complete wisdom. Such a being may find before them infinite beings who all have the various qualities of their different conditions and visions. A realized being can perceive the vision of all these various types of beings. If that were not the case, an enlightened being couldn't help somebody who is in *samsara*. So you mustn't understand this in the wrong way.

An enlightened being is no longer dependent on action, effort, and so on. And furthermore, the fruit, realization, is not

continued on page 13

## Dzogchen Building Permit Settled

TSEGYALGAR'S  
BUCKLAND LAND

From the *Shelburne and West County News*

"The long-running disagreement over building permits for a gate, storage shed and meditation structure off East Buckland Road is at an end.

The state Land Court issued an agreement for judgment last week, November 9th. That judgment orders that the permits, originally issued on April 12th, 1991, be reinstated 'notwithstanding the decision of the Buckland Zoning Board of Appeals, dated March 25th, 1995.'

The agreement goes on to state that the 'plaintiff-applicant shall have the right to construct said structures and that the plaintiff shall seek no further relief in this action.' The agreement was signed by Thomas Lesser and Joel Bard, attorneys for the two parties.

There are no stipulations attached to the document regarding any potential future building on the land, nor regarding the town's right to appeal permits for future buildings."

## NEW GAKYILS

### SWITZERLAND

*Yellow* Christina Von Geispitzheim (Zermatt)  
*Red* Max Roth (Bern)  
*Blue* Felice Kung (Haliberg)  
*Blue* Lobsang Zatul (Horgen)  
*Secy* Christina Von Geispitzheim  
Tel. 028/673826

### AUSTRIA

*Red*: Isabella Ernst  
*Yellow*: Dr. Horst Gelter  
*Blue*: Irmgard Pemwieser  
Newsletter (A-Brief):  
Stephan Peddi  
Editon Tsaparang (Secretary):  
Oliver Leick  
Address:  
Isabella Ernst  
Brunnengasse 34/12  
1160 Vienna  
Austria / Europe  
Tel: +43 1 408 30 16  
E-Mail:  
Stephan Peddi  
100255.473@compuserve.com

## ERRATA

In The Mirror, issue #32, The Singapore gakyil was incorrectly designated as Buenos Aires and the Argentina gakyil was incorrectly designated as Tashigar.

We also neglected to give credit to Tsering Wangchuck, a thanka painter from Tashi Jong, for the painting of Jomo Memo.



The following interview took place in Santa Fe, New Mexico, July 16, 1995.

**Lidian:** I thought you were very skillful in making a link between feminism and some traditional Buddhist concepts. Those knowledgeable about Buddhism were probably better able to understand it. What kind of responses have you had from the feminist communities?

**Anne:** I've had more responses from Buddhist communities. I think it's percolating in the feminist communities more slowly. I wanted it to be a book that Buddhist women could read but also one that feminists who didn't particularly connect with Buddhism would read. I'm not sure how successful that aspect has been. I did have an article in a well respected academic feminist journal of philosophy, "Hypatia". I'm very encouraged that the article was accepted there because it basically is a synopsis of what I had to say in the book about mindfulness. I've just met a woman who teaches feminist studies and anthropology. She used the book in a course on feminist theory to look at some of the gaps in feminist theory, and said it was fantastic, and that the students loved it! They were really ready to look at some of the problems in feminist theory that I raised. She is a fairly recent PhD, and told me that people who are really schooled in contemporary feminist discourse basically have too much invested in it and wouldn't be open to my questioning some of the fundamental ideas. I would also hope that introductory Buddhism courses would use it along with traditional texts. The book has been reviewed in "The Women's Review of Books", by a Buddhist feminist woman who is not particularly involved with feminist theory. Feminist studies are strong in history and anthropology and somewhat in psychology, but religious studies are a kind of minor domain. Literature, of course, is one of the strongest of the feminist fields. Feminists are very suspicious of religion in general. They tend to see religion as a major problem for women, and they don't see it as a resource.

**Lidian:** What has been your response from male readers?

**Anne:** One thing about writing a book is that there are no really good feedback mechanisms. When I do bookstore talks and workshops, about seventy-five percent or more of the people are women. Men come and seem interested in the cross-cultural aspects. Several years ago in Berkeley, when I was still working on the book, I gave a talk on the issue of the cultural experiences of persons east and west – the different ways in which people inhabit their bodies, experience their relationships with other persons, to their own cultural past, and to the natural

environment. One young man came up to me afterwards and said, "I think this is very interesting", and so forth, "but I don't see why it's only an issue for women. It seems to me it really is an issue for men. So what's so particular about it for women?" I think it also relates to issues men

are thinking about, but it's women today who are articulating questions around identity and for whom these issues are closer to matters of life and death than for many men. I've not had negative responses in general from men. It's not an anti-male book; maybe some feminist writing is. It has yet to be reviewed by a man, to my knowledge. I encourage people to write and tell me what they think because my whole idea with this book was to stimulate some conversation. It's not a book that says "this is how it is". It's an invitation to have people think and develop more, which is the beginning of an enormously complex and exciting process. I hope people will write. I have an E-mail address, or they can write me at Rice University. The women I meet are really enthusiastic, but it's hard to find out what people really think. They'll say yes, I like it, or relate it to something. Also, the first time (reading it), people don't know. It takes a while to figure out what they really think.

**Lidian:** Your discussion of Yeshe Tsogyal was largely limited to the context of a specific ritual practice. You indicated you didn't see her much as a "role model" for Western women. I was wondering, because for myself, I have found her life story to be a great inspiration, although the term "role model" is not what I mean. For instance, she hints (as she is about to leave earthly existence) that her long-term relationship with Atsare Sale may have had some abusive aspects. Also, we know that she experienced rape. These are very powerful and timely issues for women today. It is about how we as Westerners let our personal story enter into practice. Traditionally it is not so important, and yet in the *nam thars* there is also a personal story being told.

**Anne:** Certainly, Yeshe Tsogyal's is an incredible story, and it is incredibly inspiring. I guess I'm still working in my own thinking. I think we can use all the inspiration we can get. But I think something goes awry for

me if there is too much thinking of this person as a role model. Those words for me mean very specific things. They suggest a sameness about her situation and ours, when actually our situations are in many ways different. Yes, she was in relationship, but in a context which is totally

Tsogyal. She said it was that she preserved the dharma of her Guru (Padmasambhava). I tried to draw her out on the issue of Yeshe Tsogyal as a woman, and she wasn't interested in that at all. In some ways we're making a new kind of ideology of Yeshe Tsogyal as a model for women or

as possible. This involves being aware of where culture does make a difference. The fact that it is modern times, the fact that we are in the West, the fact that we are women or men. There are bound to be ways that it is different for us and we need to accept that. People, myself included, are somewhat nervous about that because we feel we're not doing it right or we're not getting the "real" teachings. I struggled to learn Tibetan so I could hear it from the mouth of Lamas because I didn't trust anybody. I wanted the real thing as authentically as possible. Now I feel part of what makes it authentic is not just going to India and securing the teachings in Tibetan, although that's fantastic and I'm grateful I had that opportunity, but by understanding that the present situation is different for us. In the book I'm trying to articulate as clearly as possible what I think those differences are. I hope that kind of thinking is part of our conversations about practices and teachings. People are thinking about this. It's an important part of practice. It doesn't mean that emptiness or rigpa isn't as true for us as it is for Tibetans. It does mean recognizing that we're bound to hear and enter into the practices in a somewhat different way. We live in our bodies differently. We live in the world differently. We relate to nature differently. We struggle with connection differently. All of those things matter somehow. There is something transcendent here, but I don't think "transcendent" means that much unless we really understand who it is that experiences transcendence. Our very need to even think about this comes out of something very specific to our time and place. Then we try to reassure ourselves that we don't have to worry about cultural differences. Some people say that all we have to do is follow what the text says and everything will be fine. But I think we also have to be very aware of our situation as Western men and women. Writing the book was for me an important way of cultivating this awareness.

**Lidian:** For me, just following what the text says doesn't eliminate the possibility of certain misconceptions and misunderstandings. So we must learn how to understand correctly. In the West is that we have tremendous intellectual capacity. Often we grasp the intellectual aspect and mistake it for real knowledge.

**Anne:** Yes indeed. That often means we stifle ourselves, neglecting to look at parts of us the texts don't seem to describe. Norbu Rinpoche is wonderful in encouraging us to recognize our real condition. He always emphasizes this. Many years ago in Conway, he said that there are many doors to the Teaching of Dzogchen, so it's not that you have to make yourself fit into the Teaching, but you have to feel

continued on page 18

## An Interview with Anne Carolyn Klein

### A Discussion of her Book *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen: Buddhists, Feminists and the Art of the Self*

by Lidian King



Anne Klein with her pet bird, Ms. Mani Padi

unlike our own. She was a very powerful woman, and the types of relationships that she would have had were not what we could consider typical, even though the abusive aspect is something other women experience. After all, she bought Atsare Sale with money she earned by raising someone from the dead, so that's already quite a different kind of relationship. She didn't have a nine to five job, and she didn't have children. She had her own extraordinary struggle and she was an exemplary practitioner. She sat on a glacier, she did all kinds of marvelous things. We probably won't have opportunities to display our own fortitude in those same ways. We have to find our own ways of expressing our capacity for practice and compassion. It's going to take a very different form. I don't totally deny here the concept of "role model", but I feel sometimes people who describe her this way are not really acknowledging the immense differences in how we would manifest our practice, whatever level it may be. I can't imitate Yeshe Tsogyal, but I can be inspired by her. That is the distinction I'm making between "role model" and "figure of inspiration". I know for many women it's enormously important that she's a woman, and that the female body is displayed as an icon of wisdom and compassion. I don't think that was important in the same way for Tibetans, men or women. In my interview with Ani Mu Tso, I asked her what was the most important issue about Yeshe

a support for female identity in ways that she was not in Tibet. In general, this was not an issue for us until recently, either. Nonetheless, today it is important for us to acknowledge and honor that she is a woman. It means something to us because of the modern twentieth century prism through which we necessarily connect with her and these practices.

