

THE MIRROR

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The Great Stupa of Merigar

by Raimondo Bultrini
(translated from the Italian by Liz Granger)

Saturday, June 15th, 1996. It will be a date to remember because on this very day the Dzogchen practitioners, the citizens of Arcidosso, the political authorities of the area where the Dzogchen Community was born in the early '80s, all took part in more than one magical event linked to the construction of the Great Stupa of Merigar.

After a brief meeting at the Yellow House with the town mayor, Attilio Marini, and the Prefect of Grosseto, Anna Maria D'Ascenzo, a long procession accompanied the Master and the authorities across the sunny fields towards the place where the Great Stupa will stand. The laying of the first stone is a customary ceremony in the West for public places, usually buildings destined to become headquarters, municipal buildings, theatres, etc. But this first stone was a bit special, as was the 'edifice' which it was inaugurating. On the stone were carved the Tibetan symbols for the Om, the A and the Hum, the three levels, the dimensions of existence, in fact, all that exists. And even the officials, though not with the same awareness



M. Logrescino

as those who for years have followed the teachings linked to these three sacred letters, had the sensation that something particular, something rather special, was taking place. The Mayor was wearing his tricolored sash at the laying of this symbolic stone and perhaps a few years ago nobody would have imagined that the local authorities not only would not have created obstacles and objected due to "scenic" or other reasons, but would have actually stimulated and been in favor of the construction of a monument which will be seen even from a great distance in the valleys around Mt. Amiata.

And this could perhaps be said to be the first magic, the wish of the inhabitants of the area who are certainly not Buddhists, to see the Stupa built. If, on one hand this wish was stimulated by economic interests linked to a type of religious tourism which is very much catching on in Italy, on the other, however, a close relationship at the local level, has, by now, developed between the Community and the local population. Exhibitions on Tibet are more and more crowded and on the same Saturday as the laying of the first stone of the Great Stupa, the new book by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche entitled 'Drung Deu Boen' was presented in the municipal library in the presence of the local authorities. Rinpoche reminded us of the importance of not letting ancient knowledge be lost in order not to risk—and this was one of his examples—ending up like the Etruscans, with museum pieces but without a real knowledge of the customs, the culture, the traditions and the experiences of daily life of these people.

Rinpoche repeated that he remained committed to hand down certain knowledge not only of Tibetan Buddhism but also of the culture which preceded it, the Bon religion before anything else, and that this last book was the most recent proof of this. He also said that during his recent trip to Tibet he had met many young people with whom he communicated in Tibetan while they replied to him in Chinese. Another signal of

a progressive decline in the culture of this population, by now hemmed in by a thousand million Han Chinese. For the rest, in many zones schools simply do not exist, and in other places, where the Chinese presence is greater, the Mandarin language is taught.

The second magic of this special day was the presentation in Italy, particularly Arcidosso, of an important book such as this "Drung Deu Boen", translated by Adriano Clemente ("my mouth and my arm" as Rinpoche described him). It was also magic because the book had been published by the publishing house of the Community, Shang Shung Edizioni, for some time in financial crisis, as a sign of recent recovery to return and offer to practitioners the precious texts which have guided them through the years.

But there was also another magic, much more "visible", during the ceremony held on the site where the Stupa will stand, located between the Gonpa, the Yellow House and the Barn which houses the Mandala of the Dance of the Vajra. At midday with the sun directly above the heads of those present, as the soon as the stone bearing the Om A Hum had been laid, a small cloud transformed into a rainbow. And after everyone had gone up the hill to the Yellow House, there was a thigle surrounding the sun.

In order to understand the hidden meaning of certain events, it is useful to quote the short and very simple talk which Rinpoche gave to the local administrators—who were quite unaware of the meaning of a

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Divine Dyads: The Ancient Civilization of Tibet

Synopsis of a Forthcoming Publication

by John V. Bellezzo

Divine Dyads is written to document the cultural history of Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho and gNam.mtsho. It is designed to stimulate interest and debate, rather than be a final chapter in the study of these key regions of the vast northern plains of Tibet. Divine Dyads paves the way for further investigation of this often ignored part of Tibet by creating a firm informational base. It is hoped that this work will be an important contribution towards understanding the diversity and complexities of Tibetan civilization.

Divine Dyads presents an unprecedented survey of the cultural history and geography of two regions of the byang.thang centered around Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho and gNam.mtsho are important 'brog.pa cultural hubs with an exceptionally long legacy of human habitation. Popularly, Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho is conceived as coupled with the mountain rTa.go Rin.po.che and gNam.mtsho with gNyan.chen.thang.lha thus forming sacred pairs.

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Retreat in Moscow

F. Andrico

Coming from the Sunrise

Dzogchen and Santi Maha Sangha
Retreats in Moscow

by Gregory Mokhin

When the sun was following the airplane heading from Tokyo to Moscow, Rinpoche's disciples were gathering at the Moscow airport to meet Rinpoche and Rosa. Having spent many months in Australia and Asia, they returned to Europe in the middle of May, and the first Teaching retreat given by Rinpoche attracted disciples from all over Russia and many neighboring countries.

Many thanks should be expressed to the organizing committee of the retreat who arranged everything for Rinpoche and his disciples, including the inexpensive accommodation in the dormitory for those people who could not afford to stay in the main boarding house. For many people from the former Soviet Republics, there is still a problem: how to have enough money to cover all the expenses for the retreat, the travel to Moscow, life in this city which has joined the number of the world's most expensive places to stay, the teaching fee, etc. Definitely it would be even harder for us to travel abroad to receive teachings in Merigar, for example.

Rinpoche is fully aware of this situation, yet he decided to hold a retreat in Moscow; during his two previous visits he traveled more and gave retreats also in St. Petersburg and Buryatia. Moscow has become the center of the Community not only for Russia, but for the many guests from Belarus, Ukraine, as well as the Baltic Republics, Finland, Denmark, Poland and from all parts of Russia; approximately one thousand people received the precious teachings. Rinpoche based his teaching of Dzogchen on the text "kun tu bzang po'i smon

lam", the invocation (or aspiration prayer) of Samantabhadra and also gave concise and very essential explanations on gradual and instantaneous methods in Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen.

One of Rinpoche's major concerns was how to help the newly formed Gakyils in the remote areas of our country to collaborate and organize the practices when they return home. Rinpoche dedicated much time to instructing all of the Gakyils' members, and especially emphasized the responsibility of the strongest and largest Gakyils of Moscow and St. Petersburg, for the coordination of the life of the Russian Dzogchen Community at

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John Shane	

I want to explain the Invocation of Samantabhadra contained in an Upadesha tantra; within this tantra is the very essence of knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching. It has already been translated into English.

This invocation is not only to be used as such, but is very important for having knowledge and understanding. In general, practitioners use this as an invocation; chanting and reciting it to be in the state of knowledge. Particularly at the beginning of the invocation, there are verses that are essential Dzogchen.

The beginning of the first verse says that the base of all of the universe, samsara, nirvana, and all our considerations, are the same base. There is a Tibetan word *chichig*; *chi* means one, *chig* means base. One base does not mean the only base, but the same base. For example, in the universe there are infinite sentient beings, including all enlightened beings. All these beings, either enlightened or in samsara, have the same base.

One of the most important things we learn in Dzogchen is what the base is: the base is our real condition. When we explain the base, we use the explanation of essence, nature and energy. Even if we use these different aspects, they are all the base. There is no difference, enlightened or not. That is why in Dzogchen we say that since the beginning our state is the enlightened state. Our real base or condition never changes or is modified. If we follow the teaching and use methods or practices for purification, we purify obstacles, but that doesn't change our nature. Our real condition is the same base since the beginning. That is what *chi chig* means: the same base.

Lam nyi means there are two paths or two aspects of manifestation. When we have knowledge or understanding of the base or are in the condition of the base, that is called enlightenment, the state of illumination. If we are ignorant of that and are no longer in that state, then we fall into dualistic vision and samsara. Hence samsara and nirvana.

When did this samsara and nirvana start? In the West we usually have a Judeo-Christian education, and have the idea that someone has created everything from the beginning. So who created this and divided these paths into two? No one divided them. Their division is related to our nature. If we have movement in our nature, it must manifest. If we have the capacity of manifesting reflections, somehow they manifest when circumstances arise.

So, when did samsara start? There is no starting point, because our real condition is beyond time. When we are beyond time we are in an illuminated state, no longer in samsara. But we don't remain in that state for a long time, because after a few seconds or minutes, thoughts arise and we are conditioned by them. That's why we speak about the state of contemplation, because even if thoughts arise we do not follow them. In that state

of clarity or instant presence is the illuminated state. When we are distracted with thoughts and dualistic vision, we are in samsara. That is the starting point of that moment of samsara. Tomorrow we can be at the starting point of samsara many times. We can have millions and millions of starting points of samsara. It depends on our condition and how we get in that state.

Generally speaking, we say that since the beginning one who is in the state of instant presence and is never distracted has knowledge or understanding. That primordial understanding is called Samantabhadra which is the symbol of the Ati Buddha, the primordial

Or, if we see something we don't like, we say: "Oh, I don't like that and if you put it in front of me it makes me nervous". That means we are rejecting and are angry with that object. These are our two main emotions: attachment and anger. In this way we accept and reject over and over again, falling into dualistic vision and accumulating the negative potentiality of karma. When we produce negative karma it has the potentiality for producing samsara. Therefore our obstacles of negative karma become thicker and thicker and we become more and more ignorant of our condition.

Even if we have our perfected qualification of potentiality from the

put his head to sleep there was a big diamond. But even though the old man had contact with this diamond every day, he never discovered it throughout his life. If he had discovered this diamond he would have become very rich.

This is an example of how we each have the Buddha essence, like that diamond. When we don't discover it, even if we have it, it has no value.

All our sense organs are directed externally to have contact with objects. When we have this contact with the objects of our senses we fall into dualistic vision and have no capacity to observe ourselves. In Dzogchen, therefore, we do not use

Even at the end of his life he said there was no wisdom, no path, and no realization. Why did he negate all these things? We always enter into concepts; if we say wisdom then we have a concept and if we remain in this concept, we have a problem. Realization must be beyond all this. Even in the sutra teaching Buddha explained things in that way.

In Dzogchen we have the qualification of self-perfectedness from the beginning. It doesn't mean that something has been built and then qualified. Self-perfectedness is the nature of our real condition. For example, in the summer there are many kinds of flowers and trees in the garden. No one made them. There is cause and effect, our condition, and through our condition our nature manifests. In the same way in our qualification there is the self-perfection of everything. This is the base in the real sense.

Why do we say that the base or essence is empty? Because when we search there is nothing to find. We always reach the point of emptiness; our real condition is emptiness. If we are in a room in the night-time and the room is totally dark, if we go in any direction we will reach a wall. We reach a wall because we are in a room. Rooms have walls; we can't reach beyond and we accept that. In general, we are in our real nature of emptiness. That is why we search and always find emptiness. Reaching this emptiness we discover our condition. It seems we only find emptiness but our real condition is emptiness with infinite potentiality, not only an idea of emptiness, like the emptiness of the idea of the horns of a hare or a horse. These animals don't have horns, but you can imagine they do even though in reality they have never existed. This is a kind of emptiness. The kind of emptiness of a horn on the head of a horse has no function.

This is not what we mean by the total emptiness of our real nature such as Dharmata or Dharmakaya. This is emptiness which can have infinite manifestations. We can observe the emptiness of space, and the infinite manifestations of this dimension. When we observe and do Namkha Arte in the sky there may be nothing in the sky. When infinite clouds arise, those manifestations of clouds can't be separated from space, they manifest in the same dimension as space. In the same way, we have that emptiness with infinite potentiality. For that reason we say that our real nature is clarity. Even if it is empty, it can manifest everything. All possibilities can manifest without interruption. This is represented by the thigle and the white A; by sound, light and rays. In the pure dimension we say Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya. When we have this knowledge of essence, nature and energy we have the understanding of the three dimensions.

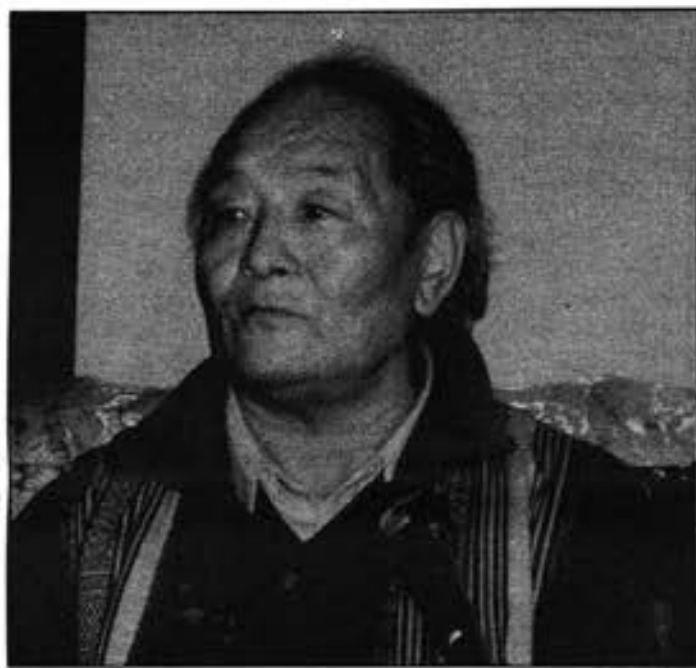
In the teaching there is an explanation of the three dimensions, the three kayas of the base, path and fruit. If you read many books, particularly Mahayana texts, then you understand that these three kayas explain some qualifications of enlightened beings. In the real sense

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Invocation of Samantabhadra

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Transcribed by Naomi Zeitz Edited by Naomi Zeitz and Liz Granger



F. Andrico

the teachings and our understanding like eyeglasses because even if they are clear and strong they always look outside. We use the teaching and knowledge like a mirror. If we look in a mirror we discover how our face appears. In this same way if we turn our awareness within ourselves, then we can discover and have knowledge, understanding; this is the principle of rigpa or marigpa - having understanding or not. Whoever has this knowledge can be in their real condition and be like Samantabhadra and Vajrasattva. If we look outside - judging, thinking and multiplying our dualistic vision - we end up with infinite dualistic vision and samsara.

In the Dzogchen teaching we have a word, *ruo*, which means reverse. We do not go directly into samsara, we reverse this process and get into real knowledge or understanding. We can have this experience and be again in our real potentiality with this invocation of Samantabhadra. This is called illumination or realization.

Realization or illumination is not something we construct or build. If we consider realization as something we build then it doesn't correspond; it becomes something made up of aggregates or something impermanent. If we create something within time and through action, we can never get beyond time. In our real condition the base is beyond time, beyond consideration, explanation, beyond everything. That is why at the end of his life Buddha Shakyamuni explained everything as emptiness with the teaching of the Prajna Paramita.

Buddha that since the beginning has never been conditioned by dualistic vision. If we don't have this knowledge or understanding there is no way we can realize or get in that state. This is called *lam nyi*, or two paths.

Drebu nyi means there are two kinds of fruit: either we have knowledge and understanding or we don't. Then there are two ways or paths.

Through those two paths samsara or nirvana are produced. Those who have that kind of knowledge are in a state of illumination. Those who are ignorant continually create negative karma and the potentiality of karma, producing infinite samsara.

What is the cause of these two paths and two fruits? Here we arrive at the main point: *rigpa* and *marigpa*. *Rigpa* means knowing or being in that knowledge and understanding; *marigpa* means ignorance of real knowledge or understanding. If we are ignorant we fall totally into dualistic vision. The way we fall is very simple. For example, we can relax a bit and observe our thoughts and circumstances: our eyes see, our ears hear, all our organs have functions, and immediately we have contact through the senses and we think and judge. We see something very pleasant, receive the information through our vision and immediately our judgement arises: "Oh, how nice, I like that". That means we are accepting and creating attachment. Then we fight and struggle to get that object of attachment. When we can't "get" that object, we suffer. So this is how we fall into suffering.

beginning, if we are not aware of it, it has no value. This principle is found not only in Dzogchen but also in sutra teaching. In sutra it is called "Buddha Essence", meaning that everyone has the Buddha essence, and if we make sacrifices and purify ourselves there is the possibility of realizing Buddhahood.

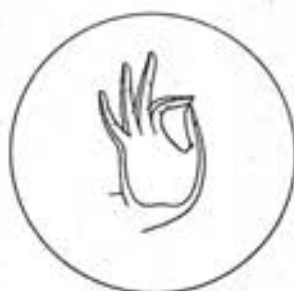
There is a book called *Gyud Lama* which explains and gives an example that is very important in the Dzogchen teaching as well. It uses this example:

There was a very poor man living in the country. Every day he went to town to get food. He didn't have a house and every night he went to a mountain cave to sleep. He passed his life in this way. In front of this mountain there was a practitioner, a yogi, who was doing retreat. Every day the yogi saw the old man going to town and coming back in the evening. Then the yogi noticed that the old man no longer came out of his cave. He saw by means of his clarity that the old man was dead in the cave. He looked a little deeper with his clarity to discover why and how the old man had died and he saw that the old man had a negative karma to purify and due to this has no money. But he also saw that every night in the place the old man

it is not only the explanation of enlightened beings but also the explanation of our condition. It is very important we know this from the beginning. Essence is empty and is Dharmakaya. Nature is clarity and means manifestation and is Sambhogakaya. And energy without interruption means Nirmanakaya. When we are in a state of contemplation we are in those three states. When we have that knowledge through introduction we have discovered our real base. How we manifest this concretely depends on how we do practice and how we realize.