**Lidian:** One of the things I've heard Padmasambhava said to Yeshe Tsogyal is that if a woman has strong aspiration, her female form has a superior capacity for practice (although both men and women are equally suited for practice).

**Anne:** I've heard that from other Nyingmapa teachers. My sense is there is something profoundly true about that. Perhaps it is to do with the way in which tantra works with the body and the energy and the openness of the female body, the openness of the enlightenment and of compassion. Energetically – this is just a wild guess – these are somehow compatible. It would be interesting to investigate.

**Lidian:** It seems to me that the essence of the teachings transcends our cultural limitations.

**Anne:** I think this is another delicate point. There's no question for me that we can and do have profoundly significant connections with the teachings and the teachers. At the same time, I think that there's no way our connections with those teachings are not affected by our culture. So there is something true about your statement, but there is also a point at which to be very careful, because I think the way our generation originally got involved with Buddhism, it was as if culture didn't matter at all. I feel that we need to be aware of cultural differences, which aren't good or bad, but come about because we are – of necessity – products of our time and place, and geography. I think it's part of the process of mindfulness to make as deep and integrity-filled a connection with the teachings



# Meeting the Great Bliss Queen



## Meeting the Great Bliss Queen: Buddhism, Feminism and the Art of the Self

by Anne Carolyn Klein  
Beacon Press, Boston,  
Massachusetts 1995

Anne Klein reports that *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen* began as a "kinesthetic feeling" rather than a set of ideas. As one who loved reading it, not least because of the important issues Klein raises, I have a sense that the book rose out of the whole being of the author. Klein shares ideas within the context of her own experiences, and her emphasis on dialogue, which she calls the "key to the processes of growth," invites the reader participation, and conveys caring and respect.

As I read (and re-read) *Meeting the Great Bliss Queen*, I was able to put into words (and later clarify the sources of) some nagging questions in my life as a Western woman Buddhist practitioner. Two of these are: why do I continue to experience pain in close relationship, even though I and the other are practitioners? Why do I sometimes feel I shouldn't want to figure out what my life's work is? Klein valorizes these and other related issues, and this is a great relief. She has cleared a safe space, provided a context for Western women Buddhist practitioners to engage in what could be considered Psyche's work of sorting the seeds of cultural assumptions and potential cultural misreadings.

"By understanding the different ways in which North American and Tibetan cultures construct persons as connected or separate, we can better understand what a Western woman can appropriate from Buddhist traditions, how she might change or contribute to them, and what the limitations are of using them as a resource."

*Meeting the Great Bliss Queen* is written for both Buddhist and feminist audiences, and is presented as a conversation rather than a comparative study. Its central question concerns the nature of the self: "What does it mean to be a self, and especially what does it mean to be a self who is a woman in a

particular culture?"

The book is divided into three sections. In the first part Klein outlines the different ways personhood and womanhood are constructed in traditional Tibetan versus modern Western cultures. We arrive at a clear picture of the profoundly different challenges faced by Tibetan women and contemporary Western women. In the second section, three aspects of developmentally-oriented Buddhist view – mindfulness, compassion, and the non-existence of a permanent self – are brought into conversation with feminist thought. Klein emphasizes the unique function of mindfulness in the context of women's healing; since mindfulness has an aspect of furthering self-acceptance, this can be tremendously empowering for women. In the third section, Klein considers Yeshe Tsogyal and the Great Bliss Queen ritual in relation to the previous dialogue, proposing new directions for both feminists and Western Buddhists.

I focus the remainder of this review on two topics Klein discusses that particularly impact me. The first is that successful interpersonal relationships are far more crucial to psychological well-being in the West than in traditional societies where more pervasive forms of connection exist. Tibetan Buddhism, which arose out of such a traditional society, does not address the factors that produce healthy intimate relationships, nor does it address the power differential between men and women today.

"As one of my students observed, 'If a woman is living with an abusive man, someone who beats her, in a situation where she has no independent means of financial support, how is emptiness going to help her?' It won't. But it won't have to either. No doubt one of the crucial shifts Buddhism will undergo in the West is that it will no longer be asked to bear the burden of all personal and social ills, as it did in its traditional Tibetan context. The permutations of this shift are difficult to predict, because Buddhist discussions of self and selflessness, of mindfulness and compassion, have never taken account of gender as a category of analysis. Who within the twenty-five hundred year old tradition has analyzed Indo-Tibetan theories and practices connected with emptiness in the context of how they do or do not speak to women?"

Relationship issues coming up during meditative practice, Klein states, often need to be dealt with on their own terms, using one of the many effective psychological healing modalities

continued on page 14

## Six Liberations

continued from page 11

considered to depend on anything else. In many other teachings realization is considered to be something produced. This is true especially in the Sutra teachings. There, for example, when one recites the dedication at the end of the practice, using the verses that were composed by Nagarjuna who was a great master, the verses are naturally in accordance with view according to the teaching of the sutras. And what do these verses say?

'May all beings through the two accumulations of merit and wisdom, arrive at the realization of the two sacred dimensions, the *Dharmakaya* and the *Rupakaya*, which are produced by their accumulation of merit and wisdom.'

So you can see that from the point of view of that level of teaching, realization is considered to be produced by something. But in the Dzogchen teaching that concept is not valid. The view of Dzogchen is it's beyond that concept. It is considered in Dzogchen that if the state of realization is there from the very beginning, what is there to produce? There is no need to manifest realization by diminishing obstacles, and so on. It might seem as if something is produced, but actually, nothing is produced.

And so the fruit which is the *Dharmakaya*, *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya*, the three states which are the qualities of the realized beings, are not produced by something. They are the inherent condition of the *Ati*, the primordial, real condition of the individual, present from the beginning.

Then the text says: *chal*

*drol chenpo*. *Chal* means that this knowledge pervades everywhere. *Drol* means 'liberation'. *Chenpo* means 'total'. So that's the meaning more or less of this introduction: total liberation that pervades everywhere.

Then at the end there are the three A's, which represent the *Dharmakaya*, *Sambhogakaya* and *Nirmanakaya*. *Dharmakaya* is easier to understand, it's our own state of emptiness.

The *Sambhogakaya* refers to the way in which, from this state of emptiness, an infinite number of manifestations can arise like the reflections that manifest in a mirror. It is important to remember here, though, that the arising of manifestation is not something separate from or other than our own presence and non-dual state of *rigpa*.

And the last A represents the *Nirmanakaya*. In the Dzogchen teachings the state of the *Nirmanakaya* is very important, more important, in fact, than the *Dharmakaya*. This is because, on the path, the *Nirmanakaya* is that which we have to integrate. *Nirmanakaya* includes all of our vision, pure and impure, and in the practice of Dzogchen we don't renounce or reject impure vision and accept pure vision.

The understanding is that all the manifestations of both pure and impure vision have the same base, so they are both the qualifications of our own primordial state. So we remain integrated in that state which includes pure and impure vision. This is the most difficult of the three *kayas* to work with, but to do so is the most important aspect of the path. That is what is meant in principle by these three A's in the text.

And this principle is the

same as the three *Ra*'s at the end of the Song of the Vajra. The first *ra* represents the *Dharmakaya*, the second represents the *Sambhogakaya*, and the third represents the *Nirmanakaya*. This is not just a nice idea. We really have to integrate all of our experience, all our feelings and sensations and so on, in this way.

When we sing the Song of the Vajra, we find ourselves more in the state of the *Dharmakaya*. When we integrate with the sound of the Song of the Vajra, we are in the state of *Sambhogakaya*. And when we finish we must integrate totally in the state of *Nirmanakaya*.

At least, that is what one must do if one really has prepared oneself well to be able to integrate. It's like going for a swim, for example. If you want to go for a swim you normally don't jump straight into the water with all your clothes on. You take off your clothes and put on your bathing suit, preparing yourself well. You could compare that to coming out of the state of the *Dharmakaya*, the state of emptiness. Then you jump into the water of our normal dimension of existence, with which you must integrate.

When you finish the Song of the Vajra it's not that your contemplation is finished; continuing in the state of contemplation in every aspect of one's life is the most important part. This is the way that a practitioner of Dzogchen must understand things, and if one understands what I have explained today, one can understand how the practice of Dzogchen is different from other forms of practice, which is very important in order to be able to follow the teachings in the right way.

## A.S.I.A.

continued from page 6

Hotu's village full of appreciation for this Master's kindness and hopeful that we may succeed in bringing this new school project to fruition in 1996.

At Qabcha, we met one of the three principal officers of the Province to whom we presented an overview of work completed and in progress, the problems encountered and our plans for 1996. The officer, on behalf of the Provincial Authorities, promised to cover the cost of all the school equipment at Dangche and confirmed their wish to collaborate in all of ASIA's efforts in support of Tibetan culture. One of the first projects will be to train Tibetan teachers so that they may be employed in the small village schools ASIA will construct in the future in the region of Amdo. The proposal is to train them in the school during summer and winter vacations.

Two days later, we left Qabcha and went to Kumbum to visit the monastery of Tzonkaba, and from there on to Xining to say goodbye to our friends. Finally, we arrived in Peking. A few days later, Phuntsok left for



Lhasa and I returned to Italy.

Certainly 1995 has been a very important year for the development of the Association. The school at Dangche is at a good point. The road to Khamdogar is complete and also the work on the school at Samdrob Shang is complete. The Adoption from a Distance Project has been a major project resulting in the educational sponsorship of more than one hundred and fifty children. 1996 promises to be even more intense, with a very full program of work projects, apart from bringing the Dangche project to fruition. In March, we begin work on a school and hospital in the region of Dzamthog in East Tibet. In April, we will begin construction of Hotu Zamba's school, along with the school at Galening and Khamdogar. We also have to recommence work on the restoration of Ralung Monastery in

Central Tibet. Our resources are still too meager to bring all these projects to fruition, but with everyone's help, we will succeed a little at a time. We ask that you send a contribution in one of the following ways:

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Information about our projects may be obtained from:  
ASIA, Via S. Erasmo 12,  
00185, Rome, Italy  
Tel/Fax: 0039 6 700200880



## Bliss Queen

continued from page 13

we Westerners have available. During the shift Buddhism will undergo in the West, she notes, as we women practitioners observe our experiences with relationship issues, we will have the opportunity to contribute to a modern elaboration of how the dependently-arising self is constructed. This will include historical, racial, gendered, political and social causes that have not been considered before.