Discovering our real nature doesn't mean we manifest our qualifications. In the Dzogchen teachings there is the example of the practitioner's knowledge which is similar to the egg of the eagle.

The egg of the eagle is different from other eggs; when it opens the small eagle is perfectly formed and ready to fly, self-perfected from the beginning. That is why it is said to be like a practitioner of Dzogchen. Even if we live with the limitation of the physical body, our capacity, knowledge and understanding are perfected. When we liberate from this physical body we have the realization of all three kayas.



NAMKHAIR NORBU RINPOCHE 1996-7 SCHEDULE

MERIGAR, ITALY

Summer Retreat

July 19th - 28th, 1996

Second Summer Retreat

August 14th - 18th, 1996

Santi Maha Sangha

Second Level Exams

August 23rd - 25th, 1996

Third Level Training

August 26th - 30th, 1996

Contact: Merigar, Arcidosso

58031 (GR) Italy

Telephone: 0564 966837

Fax: 0564 968110

Email: 101572.3265 @

compuserve.com

TSEGYALGAR, UNITED STATES

Teaching and Practice Retreat

September 19th - 29th, 1996

Santi Maha Sangha

Base Level Exam

October 4th - 6th, 1996

Santi Maha Sangha Level I Training

October 8th - 12th, 1996

Santi Maha Sangha

Level I Exam

October 18th - 20th, 1996

Santi Maha Sangha

Level II Training

October 21st - 25th, 1996

Contact: Tseggyalgar

PO Box 277

Conway, MA 01341, USA

Telephone: 413-369-4153

Fax: 413-369-4165

Email: 74404.1141@

compuserve.com

MEXICO

Teaching Retreat

November 7th - 11th, 1996

For information contact:

Lennart and Susana Aastrup

Ninyo Artillerio 33,

Tepoztlan, Morelos

tel: 52 739 50192

fax: 52 739 51059

VENEZUELA

Teaching Retreat

Nov. 28th - Dec. 2nd, 1996

For information contact:

Pablo Lau Rivera

Tel: 58 2 442 1434

Fax: 58 2 471 2772

PBA. Res. Pedernales,

Av. Paez Montalban II, 1021 Caracas

PERU

Teaching Retreat

December 13th - 15th 1996

Juan Bustamente

Tel: 51 14 791274

Fax: 51 14 459011

Calle E. Palacios 1125-c

Miraflores, Lima 18

ARGENTINA, TASHIGAR

Teaching Retreat

Dec. 27th, 1996 - Jan. 3rd, 1997

Santi Maha Sangha

Base Level Exam

January 10th - 12th, 1997

First Level Training

January 14th - 18th, 1997

Contacts: Laura Joffe

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Martin Bortogaray

Fax: 54 541 98300

Nelida Saporiti E-mail:

nsaporiti@interlink.com.ar

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

Teaching Retreat

January 31 - February 2, 1997

Rosemary Friend

Tel: 64 34 779463

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"Welcome to Merigar!"

by Liz Granger



Rinpoche in the garden at Merigar

L. Granger

With the refrain of the "Merigar Song" from a chorus of children surrounding him, amid the bright flowers and the pink purple of the early summer sunset, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche saluted us all with a warm smile, got into the small red Fiat Panda with his wife Rosa at the wheel and drove off to his home, Gadeling, for the first night of his summer stay at Merigar.

His long awaited return had been preceded by weeks of preparations and works to conclude with a gradually intensifying rhythm as the date of arrival drew closer. Structural work had been done all through the winter at his residence.

Gadeling, in order to make it more comfortable, the foundations for the great Stupa had been prepared and work on the thousands of tsa-tsas required to fill the stupa had started, roads repaired, walls painted, wood varnished, until the entire Gar was sparkling and orderly. Many hands had been involved in all this activity with the promise of the Master's presence being the catalyst for an easy and active collaboration.

From Moscow, Rinpoche had arrived in Rome where he spent a few days during which he had a medical check-up and met people from the Community. He arrived at Merigar on Tuesday, June 11th in

the early afternoon with a hot bright sun.

He stopped for a moment in front of the Yellow House to greet the crowd of people waiting for him then went to rest and have lunch.

He returned later in the afternoon to sit and chat with Community people sitting on the cool green lawn behind the Yellow House amongst a blaze of perfumed flowers. Seated crossed legged on a Tibetan carpet, with a blanket around his legs, Rinpoche donned a wide-brimmed straw hat when the sky clouded over which acted as an umbrella as the first fat drops of rain fell. Smiling and joking through the fast falling rain he pulled out a big rubber spider to amuse the children and then sweets which he shared among them. He asked and answered questions about his health, the Santi Maha Sangha training, the children's activities and a host of other things and entertained his listeners in that special way he has of turning a simple conversation into an amusing and joyful play of words and ideas. In reply to questions about the Santi Maha Sangha II exam, the Master said that those who wished to undertake it should have experience of clarity and even smilingly suggested that they should practice looking through walls.

Later in the afternoon on

Rinpoche's suggestion those present divided themselves into two groups of dancers and singers, dancing and singing in the courtyard to warm up and dry off after the afternoon rain. Then Rinpoche patiently taught us all, adults and children together, the words of "Kale Kapore", the Song of Merigar which we sang together several times, much to Rinpoche's amusement.

As always, during these last years in which he has dedicated his time to travelling around our planet in order to teach, Rinpoche's return to this Gar of the Dzogchen Community is a source of great joy to his followers here. His arrivals and departures have come to be a milestone in the life of this Community, so much time and so many experiences have passed since our last meeting. Next to our great happiness in having his presence once again among us is the mirror-like quality of this presence which brings us to reflect on the evolution of the Community in physical terms and even more fundamentally on our own inner growth, both as a group and on a personal level. Each return marks the inexorable passing of time and all that this implies. Thank you Rinpoche for your precious presence and great kindness to us and may each day be for us a return of the Master! ■

Coming from the Sunrise

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large. In particular, the task of constructing the Russian Gar is becoming more and more urgent. Rinpoche was the first contributor to the new fund which we are to raise now to buy land and start building the Gar. The discussion of this problem is presented in this issue of The Mirror elsewhere.

Hopefully, the newly born Russian Santi Maha Sangha group will do much to promote the faster development of our Dzogchen Community. After the most friendly and lively base level exams (our special thanks to Jim Valby and

Adriano Clemente who assisted Rinpoche for the exam and really faced all the discomfort of checking the people's capacities in a foreign language, and Anna Rudneva who translated the exams continuously for five days), our group had the intense training with morning sessions given by Rinpoche and afternoon practices led by Adriano and Jim. With Rinpoche, Rosa, Fabio, Jim, Adriano, Naomi, and one hundred and two Santi Maha Sangha students we formed an assembly of one hundred and eight people to do the Ganapuja, a symbolic mandala, and this occasion, coincidental as it may seem, inspired us and gave us one more indication that we are not separate and will never be.

In the evening, those who were the most enthusiastic (and a bit fortunate, of course) did the advanced Yantra Yoga course with Fabio Andrico.

Now, as I recollect those days, I think of the atmosphere of the retreats, filled with Rinpoche's "love all around" and the vague feeling of impermanence; this unforgettable atmosphere which can be felt by anybody who ever attended Rinpoche's teachings and is one of the best experiences we can have in life.

Of course, everybody has something personal to keep in mind after the retreats. For experienced practitioners it could be a clarification of the difficult points of their practice,

or maybe just an intonation, a detail in what had seemed so clear for them but in fact was nothing more than another mental construction to collapse, for new people it could be like the opening of their eyes, "the sun shining through the clouds" or whatever it may be. As a translator, I was lucky to witness many short talks between Rinpoche and his disciples. People came to ask about the practice, or just for help, or just to be a little bit closer to Rinpoche for a while. But the most concise and essential question was asked by a twelve year old boy: "Rinpoche, what should I do to realize myself quickly?" "Eh, you want to have the realization quickly?" asked Rinpoche, - "then you should do the

Short Tun frequently".

Maybe the local guardians of Moscow also wanted to stay longer with Rinpoche; in the airport Rinpoche's airplane to Rome was delayed for three hours. Instead of just a good-bye we had a small picnic under a light rain. Rinpoche, never losing time and being always in the moment, gave us another teaching: how to contact local guardians and to do away with rain, how to treat such sentient beings as annoying mosquitoes and, mainly, again and again, how to respect each other and strive for realization. We will try to do our best, our dear Teacher, and will be longing to see you again! ■

The Dalai Lama's Visit to Pomaia and Rome in May 1996

by Andy Lukianowicz

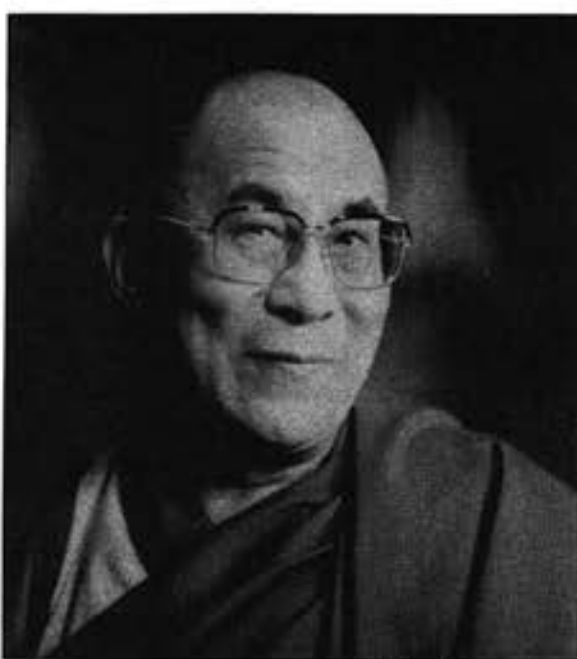
Over fifteen hundred people congregated the Istituto Lama Tsongkapa Buddhist center in Pomaia, Italy to welcome His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, and receive teachings from him on "The Three Aspects of the Path", a brief instruction letter composed by Tsongkapa, the founder of the Gelugpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, for his disciple Ngawang Dragpa of Tsako.

Before addressing Tsongkapa's text the Dalai Lama opened his teaching by saying that Buddhism, which has been called an atheist religion, could give those he calls 'radical atheists' some comfort, before proceeding to give detailed preliminary explanations on the four noble truths, pointing out that, although the cessation of suffering (that is caused by ignorance of the working of karma and of the ultimate nature of phenomena), being permanent, is beyond cause and conditions, nevertheless it requires effort and reliance on the path, on the two realities, that arise from our mind confusing the way things appear and how they actually are, and on our need to develop a mental antidote in order to overcome this erroneous tendency of our mind. His Holiness stressed the importance in Buddhism of analyzing fallacious mind phenomena as the means to change them, emphasizing that this constitutes the validity of Tibetan Buddhist practice. The Dalai Lama went on to say that seeing Buddhism as meditation on deities and recitation of mantras is a degeneration of Buddhism. The aim of the practice of the elimination of negative mental delusions is to rediscover the ultimate clear luminous nature of the mind, which however, cannot be understood by logic, but only directly through experience.

In order to demonstrate how this understanding could be approached through the treatises of accomplished masters who have experience and knowledge, the Dalai Lama explained that there are three kinds of phenomena: 1) visible, 2) hidden, but comprehensible by logic, and 3) very hidden, beyond the ken of our logic. To understand this last category we need to rely on what we are told by the four infallibles, that are: 1) the infallible scriptures, comprising Buddha's words, 2) the infallible treatises, containing commentaries by Indian masters, 3) the infallible master, and 4) infallible experience. Actually, these work "backwards", inasmuch as our experience of the teachings confirm our master's words, which in turn confirm the treatises, that are based on Buddha's words. Our knowledge of the first two categories of phenomena enable us to understand the infallible truth of the teachings and of the teacher's words, so that we can confide in the infallibility of the teachings also regarding the very hidden category of phenomena, such as the ultimate luminous nature of the mind and the ultimate empty nature of phenomena. In fact, His Holiness commented, whereas scientific research leads to new discoveries that can contradict earlier statements, Buddha's words are infallible and incontrovertible, so that later developments of Buddhist thought cannot contradict them. Moreover, while scientific discoveries may have refuted certain aspects of Abhidharma cosmology (such as, for example, the distance between the earth and the moon) proving them wrong, the validity of the four noble truths, such as the destruction of mental defects through practicing the path, cannot be refuted and can only be proved true through practice and experience.

Summing up his introduction, the Dalai Lama explained that the true antidote to mental defects is the wisdom that understands emptiness; that, however, in order to attain nirvana this wisdom must be accompanied by bodhicitta, based on a sense of personal responsibility; and that this in turn needs an understanding of suffering and the consequent sense of renunciation. These three, renunciation, generation of pure mind (bodhicitta) and wisdom's intrinsic knowledge of emptiness, are the three aspects of the path explained by Tsongkapa in his short poem.

In the afternoon His Holiness proceeded with his customary thoroughness to give a detailed line-by-line (indeed, at times, word-by-word) analysis and explanation of Tsongkapa's text. After the initial summary anticipating the contents of the teaching, regarding the first point the early stanzas elucidate why renunciation is essential and that in order to develop renunciation we need to contrast grasping at happiness in this and the next life by reflecting on impermanence and on the law of cause and effect. Meditation on the inevitability of suffering in samsara counteracts the desire for future lives.



Raphael Demandre

The Dalai Lama explained that as long as we see our mental defects as our greatest friends we cannot escape samsara, so we must see them as they are in order to bring about a change of attitude to samsara. In what seemed to me a crucial statement His Holiness pointed out that the difference between a Buddhist and a non-Buddhist is really the difference between a practitioner and a non-practitioner, that is, between someone who is fighting against their mental defects and someone who is not.

Going on to the second aspect, in his poem Tsongkapa explains that, as renunciation alone is not sufficient, we need to generate sublime enlightenment mind, the root cause of which is compassion. His Holiness pointed out that the Tibetan term for 'generation' can also intend the 'extension' of bodhicitta mind to all beings, and that the term for 'mind' refers to the 'principal' mind, mind-as-such, and not to mental factors. How do we generate this compassion? By understanding first that we are trapped in samsara's suffering, and then that others too suffer as we do. The next stanza explains that, when our bodhicitta becomes spontaneous, so that when we see beings suffering our intention to help and liberate them, and to get enlightened in order to help them, simultaneously arises, then we can say that we have generated bodhicitta.

Concerning the third aspect, His Holiness clarified that as renunciation and bodhicitta alone are not sufficient to gain enlightenment we need to train the mind in calm abiding in order to understand the twelve links of interdependent origination, and thereby comprehend emptiness. However, the Dalai Lama warned that, knowing the wisdom of emptiness without first having generated bodhicitta one could construe this knowledge as a way of overcoming suffering, thereby falling into the trap of personal liberation. In fact, the Dalai Lama said that the mind that aspires to personal liberation is very close to the knowledge of emptiness, and as such is dangerous: it is through compassion that the practitioner avoids this trap, so as to be able to attain total enlightenment. This is the reason why Tsongkapa put wisdom as the third and last of the three aspects in his letter.

The following four stanzas give a concise explanation of: 1) the need to understand the infallibility of the law of karma; 2) the need to see the inseparability of the interdependent nature and inherent emptiness of phenomena; 3) the need for this knowledge to be simultaneous and not alternating in order to have correct view; 4) the way that appearance eliminates the extreme of existence and emptiness eliminates the extreme of non-existence, because it is emptiness itself that appears as cause and effect. His Holiness elucidated that the understanding of emptiness is necessary in order to practice Tantra, and that without this view of emptiness deity practice cannot become an antidote to samsara. In fact, His Holiness expressed the doubt whether practicing deity yoga without practicing the three aspects could even be called Buddhist practice.

The letter ends with Tsongkapa's exhortation to his disciple to practice with resolute effort; by extension, His Holiness pointed out, Tsongkapa is exhorting us all to practice.

The teaching was followed by a response to a question from the Tibetan community concerning the practice of the 'protector' Gyalpo Shuden, that the Dalai Lama strongly criticized on two counts, in terms of politics (as it has given rise to controversies and struggles within the Gelugpa and Kadampa schools) and of dharma (as it is a reversion to the propitiation and worship of a worldly deity, contrary to the principle of refuge in the Three Jewels). In fact the Dalai Lama asked that anyone practicing this 'protector' refrain from coming to him for teachings or initiations.