Secondly, Klein raises a series of major points regarding Western women and practices of compassion. Chapter 4 is entitled "Gain or Drain? Compassion and the Self-Other Boundary." I recommend it

to all Western practitioners. Klein states: "Santideva's assumption (in the Four-fold Method) that self-cherishing is the central human problem, his enormous emphasis on relinquishing all sense of personal entitlement in order to serve others — is a place of danger for many women in Western culture."

Santideva's wonderful method worked in Tibet because Buddhist traditions see no dichotomy between a sense of relatedness and a sense of personal effectiveness. This is in contrast to the West, in which there is a tendency to put "autonomy" and "relationship" in opposition. In addition,

"... whereas in the West compassion and relatedness are often said to be the province of

women, perhaps reflecting women's adaptation to a situation of powerlessness, in Tibet the monastic scholars and meditators were the ones who purveyed and cultivated the compassion they saw as empowering. In cultural terms they were powerful before they undertook to cultivate love or compassion."

Klein does not suggest Western women practitioners give up these practices — far from it. Her goal is to help readers understand which circumstances make compassion and relatedness empowering and which do not.

In the West, to be compassionate often means to serve others at one's own expense. This has been particularly true for women. Whereas in Tibet a mediator can be powerful, forceful and compassionate, in the West women sometimes hear Buddhist compassion as the injunction to give up oneself. Referring to the original texts, we find this is not what the tradition says. Just being aware of the possibility of misreading is important. Klein adds: "Women in Western cultures who choose to cultivate compassion need also to find ways to increase their capacity for unique self-expression, a form of self-care little noted in Tibet."

In summary, Klein recommends to Western women practitioners: study the texts and practices; take a good look at one's life and experience in this culture; see what one needs (for example, personal power or strength, psychological autonomy, self-esteem, unique self-expression); then see if it (or support for it) is present in the tradition. Chances are it will be; if not, a bridge can be built. This kind of awareness, she says, is part of practice and scholarship. It is a part of really taking some responsibility for ourselves and our tradition.

Joan Goodman

The Great Bliss Queen is now available in paperback for \$14.95

## Jamgon Kongtrul

continued from page 5

chen lnga):

1. *The Store which Encompasses all Knowledge* (*Shes bya kun khyab*), a presentation in verses of the various Buddhist paths. Later on Kongtrul wrote a commentary to the root text in three volumes, *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (*Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho*).

2. *The Store of Precious Instructions* (*gDams ngag mdzod*) in twelve volumes. It contains empowerments and instructions related to the eight schools of Tibet.

3. *The Manira Store of the Lineages of Transmitted Precepts* (*Bka' brgyud snags kyi mdzod*) in six volumes. It contains the mandala practice of thirteen tantric divinities, both of the ancient and new traditions.

4. *The Store of Precious Treasure* (*Rin chen gter mdzod*) a collection in sixty volumes of all the "earth treasures" and "pure visions" cycles that Kongtrul could find in his life. It represents his great effort of bringing some order in the "chaos" of the terma literature.

5. *The Special Secret Treasury of Advice* (*Thun mong min gang mdzod*) in seven volumes. It contains the secret heart teachings rediscovered by Kongtrul himself.

In addition, Kongtrul wrote about Indian and Chinese astrology, medicine, grammar, rites, philosophical commentaries, and provided countless words of advice for his students. He wrote more than ninety volumes, undoubtedly, was one of the greatest geniuses of Tibetan literature since its beginning, although he used to say that he wrote his works "in the break between meditations" during his retreats.

In his *History of the Nyingma School*, Dudjom Rinpoche, one of the greatest masters and scholars of the Nyingma school of our century, describes him with these words: "If we examine Jamgon Kongtrul's career, which produced over ninety volumes of wonderful scriptures, it is as if he spent his whole life as an author. Nonetheless, if one thinks of his teaching and propagation of the empowerments, guidance, esoteric instructions, recital transmission and so forth of the ancient and new sutra and tantras, and transmitted precepts and treasures, it is as if he spent his whole life teaching and propagating. And if one investigates how, beginning with the preliminary yogas of accumulation and purification, he experientially cultivated the stages of creation and perfection associated with inconceivable myriads of mandalas, it seems as if he passed the length of his life in a retreat house sealed up with mud.

Likewise, if one considers how Jamgon Kongtrul expanded the new monastic communities and how he renovated many old establishments, commissioned inconceivable numbers of new representations of the Buddha

body, speech and mind etc., it is as if he passed his whole life diligently engaged in the sphere of work and activity. In these ways his career was inconceivable, within only the reach of those who are truly sublime."<sup>3</sup>

Moreover it has to be pointed out that Kongtrul had a fundamental role in the political life of Eastern Tibet that in the nineteenth century was very agitated. Together with Jamyan Kyentse Wangpo, one of the most important masters of his century, he gained the respect of the Lhasa generals posted in the east and together they became the natural leaders for the distressed people of Sde dge.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, Kongtrul and Jamyan Kyentse Wangpo together with other important figures of the century such as Chogyur Lingpa, Mipam, A-Dzom Drugpa, Petrul Rinpoche, Shardza Trashi Gyaltzen, set in motion a non-sectarian movement (*ris-med*) that gave a remarkable impulse to the cultural, political, and spiritual life of the country. They preserved, revitalized and propagated instruction lineages that encompassed all the aspects of the Buddhist teachings, counteracting the sectarianism and bigotry that were risking to destroy the entire cultural heritage of Tibet.

<sup>1</sup>Referred by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in his foreword to *Myriad Words* the first volume of the translation of Kongtrul's *Encyclopedia Shes bya lun bya*, by the International Committee founded by the V.V. Kalu Rinpoche (Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca New York, 1995). On Jamgon Kongtrul's life see Gene Smith's introduction to Kongtrul's *Encyclopedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture* (3 vols.) Ed. by Lokesh Chandra New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture 1970, pp.1-78; Jamgon Kongtrul's *Retreat Manual* (Transl. and Intr. by Ngawang Zangpo), 1994 Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York.

<sup>2</sup>Tibetan Khampa Industrial Society Bir, Kangra, H.P. India

<sup>3</sup>Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*. Translated and edited by Gyurme Dorje with the collaboration of Matthew Kapstein, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1991, (2 Vols.), I. p. 862.

Giacomella Orofino was initiated into Tibetan Buddhism by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in 1976 and since then has never abandoned her insane passion for Tibetan religious history and literature. She has two sons and a husband who do their best to distract her from her studies but, as she has a very bad character, she goes on stubbornly. She is the author of some very modest publications. At the moment she is a lecturer on Tibetan Buddhism at the University of Rome.

## SPECIAL PRACTICES

"... 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

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 honoring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the long-life practice of Guru Amitayus, Union of Primordial Essences.

12th Month, 18th day

Wed. 7th Feb. 1996

This day is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen master, Long-chen 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

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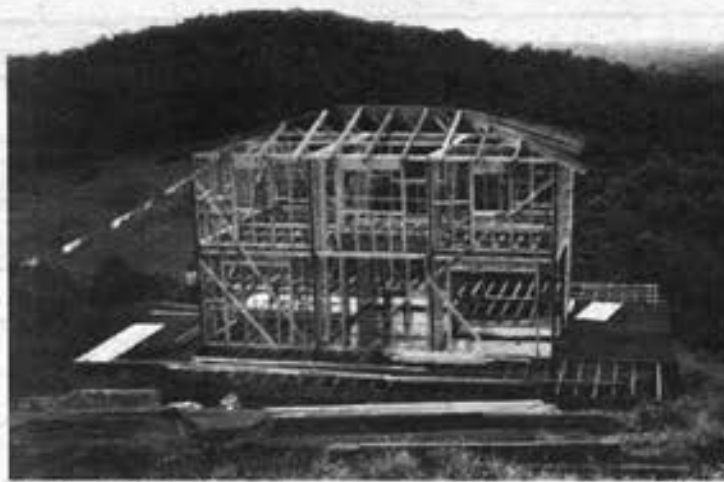
## Sky Dancing

continued from page 1

the retreat. Kevin Hayden drove his truck up the hill and offloaded the last of the wood for the beams. We are certainly fortunate to have such neighbors.

The house project continued side by side with the retreat preparations. Jim and Joe worked non stop in order to lay out the site, prepare the foundations, install the large metal poles which support the building, and then work with the wooden bearers and frame of the house. It grew high into the air quickly, and the view was incredible from the site right over the sea and surrounding hills.

A team of workers grew with Luciano from Italy, Alex and Peter from Australia, Sean and Jerry from New Zealand, Robert from the United States coming and going over the time. When the weather was too wet to work on the site, the builders constructed a camp kitchen, some camp toilets, and bathrooms, and worked on the shed



The framed cabin at Namgyalgar.

JOE ZURYLO

which was to become the Gonpa. they had little time for relaxation, but when they did they retired to the verandah of Pam's Store in Tilba Tilba and this seemed to sustain them through their heavy work schedule.

Our Master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, arrived in Australia at the end of November and travelled north to rest and recuperate near Byron Bay in the warm weather by the sea. On the 20th of December he travelled by car down to Namgyalgar. Most of the workers at the retreat site were able to take a few hours off

and travel north to meet Rinpoche and Rosa for a picnic at a spot by the sea where there were many kangaroos. We were delighted to see Rinpoche again looking so well after his rest. The picnic turned into a feast after which we accompanied Rinpoche back to the house where he will stay near Namgyalgar. It overlooks the sea and the mountain behind and if he walks a few meters he can see his retreat house on Namgyalgar rising up as it takes shape on the mountain.

By Christmas day, the retreat was almost prepared. Our

neighbors Kevin and Pam Hayden asked Rinpoche and all the Dzogchen Community to join them and their family for a Christmas day picnic on the lake at their nearby property, Killarney. Everybody left their duties and went over for the afternoon to sit by the lake, enjoy a barbecue, and to get to know our neighbors. Later Kevin Hayden wrote a poem for us about Namgyalgar. It was a very nice Christmas present.

The retreat began on the 26th of December and Rinpoche taught the *The Essential Tantra of the Six Liberations*, a terma of Rigdzin Chanchub Dorje, as he had taught in Merigar earlier in the year. He gave the transmission of this teaching over the seven days of the retreat. During that time, Fabio Andrico taught Yantra Yoga and Adriana Dal Borgo taught the Vajra Dance. Rinpoche also spoke about the seriousness of the teaching and how important it is to study the Santi Maha Sangha. He told us that he will stay in Australia until April and will hold an Easter retreat at Namgyalgar.

Following the retreat, Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo began teaching a ten day Vajra Dance retreat. Fabio Andrico began teaching a ten-day Yantra Yoga retreat. Many people stayed on at Namgyalgar to do these courses and to study for the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level exam.

There are many people here from all over the world. They are here from New Zealand, Holland, Norway, Argentina, Chile, Italy, North America and Hawaii. Grit's Sky Dance Cafe has been open day and night on the edge of the hillside to cater for all, for builders, for workers, for people studying, for Rinpoche, and also for the late night coffee drinkers who have nothing better to do. The weather has been wet, wet, wet, and it hasn't been easy, but the atmosphere remains sweet and there is a dedicated group of practitioners here who are interested in keeping the teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche alive in Australia and in the world. May they be successful!

## Book Reviews

continued from page 5

Gyatso's *lam-rim*, *Essence of Nectar*. It presents a gradual development based on a classification of people according to the levels of intelligence or capacity: lower, medium and higher. A person of lower capabilities forms the initial perspective of wanting to attain higher rebirths in cyclic existence. The driving force for this approach is a fear of suffering and the quest for happiness. The meditations include awareness of death, how one's future rebirths are projected by good or evil deeds in this life, the misery of the lower forms of life, mindfulness of the principles of evolutionary actions, seeking a place of refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Community, the recognition of the Dharma as the actual refuge (conventionally, the teaching; ultimately, the truths of the path and cessation); and purification of one's past misdeeds.

The person of middling capabilities forms the intermediate perspective of attaining liberation from any of the forms of life within cyclic existence. The driving force of this approach is the quest for personal peace. The meditations, permeated with disengagement or non-grasping with respect to all conditioned states of being, include pondering the shortcomings of cyclic existence, disengagement from them, following ethical principles, and developing calm abiding of the mind and discriminating awareness.

The person of highest capabilities forms the higher perspective of attaining full enlightenment. The driving force for this approach is compassion for other beings' condition in cyclic existence and the bodhicitta-altruistic resolve to awaken for others' sake. The meditations begin with

recognizing that all beings have been one's mother, up to the development of a genuine Bodhicitta, the meditation on emptiness united with one-pointed concentration needed to remove subtle impediments to omniscience, the practice of the six perfections, and the four ways of gathering disciples.

The types of meditation in which the persons of lower and middling capacities engage must also be taken on by the practitioner of higher capacities, but with the higher perspective. To take on these meditations is necessary because, without the clear recognition of suffering, it is difficult to feel compassion for others and form the altruistic resolve to awaken. This book is basically a survey of principles and does not delve into the details of the practice. They are presented separately in a kind of *lam-rim* liturgy and may be unsuited for Western use. The Dalai Lama does not give details since, among the six type of masters, he represents "the master of all" whose task is to provide students with the right perspective on the path, leaving the details to be explained by instructors. *Lam-rim* mainly embodies the way of renunciation, and although His Holiness includes a presentation of the tantric path, he does because the Universal Way is traditionally accepted as the foundation and ground for tantric practice.

Elio Guarisco

### The Jew in the Lotus

by Rodger Kamenetz

Harper, San Francisco 1994

Thoughtful, provocative, difficult: these are a few adjectives which aptly describe Rodger Kamenetz's *The Jew in the Lotus*, a comparative study of two of the world's great and enduring religions. The central theme of this

book is a meeting between the Dalai Lama and Rabbinical representatives of different streams of Judaism. Considering the recent diaspora of the Tibetans, the conference was ostensibly convened to draw from the Rabbis the unique qualities of Judaism which allowed it to survive 2,000 years in exile. Perhaps more interesting to the student of Tibetan Buddhism – and particularly those of Jewish descent – was the theme which nagged the Jewish contingent. Why have so many young Jews been so deeply moved by Buddhism?

The philosophical positions of the six or so Rabbis selected to meet the Dalai Lama are very disparate, and seemingly petty on occasion. Their customs and costumes are sufficiently alien to strain tolerance in the eyes of a more secular Jew. It took fifty pages to get hooked but then I found myself enjoying the unique pleasure of a good read.

For the Rabbis, the issue of Jews becoming Buddhists was painful. Losing talented young Jews through conversion to an Eastern religion was perceived as a great loss. The author quoted the deceased Hassidic Rabbi, Schlomo Carlebach, who likened contemporary Judaism to a family house on fire. He frequently

asked young Jews who had strayed to stay and rebuild. Fittingly, considering the teachings of non-duality in Buddhism, the issue was far more grey than black and white for most of the Buddhist/Jewish individuals interviewed. These "Jubus", as the author labeled them, included Alex Berzin, Pema Chodron, Allen Ginsberg, David Rome, and Joseph Goldstein. Hinju Ram Dass was also interviewed. These seekers often cited the similarities of the religions, and in many cases claimed a dual allegiance.

Nevertheless, it was clear that many of the Jubus had felt something was lacking in Judaism. In Buddhism they sought deeper spiritual experiences than they had encountered during childhood encounters with Jewish institutions. Some of the Rabbis presented evidence of deep mystical traditions within the Jewish religion which included teachings similar to Tantra, some of which seemed to incorporate emptiness into the concept of God. Many of the Jubus and even the Dalai Lama wondered why these traditions were largely inaccessible.

Kamenetz does an excellent job of tracing the historical trends and noting the massacres of Jewish mystical teachers during the pogroms. Have the Jewish mystical lineages been broken or are they isolated? Perhaps most importantly he traces the understandable evolution of non-religious secular views that have dominated American and Israeli Jewry in this half century after the Holocaust. Parallels between the Jewish and Tibetan experience are obvious.

There were many provocative aspects to this book. Kamenetz traces the origin of the Jewish star and provides evidence which supports the theory that Jewish and Buddhist teach-

ers met and influenced each other in the distant past. He also offers examples of hidden streams of Jewish mysticism.

Perhaps in response to the dialogue between the Dalai Lama and the Rabbis, several schools of Jewish meditation have opened in the United States. Teachers, "Jews in the lotus", whose pasts include impressive training in various schools of Buddhism, may be creating another stream of Judaism, or reconstructing one that has been lost.

Is it wrong to incorporate techniques of meditation into Jewish religious practice? In my mind the answer is clear. Although some within the Jewish community have reacted defensively to the crisis of conversion – and view immersion in meditation practice as a threat – others have preferred to accept their experience and limit dogmatic judgment. The Jewish religion has survived and remained vibrant for two thousand years by embracing, not rejecting. I doubt the iconoclastic ultra-religious will renew Judaism. It will more likely be Jubus who return to provoke a great flowering within a tradition that had largely lost contact with its inner-spring. If so, perhaps the Dalai Lama may deserve credit.

In the absolute sense are we Jewish or Buddhist or any other label? Once I asked Norbu Rinpoche this question. I said, "Rinpoche, are you Buddhist?" He responded, "I am Norbu." For the student of awareness the book leaves many questions unasked. Is there a correspondence between mystical Judaism and Dzogchen? Perhaps, upon receiving the ten commandments, Moses asked God how to describe the divine BE-ING to the children of Israel. God responded I AM THAT I AM.

Michael Katz



RODGER KAMENETZ



## Spiritual Backwater

by Zeljka Jovanovich

Although our country is very near Italy, the trip back can now take more than three days, due to political events which are impossible to understand. In peacetime, the journey used to take less than an hour by plane or twenty-four hours by train. My son, Cvetko and I are currently in our third day of the journey, after the SMS II level retreat in Merigar. So, we have plenty of time to think, practice and write. The train is full of people, and is already a few hours late.

At present, it is quite difficult to organize teaching retreats here. Still, in May of 1995, a Kagyud teacher, Lama Ngawang and his student Lama Chopel, managed to give some teachings concerning Avalokitesvara and Padmasambhava practice. Thus, people without transmission were able to receive instructions, also on Ngondro. Because Italy is farther and farther away from most of us (financially as well as geographically), new people who are interested in the teachings find it difficult to join us in practice.

We do group practices according to the calendar. Some practitioners do individual retreats and, since we don't have a retreat place, these can only be done in flats where we normally live. Sometimes, if a practitioner lives in a complicated family situation, we offer him/her our home for a retreat. Thus, my room was often used for intensive practice. As a single mother of three children, I have received a lot of help from other practitioners, enabling me to do retreats and go to teachings while they took care of my kids.

The Vajra Dance is a problem. We have a beautifully painted mandala that is not being used because very few of us know the Om A Hum dance, and even fewer know the Vajra Dance. We hope to be able to invite a teacher sometime soon. Anyway, in a place so near a war zone (about 100 kms away), we still do our best. It is possible to relax and try to be present and aware. As Rinpoche says: "You cannot say you were not able to practice; it would mean you were not able to live".

The train has stopped again - nobody knows why. Relax in the presence of slow movement, slow motion. Is this a joyful enough ending for the news from a practitioner returning home?

A month and a half later . . . Peace at last! We have to see what it really means. In our small Community, we have started studying SMS base level in a small group of five to seven people, sometimes more. There are usually interesting discussions concerning various topics, like suffering, karma . . .