On Sunday morning His Holiness conferred the bodhicitta vow, with a Refuge Tree visualization that included lineages from the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism, on the thousand or so people still present, before flying to Rome where he gave a talk on ethics and the environment to a public of well over fifteen hundred students in the Main Hall of the University of Rome. After opening addresses by the somewhat histrionic rector, by Prof. Gnoli (co-translator and co-editor with Giacomella Orefino of Naropa's "Initiation", on the Sekodessa chapter of the Kalacakra) and by an outspoken representative of the Tibet Domani Association, the Dalai Lama spoke for over half an hour. The Dalai Lama's talk was well received, as the students warmed to His Holiness's strong and evident concern with the topic of human welfare and happiness on this small planet of ours. He touched on several of the key issues that will face humankind in the 21st century. His Holiness said that the benevolence of which he often speaks is not confined to 'spiritual' practitioners, and that our everyday life must be based on what he calls secular ethics, that must indeed start from the benevolence that is within all of us. While man's great intelligence has led to great technological progress, it has also given rise to problems, including the safeguard of the environment, so it is necessary to unite our intelligence with our benevolence. If we are able to maintain benevolent attitude toward others, then this also calms our mind making it more harmonious, giving us greater physical health, however, if our mind is agitated then we are likely to project our negativities, such as anger and jealousy, on to others so that we come to fear them. Thus developing this sense of benevolence is an act of personal responsibility towards the ecology and the environment. His Holiness told the students present that while their university studies are important they should be combined with this sense of universal responsibility, pointing out that it is not important whether or not one is a 'religious' person, what is important is to develop a good heart and a sense of responsibility to others.

The Dalai Lama then proceeded to talk more specifically about the environment. In fact His Holiness is justly famous world-wide for his concern over the world's ecology, and is a frequent participant in meetings and conferences on environmental issues. The Dalai Lama told the students that the environment is not something to respect only in compliance with laws and treaties but because the human race is a family and planet earth is our home; the happiness of our future generations depends on our sense of responsibility for the environment, and this should become our habit at the everyday level. His Holiness pointed out that in his own case this could be exemplified by his care to make sure that he had switched off all the lights and turned off all the taps whenever he left a hotel room. Modern technology has made our world small, so that we can no longer talk about our advantage at our neighbor's expense. In a probable reference to the Chernobyl disaster of 1986 His Holiness pointed out that what happens to our neighbor now affects us on a continental scale, and that our global interdependence makes collaboration between neighbors necessary at personal as well as continental level.

Another issue mentioned in passing by His Holiness was the great 'North-South' world divide, that is not only morally wrong but is also the practical source of many great problems. Although the attempt to improve the living standards of the 'South' may deplete the world's resources, the Dalai Lama pointed out that the main cause of their depletion is their use for military development. What is needed, His Holiness continued, is global demilitarization. One thing we can all be proud of is the end of the cold war, because this has led to the acknowledgment of the uselessness of nuclear weapons and their destruction: this should lead to the denuclearization of the

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Lives of the Great Masters



Nupchen Sangye Yeshe

772 - 902

by Liz Granger

Nupchen Sangye Yeshe was born into the clan of Nup in the Drak Valley in the mountains of Central Tibet in eight hundred thirty two. His secular name was Dorje Triticus, his religious name was Sangye Yeshe and his secret name was Dorje Yangwangter. When he was seven years old he studied all the sciences with Otren Palkyi Zhoenna.

Among the many disciples of Guru Rinpoche in Tibet, Nupchen Sangye Yeshe was one of the great ones known as the twenty-five subjects or disciples. During the empowerment of the great sadhana of eight mandalas he received from Guru Rinpoche, his flower fell on the mandala of Yamantaka (the wrathful form of Manjuri), the mandala of the body of all the Buddhas. Meditating on this mandala in the caves above Samye Monastery he spontaneously had a pure vision of the deity and realized the signs of accomplishment.

Later on he received many tantras and esoteric teachings from Guru Rinpoche in the Dorje Tse-nga cave, situated on the India-Nepal border. He also received many teachings from Yeshe Tsogyal, the mystic consort of guru Rinpoche, when she stayed with his family clan during the violent reign of Lang Darma.

Nupchen travelled to India, Nepal and Gilgit seven times to visit learned teachers and to study and translate under many great masters and translators such as Shrisimha, Vimalamitra, Kamalashila, Shantigarbha, Dharmabodhi, Dhanashila, Vasudhara and Chetsen Kye. In Tibet he received teachings from the translator-scholar Nyak Jnanakumara and all of his eight disciples, in particular Sokpo Palkyi Yeshe and Zhang Gyalwe Yoenten who had been a disciple of both Ma Rinchen chok and Nyak. Through these great masters the tantric transmissions of Mahayoga, Anuyoga and the Semde of Atiyoga were united in him: the lineage of the major kama and terma teachings of Mahayoga from Sokpo Palkyi Yeshe and Zhang Gyalwe Yoenten, the lineage of the Anuyoga tantra from Dharmabodhi, Vasudhara and in

particular Chetsen Kye, and the lineal transmission of Semde and Longde of Ati Yoga from Sokpo Palkyi Yeshe (based on information given in "Masters of Meditation and Miracles - The Longchen Nyingthig Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism" by Tulku Thondup, Shambhala, 1996). Nupchen is considered to be one of three great masters who transmitted and diffused the teachings of Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Semde of Atiyoga of the Nyingma tradition of Tibet; the other two are Nyak Jnanakumara and Zurchen Shakya Jungne.

Through his practice it is said he achieved dominion over gods and demons and, moreover, that he had supernormal cognitive powers. He became widely known as a great Siddha and there are many accounts of him performing miracles such as passing through mountains and shattering rocks with a touch of his phurba.

He founded his hermitage at Yangdzong, in Drag, Central Tibet, intending to stay there in solitude but political events created difficulties for him and his disciples because of the lawlessness and partisan conflict of the time. Previously the reigning King Ralpachen had given generous support to the Buddhist community considering that it would be beneficial to the country to unite political power with religious authority. His half-brother, Lang Darma, strongly opposed the king's support and had him assassinated, securing his power through the Bonpo priests. In this way, he re-established the Bonpo religion during his reign at the same time attempting to suppress Buddhism in malevolent ways.

During the reign of King Ralpachen the Sangha had been divided into the Red Sangha composed of fully ordained monks and the White Sangha who were generally yogis or householders. In fact most of Guru Rinpoche's disciples

belonged to the White Sangha. When Lang Darma took power he ordered the execution of monks or members of the Red Sangha who did not obey his edicts but he generally left unharmed the White Sangha because they were not monks.

One day King Lang Darma went to visit Nupchen after hearing that he headed a large group of White Sangha. On his arrival Nupchen pointed his finger in the sky while reciting a mantra and immediately a huge scorpion the size of a yak appeared. Filled with fear the king watched as Nupchen went on to make a thunderbolt manifest from the scorpion which pulverized some nearby rocks. This manifestation of magical power forced the terrified king into proclaiming that he would not destroy the tantric master and his followers.

Since the Buddhist teaching was in decline during this interim period and there were many people who did harm to the teaching, Nupchen decided to eliminate all this by using the wrathful mantras of the cycle of Yamantaka in order to protect the teaching. Moreover his own two sons had been killed during the local rebellions. When the revolt reached his area, he destroyed thirty-seven towns through use of this wrathful mantra. Surrounded by rebels at Chen Fortress in Nyemo, he called on the wrathful deities for their help. When they appeared they told him that since the karma of his past life had finally been exhausted they would now be able to help him and obey his commands. Nupchen drew his kila out of his robe and pointing it in the direction of the mountain where the rebels were located he caused an enormous fire to ignite which burned the rebel army to ashes.

During this almost half century of Buddhist suppression, Nupchen Sangye Yeshe and his followers saved a great number of the early translations and preserved the oral transmission of the Nyingma lineages and explanations of the esoteric treatises. Many of his disciples led the life of householders and lived in the mountains and could continue their practice secretly and they were able to hide many texts prior to the time of Lang Darma which would benefit future generations.

Nupchen Sangye Yeshe is one of the great masters who transmitted the Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Semde of Atiyoga of the Nyingma tradition in Tibet. He had many disciples, the main ones being five in number, the most notable of which was Khulung Yoenten Gyatso. Nupchen wrote many treatises including: the Armor Against Darkness, a commentary on the sutra which Gathers All Intentions (mdo'i 'grel chen mun pa'i go cha); the Disputant's Sword which Cuts through Difficulties (dka' good smra ba'i mtshon cha); the Commentary on the Realization of the Eighty-Chapter Magical Net (sgyu 'phrul bgyad cu pa'i mngon rtogs 'grel); and The Light of the Eyes of Contemplation (bSam gtam mig sgron) his foremost text of instruction concerning the Ati Yoga.