A funny thing happened after one of our SMS sessions. One of our practitioners asked me to show her how to do prostrations. I showed her and she tried a few. My 6-year-old twins, Ana and Marija, started imitating her, easily doing dozens of prostrations in front of our altar. Some days later, Marija was taking a bath and I saw her doing prostrations in the bathtub. I had to stop her for fear that she might choke, lay-



Zeljka and Cvetko. N. ZEITZ

ing face down in water. So I have decided to do Kumar Kumari with them instead.

We meet regularly for group practices. The Precious Vase is being translated for the Community, and Manjushrimitra's *Primordial Experience* for a publisher. It would be false to say that things are wonderful, elating, enchanting. In a place like ours, with war just finished, things are tough and life is quite difficult and demands a lot of skill just to survive. So, if a person finds time and space and mindfulness to do just a bit of practice, that's quite an achievement. I think, if we have some practitioners and they keep practicing, that's really great.

In Yugoslavia we have an old saying: "If brothers join their strength, even lead can float on water". So, if we, Vajra sisters and brothers, stay together in tough times, we expect miracles to happen, the best of them all would be continuous practice until realization.

May our boat sail the rough waters until enlightenment!

## Sweet Smell of Snow

by Naomi Zeitz

Winter. Conway. Silent, muffled movements.

The scraping of the plough's big shovel outside my window as it pushes the snow back and forth - high piled walls of the cold, white, frozen water in our parking lot.

It is an enforced, external stillness that encourages the internal quiet. A Christmas postcard for Merigar rests on my desk, of Italian monks spinning on the ice, joyous in the rapture of the snow. Black robes turning on white. The ecstasy of cool, white, gently falling space. Turning, turning, turning the air.

We live simply here. Wrapped in protective layering of all kinds, shuffling in to make pots and cups of steaming tea, retreating to our rooms for morning practice, re-emerging for a pancake or two, then down to the spacious, awaiting offices to do work filled with the love of this Community, and this living, breathing transmission of wisdom.

And outside falls the white, fluffy stuff coating everything with its cold majesty.

We snuffle. Cough. Swear we'll go for a walk today and not become computer slaves. At least to the post office. Or maybe a little yantra.

Rituals of all forms. Individual and group. Unique moments rising and falling between us, through us, around us.

Driving along the gently turning country roads, sighing with the beauty of the stark naked branches and the soft pink evening light of winter in Massachusetts, I remember now a place I haven't been since childhood. Re-acquainting the countryside like that of my youth, countless hours spent in the wilderness of my mind - bundled in gigantic costumes, running, rolling, laying in, building with, and eating the sweet, cold, white stuff that fell in our faces like a soft kiss.

Getting progressively hotter packed in suits as we ran from one glorious activity to the next. A carrot for the nose. A real eskimo's

igloo. Hitting the puck across the ice. Making snow angels sprawled out flailing arms and legs, spraying the white stuff everywhere. No repression. No fear. Sheer experience.

Angels we were. We try to continue. To renew. To rediscover. Meet again that state of the spontaneous joy of each new day as it dawned. We awoke warm with sleep, anxiously pulling aside the curtain to see if our dear friend was still there, available for our pleasure in its manifold potentiality.

And it is our potentiality now we are discovering. The natural, spontaneous freedom and joy of those cold, winter mornings can be revisited. It is there. Behind the veils.

Outside the snow falls. The clock ticks. Yeshe watches a movie downstairs. The new gekos is full of plans. Jim sits by the fire at Catharine's house. Kyu waits for a transfer to join us. Bodhi drives over just to see if he can.

I feel the Master as deeply as the snow. In his stillness. In his spontaneity. And in the grandeur of his generosity.

And in this funny, yellow schoolhouse, as the darkness

## AUTUMN MORNING EXACTLY

*When things finally get precise  
inside the circle*

*taste of old spit in my mouth  
and in the ears a space of expectation  
landscape moving in symmetrical spirals  
train neither moving or not moving*

*my thighs deep down on a seat  
colorglowing flowers outside and trees  
getting quickly older  
a man in boots in a moat  
already old*

*air ageless young  
disentangling from rests of mist  
deep green wiping my eyes  
birds cows everything  
kind of slow  
sun promising behind distracted clouds*

*back into me into hands with pen  
point touching paper leaving a trace  
wrists disappearing in cuffs of dark leather  
and white wool  
tongue finding a morsel of food behind teeth  
breath breathing as soon as you turn to it  
heart nowhere  
But you know where it is.*

Dorothea Franck, September 1995  
in the train Amsterdam-Den Haag

## Passages

### BIRTHS

Uma Saraswati, a baby girl, was born in New York City on January 9, 1996 to Miranda Simmons and John Dhannon.

### MARRIAGES

Natasha Sinicina and Glen Eddy were married on September 23, 1995 at Tsegylgar in Conway, Massachusetts.

### APPOINTMENTS

New gekos at Tsegylgar: Neil Murray

Secretary of Tsegylgar resigns: Our wonderful friend and secretary, Jim Valby, has resigned as secretary at Tsegylgar as of January 1st, 1996. We are all grateful for his dedicated service and wish him well in his venture as a full-time translator. Thanks Jim!

Kathy McGrane will be secretary at Tsegylgar for the next three months.

### DEATHS

Bajic Miodrag, former husband of Zeljka Jovanovic, died at the age of 38 on December 25th in Yugoslavia.

grows deeper - we each take our nesting places and go into the night as it beckons. As we must. To dream our dreams. Looking for signs.

We are journeyers all. Kicking up the powdery, cold, white stuff, walking down the

road, not too worried anymore. No more to travel alone, longing unfulfilled. It is the sweet smell of snow now here in the Conway hills of winter. Real sweet.

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## What is this Wound

continued from page 19

he had treated many persons who were mentally ill. Such was the strength of the assumptions and preconceptions I had about lamas and spiritual teachers that I had a really strong resistance to understanding what he was saying, and it was some time into his lecture before I was able to understand that he was telling us that he himself had been mentally ill twice due to the incredible stress and anguish caused, on the first occasion by the destruction of the Chakpori Medical College in Lhasa, Tibet, of which he was the director, and on the second occasion by the difficulties he encountered in India when he tried to reestablish a teaching center for Tibetan Medicine there. The simple frankness with which he acknowledged his difficulties without either attempting to belittle them or to dramatize them was a lesson as powerful as his teachings themselves, and in no way undermined his "authority" as a teacher; in fact, in my eyes and in the eyes of others present, his stature was increased.

When I acted as a translator for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, he would often refer people to me when they came to him after the teachings asking for clarification of a particular point. Sometimes it was easy, sometimes it was difficult for me to explain to them what they needed to understand; but this depended as much on their attitude to the situation as on my capacity or knowledge. When I commented on this to Rinpoche, he remarked that in deciding whether or not one should teach a particular person, one should be aware of many factors, not the least of which was whether the person whom one was considering teaching was really willing to hear the teaching from you. Some of the people whom Rinpoche sent to me for an explanation were really unwilling to hear such an explanation from anyone other than Rinpoche himself, even when Rinpoche personally sent them to someone else. I learned from this that if the person who is to receive teachings from you is not satisfied with you as the teacher, even if the teachings you give are perfect, the person receiving them will never really be satisfied with what is taught to them.

In the Dzogchen Community we are privileged to follow one of the greatest Dzogchen masters to have lived in this century. It is clear that as student/teachers it is hard for us to live up to the example of such a great master. While that is a challenge to which we must rise if the teachings are to take root in our culture and if the lineage is to continue in the future, a further challenge faces the whole Community. As the Santi Maha Sangha training proceeds we must create a culture in which we are supportive to, and accept our fellow practitioners as teachers.

In many ways to practice is to teach. Our example speaks

louder than our words. And in many ways we teach what we ourselves need to learn. Learning and teaching, in fact go together. If we are not willing to learn, we can never teach. And if, when we teach, we are not learning at the same time, our teaching will be as dry as dust and we will not be in touch with the persons with whom we are trying to enter into communication.

Everything works best when there is no sense of a teacher and someone being taught, no separation. Only when inflated notions of self-importance on the part of the would-be teacher don't get in the way of what is being taught, and resistance on the part of the student doesn't get in the way of the process learning, is there the possibility of the kind of deep, relaxed communication built on mutual trust in which transmission can really take place.

So, "What is the wound that made this heart into a fist?" According to the Buddha's second Noble Truth, in the same way that it is the act of grasping that makes a hand into a fist, it is grasping (at events, thoughts, feelings, sensations, experiences and the sense of a fixed self or identity), that is the cause of our suffering. The good news is, however, that, as the sticker I saw recently on a car window said: "Pain is inevitable/suffering is optional."

Whatever first caused the wound that closed our heart, making it into a fist, the ongoing suffering, the continuing anguish and mental confusion arising from all our injuries is self-maintained; if we can take responsibility for ourselves and open our hearts through letting go of grasping we can bring that suffering to an end.

## Board of Directors

continued from page 7

and synthesis of ideas was to develop a set of specific objectives for the Institute out of which plans for action will develop. These are enumerated on p. 6.

We went on to review the projects which are currently in progress or in start-up phase. (Several are joint projects with our sister organization in Italy, Istituto Shang Shung.) These include: The Vairocana Project (translation of fundamental Dzogchen tantras), translation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's *The Light of Kailash*, The Bonpo Catalogue Project, Merigar Library Catalogue Project, and Tibetan Folk Traditions (dance, cooking, conversational language).

Preliminary plans were made for our next general meeting in Conway in March, 1996. We hope that many people in the Community will continue to offer their support, both financially and with their time and energy, to help our organization achieve the real benefits that Rinpoche has envisioned.



On the beach in Thailand with Rinpoche.

## Shifting Tides

by John LaFrance

Living on the rocky coast of Maine in the northeastern United States, the force of the ocean is always present. Some of the planets' highest daily tides are recorded in this area. Ships navigate otherwise small rivers on the changing ocean currents. In the course of a few hours, the juxtaposition of storms and lunar events can cause the ocean to crash over the land, only to be replaced, a short while later, with wide expanses of beach and previously hidden rocky islands.

Until recently, my life seemed to reflect the periodic crashing and receding tides. Emotions, attachments, agitation, and anxieties crashing against some unknown barrier, interspersed with periods of aversion, boredom, indifference or depression. Swept along on a wave of opinions and concepts. Neither was extremely satisfying. The larger flow of changing forces mostly unnoticed. Living without a context was my life before practice.

During my brief association with Rinpoche and his transmission, another kind of shifting tide has emerged. Three years ago, when I first attended a Dzogchen retreat with Rinpoche, I was caught in the throes of emotional changes. I was thrashing about without a clue of the causes and wrapped up in anxiety and fear. Then the Master identified the problem - attachments, caused by putting too much importance on things. And he offered a solution - specific practices. Clear, direct, simple. So I began the process of effort to learn the practices, to find time for them, and to continue when nothing seemed to change. My confidence in the Master was my guardian against failure.

Then, almost immediately thereafter, *Santi Maha Sangha* began. The study and practices became more intense although much of the time the meanings were elusive and the practices mechanical. With the threat of emotional upheaval still seeming close, the persistence to practice continued to arise from my confidence in the Master.

Out of a seemingly enormous negative event, the threat to Rinpoche's health, another ally emerged - devotion. My heart opened in a different way from anything I had ever experienced. Out of the opening, devotion to the Master spawned determination.

Anxieties and attachments still seemed to hover, waiting for an opportunity to reassert themselves. But now persistence and devotion, combined with the concrete awareness of passing time, made the practice and study ever more important.

Along the way the Sangha emerged as an encouraging, positive force. It seemed that any time I had a question or confusion I would receive some helpful explanation, many times indirectly, from a Vajra sister or brother. Although I doubted my readiness for *Santi Maha Sangha*, I was encouraged to continue.

I decided on relatively short notice to go to Merigar for *Santi Maha Sangha*, creating a big shift. Worldly requirements became secondary to study and practice. Sometime during this period of intense preparation, despite the trepidation of being tested, a settling confidence seemed to develop. I believed that I was "doing my best", just as the Master had exhorted, and I experienced a different kind of relaxation. I loosened the grip on expectations and results.

However, nothing prepared me for Merigar. Seeing the Gonpa for the first time was transfixing. It sits like a jewel on a protected pinnacle. Staggering: The light, the color, the beauty and the graciousness of the hosts created another dimension. Then I saw the Master, strong, healthy, and complete. He was sitting and transmitting in just the right spot. Something happened. I heard it from others also. Something was changing.

Now, back amidst the changing ocean tides, I have a glimmering of what has happened. The quiet tide of dharma is replacing the crashing tides of attachment and aversion. Looking back, I can see that the changes didn't happen all at once. Very slowly, with practice, and assistance from the Master and the Sangha, the grip of attachments is weakening. My flickering awareness of calm and presence create other realities, other possibilities.

Unlike the tides of emotion which appeared to be so powerful, the tide of dharma is less apparent, yet infinitely stronger. Rinpoche's teaching is panoramic and deep. It is like the planetary forces that control the tides, rather than the changes on the surface. It is providing a context for my life that didn't exist before. Slowly, my life is better.

The changing surface is losing its fascination. Developing in its place is a quiet awareness that every obstacle and hindrance can be overcome. However, opportunities for practice must be created and time cannot be wasted. All benefits come from the Master. What good fortune!

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## Interview

continued from page 12

who you are and find your particular door into the teachings. You can't make yourself up to be something you're not. You can't pretend you fit into some teaching category. I think this is an extremely important message. I really hear that, as, among other things, permission to honor, acknowledge, and be aware of your cultural conditioning and all the things that go with it. That's the only place that rigpa can manifest because that's where we are and what we are. So I've always appreciated that very much. It's not always emphasized, especially when you first come to a Buddhist teaching. In Tibetan Buddhism especially, there's a real sense that one has to just walk in and let it be revealed. Let the teacher guide one through it, not only because the teacher must guide one, but also because Tibetan culture and all the things that come with it, the images and so forth, are so amazing. So I feel I just have to follow my teacher. There's real truth to that. But there's also this other truth of finding our own ground. I don't mean in the supreme ultimate sense, but our own ground in terms of who we are socially, culturally, age-wise, gender-wise, those kind of basics, and relating to the teachings.

**Lidian:** I think your book does a wonderful job of weaving difficult Buddhist concepts in and making them really relevant. In Dzogchen, mindfulness/concentration is not so much spoken of as is the rigpa awareness and presence. How do you see differences in the rigpa consciousness or presence and the more traditional mindfulness/concentration practices?

**Anne:** In the book I talk mainly about mindfulness in the Sutric sense. I think, of course, in the Dzogchen context mindfulness is not a separate practice. It comes

together with the capacity to discover and see one's own nature and be that nature with presence. Presence already involves a mindfulness. That mindfulness, if we call it that in Dzogchen, is not dualistic and is not about looking at an object. The mindfulness that is cultivated in the Sutric tradition, which by the way, I understand as an extreme-



ly important training for a would-be Dzogchen practitioner, is more dualistic. If you can't maintain focus on an object dualistically, you're probably not going to be able to stay non-dualistic either! So, I don't in any way say, 'Oh, those poor things, they do dualistic mindfulness!' In fact, some of the Dzogchen preliminary practices also involve forms of dualistic mindfulness. Ultimately they're not dualistic, if you're doing them right. That's one big difference in Dzogchen: not looking from the subject side to the object side, but being with an experience in which one understands one is recognizing oneself. I've been translating a (Bonpo Dzogchen) text with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche called *The Authenticity of Innate Awareness*. It makes a distinction between mindfulness in Dzogchen and Sutric mindfulness on the basis of the kind of grasping or holding to the object, associated with the latter. Once mindfulness looks at an object it has to hold to it. Rigpa, however, has the quality of not grasping. It's more open and expansive and the locus of its focus is not limited to some small thing. It

has no delimited location in the way Sutric mindfulness does. These are certainly different, although one can be very helpful for the other. What I wanted to talk about in the book were the issues of being in the body and self-acceptance and not of being overly swayed by ideals or other people's ideas of what you need to be. I thought the Sutric mindfulness was in some ways sufficient. I also wanted people to know about Dzogchen, but I didn't want to be inappropriate in terms of saying too much about it.

**Lidian:** I felt your linking of discovery/development<sup>1</sup> with the feminist perspective of essentialist/constructionist<sup>2</sup> worked very well.

**Anne:** I had many ideas and finally thought I could talk about most of them in terms of the difference between discovery and development. It took many years to realize I could also connect that with essentialist/constructionist positions in feminism. Basically, I came to see these as two ways of practicing and two ways of relating to yourself. One of the other things I was trying to do, and am still trying to do in workshops and in my own life, is work with the different strengths of discovery/development. Do I accept myself or not? Do I try to be different than I am or do I just open up my heart and see all the riches that are there? Can I use both these strategies to the best advantage – mindfully noticing when it is appropriate to make fierce effort and when it is more suitable to relax and let be. It's one of life's major koans, really, choosing wisely between these. I think both are important ways of relating to yourself. There are times when it is good to try to develop a new capacity and other times when it's important to realize how much you already have. It also seemed like those words, 'discovery/development', would make it possible to bridge these ideas to women who are not necessarily connected with Buddhism. In the meditation workshops, there are often women who know little of Buddhism who can do simple practices that speak to those issues. Then they use them to develop a certain type of strength. The idea is to feel strong in a way different from the 'winning-over-somebody-else' found in our culture. For women who are spiritually inclined and who felt Buddhism is foreign to them and don't see how it fits into their lives, I hope to help them at least connect with the strength that comes with a certain level of self-acceptance. Basically being able to be kind to yourself, warts and all. The practices (in the workshops) address these issues. Women often say that practice increases their confidence, and of course that's a major issue for most of us. I have a phrase that means a lot to me – 'traditional practice with a modern sensibility.' In other words, it's not about

changing practices. There's a lot that can be done in terms of educating our sensibilities, and developing a self-awareness about what I need to learn to help myself. Why am I really practicing? Yes, I would like enlightenment, but I would also like to communicate better with people, be kinder, more energetic and so on. We have all these agendas, whether we admit them or not, that we bring to practice. I think it's good to acknowledge them. Coming to practice and being aware that I have these issues enhances the possibility of them being addressed by traditional forms and practices. If I deny them or I am not aware of them, the door is closed and I'm sealing off part of myself as I'm doing a practice. That's not what you're supposed to do, but it happens very easily and is not something a traditional Tibetan teacher is likely to mention.

**Lidian:** Thank you, Anne.

<sup>1</sup> Some Buddhist traditions, such as Zen and Dzogchen, emphasize practice as a way of discovering what we already have. Other traditions, most Sutra practices for example, emphasize the importance of developing qualities such as compassion, wisdom, and calm abiding. The debate between which of these perspectives should be featured, often referred to as a debate between sudden and gradual systems of practice, has ricocheted around the Buddhist world for centuries.

<sup>2</sup> The major debate in feminist circles is somewhat analogous to this. Is 'womanhood' or 'the feminine' something that every female has, which need only be discovered as a kind of essence, or are all our experiences of womanhood and femininity constructed by culture, that is, developed through certain habits and patterns of history?

Anne C. Klein is Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, Rice University and she also teaches meditation outside the University. She has been a student of Buddhist thought and practice since 1970, and a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982. She welcomes responses to her writing: klein-a@ricevm1.rice.edu or 6100 Main Street MS-15, Rice University, Houston, Texas 77005-3008, USA.

very  
aware  
as we practiced  
in big sur  
of that visit  
fruit falling  
in the orchard  
may we tend it tenderly  
forever

steven goodman

## Real Mirror

continued from page 1

just before teaching, Tai Situpa and his entourage came to the site chosen by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for the building of a new stupa and did a consecration ceremony in the presence of many of the retreat participants. The thin winter sun and pale blue sky were a tranquil background for the billowing smoke rising from the offering fire and the bass tones of the prayers of the maroon-clothed monks rang gently out on the still morning air.