He passed away in his one hundred thirtieth year, although some sources claim that he lived until the age of one hundred and thirteen. The passing of this great Siddha scholar-translator marks the end of the first dissemination of the Dharma in Tibet. ■

BOOK REVIEWS

MYRIAD WORLDS
Buddhist Cosmology in
Abhidharma, Kalacakra and
Dzog-chen

by Jamgon Kongtrul
Lodro Taye

Translated and edited by
the International Translation
Committee of Kunkhyab Choling
founded by the
Very Ven. Kalu Rinpoche
Snow Lion Publications,
Ithaca, 1995

In 1988, Kalu Rinpoche convened a gathering of senior students, translators and scholars at Bero Khyentse's monastery in Bodhgaya, India for three months to translate the Kongtrul's Encyclopedia of Buddhism. Subsequently, at Kalu Rinpoche's urging, a smaller group moved to Rinpoche's monastery at Sonada, in the Darjeeling District of India, and worked tirelessly over many years under often frustrating and difficult conditions, to fulfill Rinpoche's vision. Myriad Worlds is the first publication of their work. While I was a member of the initial gathering I contributed in only a small way to some of the initial drafts and have had no significant role in the translation project as it unfolded.

In making a concerted effort to publish the works of translators and translation groups, Snow Lion Publications is playing an important role in the transmission of Buddhism to the West. Their commitment to publish major works such as this will ensure that substantial portions of Tibetan Buddhist learning will become accessible to a wider range of Western students and practitioners.

The challenges and difficulties in translating a work such as Kongtrul's Encyclopedia of Buddhism are considerable. The Buddhism of Tibet is virtually a self-contained system which has been passed down from generation to generation with little outside influence and very little change. One can read a text from the 11th century as easily and fruitfully as one can read a text from the twentieth century; the language, concepts, formulations and perspectives have changed very little. All texts and writings assume a complex system of associations and references that have been built up over the course of centuries. The Tibetan language itself, though it uses a phonetic alphabet, has a completely different etymological and grammatical structure from English. The translation challenges are compounded since formal written Tibetan was developed initially for the sole purpose of conveying Buddhist ideas, and is thus highly specialized and capable of extraordinary precision and compactness. Additionally, basic to this system of thought and practice is a world view that permeated the culture and was universally accepted. Part of that world view is an inherited Indian cosmological system that was accepted in Tibet, and, without the astronomical sophistication of Tycho Brahe, Copernicus, Galileo and others, was never challenged or refined.

Myriad Worlds is a comprehensive description of that cosmology, or, to be more precise, those cosmologies, for Kongtrul discusses four: the cosmology associated with Hinayana philosophy and practice, the cosmology associated with Mahayana, the cosmology of the Kalacakra tantra, and the cosmology associated with Dzogchen. Initially, the text might appear difficult and of questionable relevance to the needs of Buddhist practitioners. An excellent introduction by the Translation Committee overcomes this and many other problems inherent in the translation of these substantial and comprehensive works.

The introduction (which is well worth reading for its own sake) includes a biography of Jamgon Kongtrul drawn principally from his autobiography. It also provides some very cogent and relevant observations of the relationship between a given cosmological system and the basic philosophical position of that system. For each of the four cosmologies the introduction summarizes how the world we experience comes into existence, how the world is structured, the spiritual intention of the cosmology, how it is realized, and the relationship between the underlying philosophy and the conception of enlightenment in that particular system. The translated text then becomes a way of exploring in detail the interrelationship between



philosophical and psychological perspectives and how they manifest in a view of the universe (a connection that has considerable relevance to the predominance of the scientific world view in our culture and its effect on how we see, experience and treat other people, our environment, and our spiritual practice). If we turn attention to the text itself, the translation is rendered in clear and readable English. The translators have made a significant effort to move into natural English and away from Sanskrit terminology. Thus, we have "mahayana" being rendered as "universalist way." I find these efforts creative and potentially workable as the words in English take on their own nuances and connotations.

The Encyclopedia is a fine example of classical Tibetan exegetical works. The translators have taken pains both to preserve the classical form (with the invocations, the root text, and the commentary all clearly delineated) while they

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stupa—before the inauguration. "There are different types of stupas", said the Master, "but one of the principles has the meaning of re-balancing the energies of the region. And in fact they are built in places where there are problems because problems often arise precisely due to the disharmony of the energy of the place. For example in the world there are places which manifest a strong energy caused by hardships such as wars and great natural disasters. And even if these types of disharmony do not always manifest, an energy disorder or a conflict between different energies can always arise. So this brings about negativity and above all the region and the people become passive and there is no progress, no prospective. For this reason these stupas are built."

The form of the stupa represents all aspects of energy of the relationship between the place and the people, the general dimension. Precise objects are placed inside the stupa which concentrate the energy, developing and improving the positive energy while controlling the negative energy. For example, we put up lots of prayer flags; apart from their beauty, there are many things written on them and then they are in five colors which represent the five elements. When they are in contact with the wind, the air, in general they purify the place and the circumstances. So the stupa is for the region.

There is another example. In Tibet many disturbances arose when monuments and stupas built by masters and kings dating back to ancient times were destroyed during the Chinese cul-



Rinpoche and Mayor Marini

M. Mingotti

tural revolution. Many problems arose because of this and so when they are rebuilt, one will be able to have control of the disturbed energy once again.

The concept of the Stupa at Merigar is more or less like this. It will be not only beneficial to Merigar but also for the region, for Italy. The area where there is a stupa undergoes a positive influx and it for this reason that principally the Dalai Lama has

suggested building them and has sent experts to help and control certain negativities in this way even in the West. In Yugoslavia, for example, the Dalai Lama has often considered building a chorten in order to bring a little benefit. Perhaps it does bring some benefit, but even if it doesn't bring much, it is quite a nice monument and passers-by may say: 'Ah, let's see what there is.' Many people come to visit the little stupa and a big one will be even better, 'more perfect'. Like an ornament."

Rinpoche explained up to this point and also talked about the project of many Mongolian practitioners to construct a stupa as big as the one in Kathmandu with a temple inside. A difficult project which could need three years to realize. Giovanni Boni spoke about the time required for the Merigar stupa. The Director of Merigar explained that no more than five or six people at a time could work on the construction of the stupa which will be about twelve meters high with a base of five meters so about three or four months will be necessary. But to finish it and decorate it could require from six months to a year.

Finally a few words from Rinpoche on the details of the stupa, on the part called the treasure of all the local spirits which is for having a good relationship with all beings. It contains mantra, reliquaries, symbols of the central strength, on different levels. Then there is the so-called vase, which contains the objects. At the bottom is the door, facing east to symbolize the rising of the sun and something which receives, which is closed once and for all. ■

Divine Dyads

Continued from page 1

These pairs are characterized as either *rgyal.yab* and *rgyal.yum* (divine father and divine mother) or *lcam.dral* (brother and sister). This yoking of holy mountains and lakes serves as inspiration for the title of the book, *Divine Dyads*. This book, the first monograph published on *gNam.mtsho* and *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho*, attempts to fill a critical gap in the study of Tibetan civilization by bringing new materials to light on these pivotal regions of the *byang.thang*. Its aim is to create a better awareness of the vital role *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho* and *gNam.mtsho* played in the development of Tibetan civilization thus retrieving them from the margins of academic enquiry.

Divine Dyads is compiled from four kinds of sources giving it a wide purview. These sources include: 1) Tibetan language literary sources 2) literary sources in other languages 3) Oral sources obtained from interviews with a wide range of Tibetans 4) field surveys of *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho* and *gNam.mtsho* carried out during seven expeditions spanning nearly one decade. Methodologically, a thematic approach is employed to elucidate the culture, history and geography of the study regions so that the information can be modelled through a variety of paradigms. The work is primarily written from an anthropological and historical perspective but with a strong interdisciplinary component, allowing for optimal utilization of the available data. By marshaling the fullest range of sources and by processing them through a different theoretical frameworks a degree of comprehensiveness is achieved. Historical and archaeological materials spanning the entire chronological spectrum from the pre-Buddhist era until the modern period are presented.

In *Divine Dyads*, special stress is laid on the sacred geography of the lakes, their shorelines and adjoining plains and mountains recorded in oral and written tradi-



Khyung Lung Ngulphar

Istituto Shang Shung

tions. A chapter each is devoted to the role of *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho*, *gNam.mtsho*, *rTa.sgo Rin.po.che* and *gNyan.chen.thang.lha* in the religion and mythology of the *byang.thang*. Their place in the scheme of sacred geography are exhaustively explored and parallels to other regions of the *byang.thang* and greater Tibet are noted. An essential source for this kind of investigation are various types of Tibetan literature procured primarily in Tibet. These include: *gsol.kha* (incense hymns), *gnas.bshad* (guide books), *bskang.ba* (offering prayers) and *dkar.chag* (registries of sacred places). Schematic translations of the essential contents of over twenty works of this genre are provided in order that the most complete assessment of sacred geography as possible is considered. Literary sources are buttressed by the presentation of oral narratives largely collected on site. These oral accounts help to enrich the mythological content of the literary material. Oral sources also aid the process of translation making the literature more comprehensible. The part literary sources on sacred geography play in local patterns of religion and belief are carefully reviewed.