All those attending the teachings of H. E. Tai Situpa were moved by his clarity and thoroughness, his gentle sense of humor, his compassion and concern not only for all sentient beings but for the planet. We feel fortunate that he accepted Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's invitation and we wish to thank him for his generosity and compassion in teaching here. We sincerely hope that in the near future we will have the opportunity to welcome him once again to Merigar.



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## Seeing the Face

continued from page 4

sary. So for instance one should do one's yidam practice in a hidden way and keep the practice and mantra secret.

Furthermore, it is said that if we should find fault in our master or in our Vajra brothers and sisters that we should never make these faults public. All the substances (*duetsi*, *bdud-rtsi*, *amrita*, *Skr.*) and items of the practice of the secret mantra Vajrayana should also be kept secret, and if we have helpers in the practice we should also keep this secret. Even the time or routine of your practice should be kept secret. If our master or our Vajra brothers and sisters tell us something in confidence and ask us not to tell anyone then we should really respect that. Indeed, it is said that whatever the practice is in the secret mantra Vajrayana that its power and effect is much stronger if we keep it secret. It is also said that to reveal and explain the practices of the secret mantra Vajrayana to those who are not suitable vessels is a great fault. So these are the five root Samaya and it is very important to keep these, as I have just explained.

The remaining ten branch Samaya relate to perceiving our five poisons or the conflicting emotions as the five wisdoms. For us now at this stage it is very difficult for us to perceive our five poisons as the five wisdoms. But if we have a strong aversion to the negative emotions which are these five poisons, then gradually we will be able to eliminate them. Before actually realizing the view, it is safer to consider the five poisons as negative and keep them at a safe distance. For

a Dzogchen practitioner who has been introduced into the nature of mind, then it is possible to regard the five poisons as the five wisdoms. If one can see the essence of mind as *rigpa* then all of the five emotions are part of that awareness and we can see them as such. The meaning of *rigpa* is that pure awareness, which is the same as wisdom (*Yeshe*, *ye shes*). So even though we cannot realize that now, just considering that the five poisons are the nature of the five wisdoms is enough.

The five nectars: stool, urine, semen, blood and meat are generally considered as impure. If we regard them as having the nature of nectar (*duetsi*, *amrita*) then we should be able to accept them. Although worldly people consider such substances as impure, if we remain in the view then we regard them as nectar. So we see the five substances as the five nectars, as the five wisdoms and as the five Buddha families. Since it is said that we should regard all phenomenon as pure and equal then such substances are pure, aren't they? Up until this point I have explained the five Samayas which should be kept.

Then there are the Samayas where there is nothing to be kept. This is the situation if one remains in the nature of mind. There are five of these. In the state of Dzogpa Chenpo in which we are beyond keeping Samaya, four aspects are present, and together they constitute the fifth Samaya:

1. *Mepa tamtsig* (*med pa dam tshig*), the Samaya which is non-existing; 2. *Cig pu tamtsig* (*gCigpu dam tshig*), the single or only Samaya; 3. *Chalwa tamtsig* (*phyal ba dam tshig*), the Samaya of seeing things in the state of all

pervasive equanimity;

4. *Lhundrup tamtsig* (*Lhun grub dam tshig*), the Samaya which is spontaneously arising or existing.

When we remain in the nature of mind then these four naturally exist in this natural state. If we remain genuinely in the natural state, is there anything like fabricating existence or non-existence? In that state there is no distinction between pure and impure or anything like



that. In that state there is no distinction between existing and non-existing, substance or non-substance. That is the single Samaya. As we stay in that state there is nothing to focus on. That is the Samaya of equanimity. As we remain in the natural state the kayas and wisdom will be spontaneously accomplished. And these are the four Samaya of that state. So, in brief, we remain in the natural state in which the four Samayas which are not to be kept, which are beyond keeping, are completed. For those practitioners who do mind practice then the most important thing is to remain in the natural state. If we remain in the natural state then we don't have to do all sorts of practices visualizing deities etc. because these are already included in that natural state. In the same way recitation is not necessary because it is already included in that natural

state of mind. It is said that all sounds are empty and that the nature of mantra is empty, so mantra is included in remaining in the state of the nature of mind. I have spoken these few words about Samaya, and I would like to request you to keep your Samaya as much as possible. All of us have received lots of empowerments, and the masters who have given us our empowerments require us to keep our Samaya. Actually, it is not really according to the tradition to explain Samaya after having given the Empowerment (as has happened in this particular circumstance).

One must train in this at all times, not only in the Empowerment. If one receives the Empowerments and keeps the Samaya accordingly, it is like going unobstructedly to Enlightenment.

Khenpo Namdrol Rinpoche was born in 1953 in Kham, East Tibet, in a village three days' horse ride from the Palyul monastery. His family traces its history back to the royal house of Derge, and even further back to Gar Dampa, the famous minister of Songtsen Gampo in the 7th century. Khenpo Namdrol left Tibet for exile in India in 1959, and at the age of 13, he joined H. H. Penor Rinpoche's monastery in Mysore, Namdro-ling, just a few years after it had been founded. There he served for some time as attendant to Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, who first encouraged him to pursue a path of study. Khenpo Namdrol has received teachings from a number of renowned masters and khenpos. In Sikkim he studied with Kyabje Dodrupchen Rinpoche and then for five years with Dzogchen Khenpo Tsoendru. Later, he was to continue his studies with Khenpo Rinchen and Khenpo Dazer.

In 1978 he returned to Mysore,

and along with Khenpo Tsoendru, he started the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute, the study college at the Namdroling monastery.

Khen Rinpoche has received many teachings from H. H. Penor Rinpoche, whom he has served tirelessly over the years. He also received a number of transmissions from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, who visited the Namdroling monastery on three occasions. It was during his first visit that Khenpo Namdrol was enthroned as khenpo.

Khen Rinpoche has a special interest in the Guhyagarbha Tantra, and his quest to receive deeper teachings on it led him to travel to Tibet. There he met and discovered a very close connection with H. H. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok receiving many teachings from him, and being invited by him to teach his students. Khen Rinpoche played the leading role in arranging the meeting between H. H. the Dalai Lama and H. H. Jigme Phuntsok in 1990, and accompanied H. H. Jigme Phuntsok on his tour of the West in 1993. He has become a lineage holder of H. H. Jigme Phuntsok's terma teachings.

Khen Rinpoche is the senior khenpo at the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute, which has become the largest Nyingmapa study college in exile, with over 300 monks enrolled in courses, and a reputation for outstanding scholarship. At least thirty students there have now become qualified to teach the Sutras and Tantras, which stands as a tribute to Khenpo Namdrol's eighteen years of hardship, establishing and teaching at the Institute.

Khenpo Namdrol is among the most important teachers in the Nyingmapa tradition, and he looks forward to being able in the future to offer teachings in other Nyingmapa monasteries in the East, as well as in the West.

## What is this Wound

continued from page 20

If our heart has become a fist, what has happened to it? It has become hard, inflexible, and closed. By why did this closing come about? The question as it arose in my mind focuses this enquiry on a wound, asking what the wound was.

The details of the wound will, of course, vary from person to person, depending on the person's life history; but whatever the specifics of the particular wound, when we are wounded we generally try to protect the wound, to prevent further hurt. Paradoxically, the contraction of the body/mind, of our whole organism, around a wound only causes us to suffer more.

Shrinking away from our hurt and from what we fear will hurt us again in the future, we close ourselves up, thus hurting ourselves, and ultimately others. Our heart becomes a fist, and we become unable to love, unable too to accept or to love those who try to love us. When we consider our ability to act on behalf of the teachings, we may feel deep down that we are inadequate to the task

because, when we are truthful with ourselves, we know that we have wounds that are not healed. Then again, the knowledge of our own woundedness is something that we may not feel able to openly acknowledge in thinking of ourselves as dharma teachers. And in presenting ourselves as capable of teaching others, we may feel that we cannot afford to acknowledge our weaknesses. Or again we may feel that because of our wounds we may be unable to meet the expectations others will have of us. (I use the words "our" and "us" here, assuming that my own experience may be similar to that of others.)

Ultimately we may feel that because we are wounded we may not be able to help others at all. But in some strange ways the wound, however it was caused and by whomever it was caused, is the best part of us. If we can stay close to the wound without shrinking away from it, we will not go far wrong. The wound is tender. That is why we try to protect it. If we can stop trying to protect it and are able to acknowledge it, the wound, through its tender quality, also connects us to others.

In societies where the

shaman plays an important role, the shaman has the function of a "wounded healer". It is the wound itself that enables the shaman to heal. Having suffered perhaps a profound illness, physical or mental, and having sufficiently recovered from it, the shaman is able to cure others.

Anyone who has engaged seriously over time in the practice of an art knows that it is from a certain sensitivity, really a vulnerability, as much as from strength, that creativity flows. Our ability to access and bear (as well as sometimes bare) our wounds is often part of our creativity. In primary cultures, it was (and is) through the direct experience of the shaman, who was gifted with a "divine" wound, that the songs and myths of a people were (and are) renewed for the changed times that the particular society moved (or is moving) through.

I am not suggesting that we should preoccupy ourselves with grandiose imaginings that inflate the importance of the details our suffering; nor am I suggesting that we should imprison ourselves in a victim mentality that compounds the grip of our personal story on our imaginations. Far from it. But I

do feel that the very (often wounded) heart of our personal dilemma as human beings, the central crux of our particular drama, can be the means itself through which we can reach out to help others, if we can find the courage, the emotional integrity and the honesty to work with our own situation in that way.