This exposition of sacred geography is further enhanced by furnishing accurate topographical data gleaned during the expeditions to the target regions. By accommodating information on the physical geography, a cornerstone of sacred

geographical conceptions, the study assumes more pertinency. Rather than merely describing sacred geographical features and motifs *Divine Dyads* attempts to critically interpret their historical and cultural value. An outcome of this is the formation of a theoretical structure designed to decipher the historical development of land based religious traditions at the two lakes from the prehistorical period onwards. Comparisons are also drawn between the target regions, this interlinking of the culture and history of sacred geography at *gNam.mtsho* and *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho* provides a persuasive rationale for surveying both of them in one book. This comparative approach also elicits many questions. A major question explored, although a definitive answer is not available is; how were the Dyads interrelated in the pre-Buddhist period? Did they belong to the same tribal and religious milieu or were they independent of one another?

Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho, *gNam.mtsho*, *rTa.sgo* and *Thang.lha* are studied from other perspectives as well. Their role as clan deities (*ru.ryud.lha*) and ancestral from other perspectives as well. Research into the theogony and character of these types of deities on the *byang.thang* is in its infancy and although *Divine Dyads* only begins to tackle this subject it does open up an important line of study. The pairs of mountains and lakes

are also relevant as the embodiment or residence of deities which are channeled by *lha.ba* and *dpa'.bo* (spirit mediums). The study of this facet of cultural life of the target regions has an urgency about it because it is disappearing rapidly due to political and social changes. Interviews with one of the last spirit mediums at *gNam.mtsho* and at *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho* contributes to a better

understanding of the centrality of the Dyads in the target areas. Another strand to the book is an enquiry into the manner in which the Dyads are worshipped, entreated and placated and the attitudes the native people hold about them. While *Divine Dyads* is not a sociological-anthropological work, it was felt desirable to include such material in order to convey the full cultural import of the sacred mountains and lakes.

The chapters outlining the sacred geography are followed by an exhaustive survey of the cultural, religious and archaeological sites found in the study areas. This includes the cataloging of a number of major and minor pre-Buddhist archaeological sites documented by the author. These lend credence to the bountiful legends and local lore which tell of a vanished civilization characterized as either Bonpo or Zhang Zhung. This documentation may prove to have much scholarly utility.

The elucidation of the prehistory of *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho* and *gNam.mtsho* is also served by a comprehensive study of the cave art at *gNam.mtsho* including that found in undocumented caves. To permit an extensive analysis of both pre-Buddhist and Buddhist cave art two major approaches were used. One approach focused on interviewing scores of Tibetans from diverse backgrounds in an effort to understand the function

and significance of the art. The findings of this approach demonstrated that much of the earliest artistic expressions fall outside the contemporary cultural ambit however, that meaning which remains alive in the Tibetan consciousness offers a highly lucid window into the past. By interpreting cave art utilizing indigenous models and perspectives an intimacy with them is required. The second approach revolves around art history and cross cultural comparisons. *Divine Dyads* makes use of scholarly studies which examine cave art in other parts of the Tibetan cultural universe. Central Asia and Beloristan drawing parallels to the cave art at *gNam.mtsho*. Certain cultural and historical orientations are consequently established but the chronology of the paintings remains quite elusive. A most intriguing part of this work is the comparison of archaic inscriptions found at *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho* with similar undocumented paintings at *gNam.mtsho* raising questions about pre-Buddhist cipher and symbolism.

The monastic history of the lakes is reviewed closely through field surveys, oral accounts and historical documents. The heads of the various monasteries and other clerical figures associated with them, both in and out of Tibet, were the most important fountainhead of information. Their testimonies are made full use of in trying to ferret out histories of the *dgon.pas*, the history and culture of the monasteries are especially crucial because of their prominence is an environment with few other fixed structures. Sacred caves and hermitages while obscure, are also documented and tend to be vital to the history of the study areas. A treatment of economic history is largely beyond the scope of this book, however, environmental history warranted special attention, this is because it occupies an influential position in shaping the cultural development of *Dang.ra g.yu.mtsho* and *gNam.mtsho* through the ages. Oral narratives were the paramount source for environmental history. ■

From a talk given at Merigar during a Yantra Yoga course in August 1995. Translated from the Tibetan by Jacobella Gaetani. English version edited by Robin Cooke.

In Tibetan medicine there are a number of principle texts, and many secondary ones. Some of these texts were composed by Tibetan scholars, while others were taught directly by Buddha. Also translators compiled Tibetan editions of texts originating from India and China and there are also some texts which are Termas. The root texts are the Tantras, each of which has its own collection of

and enters the sites and pathways of the other humors. In cases of 'rikgyne', for example, the 'lung' often goes into the bile's pathways and into the liver and gall bladder. Then there is a group of twenty-eight pathologies in which the 'lung' is pathogenic even though it remains in its proper places. These are called 'nekgyne' (Nas-gyi-nad).

Finally, there are fifteen special pathologies of 'lung'. Of these,

oesophagus. Tibetan medicine speaks of the 'zopza', that is to say the central life channel corresponding to 'uma'. While the uppermost part belongs to the life-sustaining 'lung', the section running between the throat and the chest is the home of the ascending 'lung'. The pathways of this 'lung' are found in the regions beneath the tongue and in the throat. The main functions of the ascending

stomach and the bowel as a whole. The function of the metabolic 'lung' is to allow digestion and the separation of pure substances from impure ones, the latter being sent downwards by the descending 'lung'. In males it also permits the production of sperm, which is then directed to the seminal vesicle. In females it is responsible for the ovulatory blood.

Secondary causes that cause

metabolic 'lung'; and the secret chakra with the descending 'lung'. The function that clarifies the senses and the mind is localized in the head part of the central life channel and in the five hundred surrounding channels which branch into all five sense receptors and the controlling consciousness in the brain.

Mental clarity and intellectual capacity depend on the ascending 'lung'. This type of 'lung' is also associated with the central channel and its surrounding nadi.

'Lung' and the astrological elements

As far as the astrological elements are concerned, the 'lung' is

Tibetan Medicine

The Five Types of rLung

by Dr Phuntsok Wangmo



commentaries. The Four Medicine Tantras, which we will take as our guide today, are the principle texts used in Tibetan medicine.

There are also variations from one text to another within the Zalung tradition: different traditional explanations. In the Kalachakra too, the channels and chakras are slightly different. I am now going to give an explanation from the Four Medicine Tantras and the Commentary called Vaiduria Ngonpo, written by Sangye Gyatso.

General characteristics of 'lung'

Tibetan medicine speaks of 'lung' (rLung) or air, which is one of the three main humors, along with 'thrispa' (mKhris-pa) or phlegm, and 'baeken' (Bad-kan) or bile. These humors are said to derive from the three passions: 'lung' from attachment, bile from anger, and phlegm from ignorance. If passion, or desire, is very strong the 'lung' increases with respect to its natural state and becomes pathogenic.

Lung has five characteristics: it is rough, light, mobile, hard and cold. Its principle site is in the pelvis and lumbar region, whereas that of the bile is in the torso or central part of the body (particularly in the liver and gall bladder), and the phlegm resides mainly in the brain. The 'lung' circulates along pathways: along the bones, in the canals and veins of the ears, and through the skin and muscles. These are all sites of 'lung'.

Disturbances of the 'lung'

Lung is responsible for sixty-three different pathologies, which can be subdivided into different groups.

There is a group of twenty called 'rikgyne' (Rigs-gyi-nad), which can appear when the 'lung' does not stay in its proper place,

five are affections of the different types of 'lung' from which they take their name; a further five are specific to the 'lung' but have 'thrispa' (phlegm) complications; the remaining five are 'lung' pathologies which have 'baeken' (bile) complications.

The five types of 'lung'

The 'lung' humor itself has five different subtypes: 1) life-sustaining 'lung' (Srog-'dzin-rLung); 2) ascending 'lung' (Gyen-rgyu-rLung); 3) pervasive 'lung' (Khyab-byed-rLung); 4) metabolic 'lung' (Me-nyon-rLung); 5) descending 'lung' (Thur-sel-rLung).

The life-sustaining 'lung'

The life-sustaining 'lung' is found in the brain, in the prana gateway. This 'lung' circulates from the top of the head through the throat, into the lungs and down to the diaphragm. Its function is to allow the swallowing of foods and liquids, breathing, salivation and the ability to spit saliva and catarrh. It also permits the functioning of the five senses, particularly clear sight and the ability to see, and potentiates intellect, clarity and mental presence.