The life stories of the eighty-four Mahasiddhas certainly seems to bear out my suggestion. Though all of them became enlightened, all were very different as individuals. One common theme stands out in their history: it was through working with, rather than against, the particular propensity of each of them, the particular style of difficulty, or "wound", that they each came to enlightenment. None of them denied their own particular problems, rather they learned to embrace them and to use them as practice.

One of the meanings of the word "dharma" is, after all, "universal truth/law", and "To Thine Own Self Be True" is an old and familiar saying which, for me at least, doesn't imply faith in a self in the sense a soul, immortal or otherwise, but means that one should live one's life authentically, without pretense or false-

hood. Wisdom and confusion, nirvana and samsara are two sides of the same coin.

At the first conference on Tibetan Medicine, which was sponsored by The Shang Shung Institute in Venice and at Merigar, I attended a lecture given by the distinguished Tibetan doctor, Trogawa Rinpoche. As well as being a doctor, he is also a lama of the Nyingmapa school, and although he is not a monk, he chooses to wear traditional Tibetan robes and to keep his hair really short. He is an imposing figure, with his stern but kindly countenance, and a wonderful doctor, with an truly remarkable gift of healing. His teachings during the days of the conference in Venice revealed a quite extraordinarily precise and orderly mind. The way he carried out the pulse diagnosis was exquisitely delicate and sensitive. So when the conference transferred to Arcidosso and I attended a lecture by him on mental health, I was extremely surprised to hear him begin his teaching with these words: "I am qualified to teach about mental illness because I have personal experience of it."

At first I took this to mean that

continued on page 17



# What is the Wound that made this Heart into a Fist?

by John Shane

During the Second Level retreat of Santi Maha Sangha training at Merigar this autumn, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu explained briefly and in a very matter of fact way that since the students present that morning had passed the exam for the First Level, which includes a revision of the material of the Foundation Level Training, we were qualified, if we fulfilled some further commitments, to teach the Foundation Level of the Santi Maha Sangha training to others.

I looked up at the figures of the lineage masters around the Gonpa walls and then back at my fellow students seated around me. The Foundation Level contains some very powerful practices and some very profound teachings. I know just how great the aspiration of my Vajra sisters and brothers is, how hard they work for the teachings, and how much devotion they have to the master. Some of those who were present that day I know very well indeed, others less well, but I believe I know myself well enough to understand our common situation. And I have to admit that at one level it seems absurd that we students could in any way be seen as worthy of upholding the tradition passed on to us by the great masters who have maintained the lineage down the centuries.

Would any one of us claim to be without shortcomings? I would certainly not do so myself. Even if I wished to pretend to others that I was in some way different to how and who I really am – which has never been my intention – just opening my dharma notebooks and looking at the two sides of myself revealed there would quickly remind me just how much work I still have to do before I can say I have really integrated the teachings, neatly written on one side of my notebooks, with all the glorious tumult of my life as it is notated in my poetry and journal entries, on the other.

That there is a gap, sometimes a chasm, between my aspirations and my actual capacities and qualities is undoubtedly true. I know that I have a long way to go before I can truly fulfill the qualifications of a spiritual teacher as described in the Santi Maha Sangha texts. I would imagine that the same is also true for others in the Community. But at the same time, I know that I am not without capacities or qualities, and I know that my fellow students are not without them too.

We may aspire to be what we teach, but without exception, as every parent of small children certainly knows, we really teach what we are. In every circumstance our way of being communicates as much as the words we say. But when we speak of the Dzogchen teachings, which are concerned with transmitting a state of knowledge or awareness, then, if we do not have that awareness, if we do not have that state, what is there that we can transmit?

We can certainly communicate the details of methods taught to us to enable us to reach the state of contemplation, but who would have confidence in the methods we might teach if we ourselves showed no qualities of the state we claimed the methods could lead to? Here, of course, we come upon the difference between a teacher and a master.

But does this mean that those of us who do not abide in a state of continual contemplation, and are thus not masters, have nothing to contribute as teachers? When it comes to thinking of oneself as a teacher,

one's problems might seem the last thing that would be of use. But perhaps that is too limited a way of seeing things.

In the margin of one of my old notebooks, alongside my notes on the teachings given at a retreat held a few years ago, a phrase written in my handwriting in clear bold capitals jumps out of the page and catches the eye:

**"WHAT IS  
THE WOUND  
THAT MADE  
THIS HEART  
INTO A FIST?"**

I wrote those words at the end of a session of teachings at a retreat held in the 'cappanone', the big barn at Merigar that we used for the teachings before the gompa was built. I was translating into English during that retreat, and Rinpoche was teaching several sessions a day. The conditions in the barn were difficult. It was very cold, there were too many people for the amount of space available, and by the end of the retreat I was exhausted. I didn't sleep well the night before I wrote the phrase in my notebook, and despite the wonderful teachings I had been translating and all the practice we had done, I just seemed to feel closed up and full of obstacles.

Although, in retrospect, much of what I was feeling was just the passing pain arising from the prevailing conditions that would evaporate when those conditions expired, at the time I felt I was confronting a central knot of tension within myself that seemed to have emerged, contrary to my expectations, to confront me after years of practice and study. There seemed to be a stubborn resistance in me, a "fist" of closedness, tightly grasped to protect a central wound, a wound in my heart. My heart seemed even to have become this fist.

I always imagined that I might one day write a poem of which the words of that phrase would be the first line, but that hasn't happened yet, despite my having a few interesting shots at it. Although I never finished the poem, or perhaps because I never finished the poem, that one single opening line has remained like a Zen koan, an unanswerable question that has provoked me to go beyond the known, asking myself as I tried to complete the poem what the meaning of the phrase could be. So the question has been working in me for a good few years, and as I undertake the practices of the Second Level of the Santi Maha Sangha training and reflect on what it might mean for us students to teach, the question is still working in me.

So what does the phrase "mean"? A line of poetry generally does not have one clear meaning; its value as a symbol depends on its pointing to something beyond itself, and poetry usually aims at multiple layers of meaning, not just out of love of complexity for its own sake, but because the power of suggestion is stronger than any one literal meaning. The imagination of the reader, if it can be engaged, supplies a wealth of

*I offer my body speech mind to the Dharma King, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
In his heart resides authentic lineage of the twelve Primordial Masters  
He has shown me again and again,  
the emptiness and the clarity beyond coming and going  
May I recognize it during the Bardo of Dying*

*I offer my pure intention of bodhicitta to the Teacher, Lopon Tenzin Namdak  
In his heart resides authentic lineage of the twenty four Masters of Light  
He has shown me again and again,  
the single and unchanging state beyond hope and fear  
May I recognize it during the Bardo of Becoming*

*I offer my accumulated merits to Vajra brothers and sisters  
In their hearts reside Dakas and Dakinis of infinite dimensions  
They have shown me again and again,  
the four Immeasurables and six Paramitas beyond subject and object  
May I recognize it during this Bardo of Existence*

*As to this fat-headed practitioner full of pride  
small in experience and big mouthing,  
please extend your compassion to me before you leave this world  
that may I be saved from the confusions and terrors of Bardo  
And liberate this vision of the cycle of rebirth*

*As to this small-minded practitioner full of jealousy  
tiny merit and blinding to the mountain of virtues of others,  
please extend your compassion to me before you leave this world  
that may I be saved from the confusions and terrors of Bardo  
And liberate this vision of the cycle of rebirth*

*As to this obligation-bounded practitioner full of passion  
little practice and making plans and activities  
please extend your compassion to me before you leave this world  
that may I be saved from the confusions and terrors of Bardo  
And liberate this vision of the cycle of rebirth*

*As to this empty-handed practitioner full of ignorance  
lacking in understanding and always complaining  
please extend your compassion to me before you leave this world  
that may I be saved from the confusions and terrors of Bardo  
And liberate this vision of the cycle of rebirth*

*As to this big-bellied practitioner full of greed  
no realization and looking for more teachings  
please extend your compassion to me before you leave this world  
that may I be saved from the confusions and terrors of Bardo  
And liberate this vision of the cycle of rebirth*

*As to this small-hearted practitioner full of hatred  
no capacity to forgive others and wishing to be cared for  
please extend your compassion to me before you leave this world  
that may I be saved from the confusions and terrors of Bardo  
And liberate this vision of the cycle of rebirth*

*Through the power of your compassion and my sincere aspiration  
completely purifying my broken Samaya  
May we meet again and again,  
until I am saved from the confusions and terrors of Bardo  
And liberate this vision of the cycle of rebirth*

Gene Kim

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meaning that any one-dimensional approach to writing will automatically exclude.

When this one line arose in my mind, the habit of mindfulness, of paying attention to my own thoughts, and the habit of notation, of noting thoughts down without thinking about them first, worked together in such a way that I was later able to examine this raw thought. Editing is very important, but notation must precede editing, and the internal editor must be switched off to write well. There is a parallel here with the "letting be" involved in contemplation, and in fact mindfulness practice can be a powerful aid to the practice of creative writing, just as creative writing can be a profound aid to the practice of mindfulness.

When a few days after making the original note I looked through my notebook, as if examining my catch after a fishing expedition trawling the waters of a deep ocean, my attention was immediately drawn to the images of this phrase, and to the qualities of its sonority. The way a line sounds is very important to me. When spoken aloud that particular line has a certain ring to it, a

certain rhythmic cadence, and as I reread it there seemed to me to be a unity between this rhythmic cadence and the images, images that had formed themselves in an unpremeditated manner in my mind. I only thought about their meaning when I re-read the piece. Sometimes whole poems emerge in this way.

A hand is flexible, and can move to work in many ways. A fist, on the other hand, has more or less one purpose. A fist is a tight bundle of clenched fingers: it is meant for punching. Even just to show one's clenched fist is to make a threat of violence.

The physical organ of our heart is a muscle upon whose continuing flexibility our lives depend. The heart's ability to alternate freely between expansion and contraction is what enables it to pump the life blood to our brains and around our bodies. In the West we also consider the heart to be the center of ourselves, the seat of our emotions and of our feelings, while in the world view of Tibetan culture and many other ancient cultures, the heart is understood to be the seat of the mind.

continued on page 19