Certain secondary causes may cause the life-sustaining 'lung' to become pathogenic. For example, if one has eaten for a long time only insubstantial food (in Tibetan, 'supo', which literally means rough) such as rice or vegetables, or been fasting altogether; or if one has been laughing or crying excessively; or else if one has had a lot of suffering, or has over-stretched the body, voice and mind. Characteristic disturbances caused by pathogenic life-sustaining 'lung' are a twisted mouth, lack of mental clarity and bodily weakness.

The ascending 'lung'

The ascending 'lung' is situated in the chest, in the middle of the

'lung' are to allow speech, the emission of words, and to reinforce the body and confer courage. The secondary causes which can provoke pathogenic ascending 'lung' include carrying heavy weights and wearing oneself out, suffering from diseases with vomiting for a long time, and talking for a long time, tiring the voice. Symptoms of its affections are talking senselessly or becoming almost speechless; the tonsils turn red and cold.

The pervasive 'lung'

The main site of the pervasive 'lung' is in the heart, from where it emanates throughout the body by means of the heartbeat and circulation. Its primary function is body movement, particularly of the limbs, and also the opening and closing of the eyes and mouth. Activity in general is governed by the pervasive 'lung'.

Secondary causes which can provoke disturbances include great sufferings that cause the heart to function badly, thereby preventing the pervasive 'lung' from circulating properly throughout the body. Other possibilities are provocations from the Doen or Dreg, or having suffered a great shock. In this case too the heart does not function properly, leading to symptoms such as fainting, and loss of consciousness. The typology can be that of an anxious person who can never keep still but always has to move about and walk up and down; the patient may speak senselessly or cry frequently. These are some of the symptoms.

The metabolic 'lung'

The metabolic 'lung' that accompanies fire is situated in the stomach in the digestive region. The pathways through which it circulates are the large intestine, the

disturbances are: having suffered a hemorrhage; consistently eating only insubstantial food or nothing at all; or sitting for a long time in a damp place. The resulting symptomatology includes weakness, inability to digest and liver conditions. If the situation is allowed to continue for a long time, kidney diseases can appear.

The descending 'lung'

The descending 'lung' resides in the anus and in the pathways of the secret zone, the bladder, rectum and uppermost part of the thighs. Its function is to permit the evacuation of feces, urine, sperm and menstrual blood, as well as to bring on delivery. In fact, it allows the fetus to remain in the womb throughout pregnancy, and then causes it to be expelled. 'Tursel' diseases can arise after sitting for too long in a damp place, or when one has had diarrhoea or constipation for a long time. They can also be provoked by consistently forcing one's evacuation, or by holding back feces or urine a lot.

In the Western world, many people have problems with this kind of 'lung'. If it does not circulate properly, one has difficulty in evacuating, and one develops a swollen belly. Many people believe that this is caused by an inability to digest properly, and therefore take laxatives. According to Tibetan medicine, however, the descending ('tursel') lung is blocked.

'Lung' and the chakras

As regards the relationship between the chakras and the different types of 'lung', the Kalachakra makes the following connections: the head chakra with the life-sustaining 'lung'; the throat chakra with the ascending 'lung'; the heart chakra with the pervasive 'lung'; the navel chakra with the

said to correspond to the wood element: this is explained using the example of trees moving in the wind.

Cancer and the different kinds of 'lung'

In general, it is difficult to find tumors that do not depend on one of the different types of lung. In particular, cutaneous and hematological tumors are linked to the pervasive 'lung'; brain tumors to the life-sustaining 'lung'; lung and glandular tumors to the ascending 'lung'; gastric tumors to bad digestion and the metabolic 'lung'; and tumors of the bladder, uterus and kidneys to the descending 'lung' ('tursel').

Vital 'lung'

Without the 'lung' the human body would not be able to function. However, the different kinds of 'lung' guide diseases and cause them to spread. 'Lung' is also the ultimate cause of death, at the moment when our breathing ceases. So it is very important to get to know this humor and how it works: one should be familiar with its characteristics and the causes that can lead to imbalance.

Dr. Phuntsok Wangmo was born in 1963 in Lhasa, Tibet. She trained for five years at the Institute for Traditional Medicine, founded by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1917. Following her graduation she studied Tibetan Astrology and specialized in that divinatory art. After brilliantly completing all her training, she went to eastern Tibet where she collaborated in the projects of A.S.I.A.

During her time in Tibet she practices medicine, visiting patients daily at Galengting (near Derge). She has also taught medicine at the University of Medicine in Lhasa.

Russia

Interview with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche The Organization of a Gar in Russia

by Lyudmila Kislichenko & Gregory Mokhin



Rinpoche with the Russian Community

F. Andrico

Q: Rinpoche, what is the meaning of a Gar? Should it be a place for retreats? What should be built there?

A: The Gar is the place for the communication of all the practitioners inside the country, as well as practitioners from other countries. Places for retreats, for example, for a dark retreat, can be located at other sites. The Gar is the center for transmitting the teaching. Other lamas and teachers can also be invited to visit the Gar. The Gakyil should understand what a Gar is. The Gar is the main place for the Dzogchen Community; not really a place for people to live. Of course, there must be some houses where the responsible people who look after the Gar can stay. Outside the main Gar there can also be other houses built where people can live, if there are people who can buy the land on their own.

In Merigar from the very beginning we did everything together, and nobody lived there permanently. Now there are some ninety to one hundred people living around Merigar, and some of them bought land and houses nearby.

A Gar is not necessarily a large site, but is open for all the members of the Community. For example, a Gar can house a common library. Tsegylgar, in America, is younger, and has a wide piece of land with many neighbors. At the beginning, both the neighbors and local authorities were against building anything on that land. Only recently have we received the permission for starting construction. We now have some buildings in Conway, twenty kilometers away from Tsegylgar. The Shang Shung Institute is there, and many projects are carried out now; the projects which were initiated by us after the opening of the Gar.

As far as construction is concerned, the first thing we need is a house for the land keeper (the gekos). The house is not like a family house, but a place where he or she could stay. In summer tents are acceptable. You should also keep in mind the winter, so people would be able to meet, communicate, and do practices. Houses for retreats are not so urgent. If people are able to meet and communicate, they can decide what is necessary next; whether it is a Gonpa, or a hall for the Vajra Dance or Yantra Yoga. So, everything will gradually develop.

In Merigar there was only one house and one room at the beginning; other rooms were not suitable for people to live. We spent our free time cleaning and repairing the whole house and more people were able

to live there. Our first retreat in Merigar was held in the open air, but now we have many buildings completed. We have developed gradually. Houses for retreats were built only two years ago. A Gar develops slowly, and the most important thing is the collaboration among the people.

Q: Rinpoche, how can we find the resources for supporting Gar?

A: There are not any specific resources. A Gar must be a self-sustaining venture. We have orga-

nized auctions, for example, and tried to find sponsors. To have enough money for Merigar two, we borrowed money from a person who had a lot of resources, and gave it back portion by portion. On my birthday he gave me a gift and canceled all our debt.

Another time we did a continuous twenty-four hour Ganapuja, with the rites of the Guardians, and by the time we had to collect money it was there! So the collaboration is really the most important thing.

Q: Rinpoche, there are many people who do not have enough money but who are ready to live and work in the Gar. How can it be done?

A: You can also arrange for this. For example, somebody can stay for a month or for one or two years, but the owner of the land must be the Community.

If you have your Gar in the future, I will stay there, but it is no longer possible in a tent. I do not mind staying in a tent, but now it would be a little hard for me to endure. Of course you can build a Gonpa, but that is not the main point.

You can also do retreats in the open air, as we did in Merigar. Sometimes in the winter we used to move to Greece, and you also should act according to your circumstances. Now it is up to you to clarify all the legal questions as it is done in your country, and compare it to Merigar, Tsegylgar and other Gars. Then you should find a suitable place, asking for the advice of other Russian Gakyils and consulting with me. Then you will know all the potential problems and how to solve them. In Italy, for example, we spent four or five years looking for land.

Q: Which qualities should a place for Gar possess?

A: If it is a mountainous area, the place should face south and be protected from the north by a slope. The East, and better if it's the West, should be open. A water stream should not escape from the site of the Gar. If you want to know more details you should read books on geomancy.



Sergiev Monastery

F. Andrico

The Sergiev Monastery

by Anna Rochegova and Helena Antonova

One evening during the Moscow retreat, Fabio reminded us about our trip with him on his first visit to Russia to the ancient Sergiev-Posad Monastery. It was a great idea to go again with Rinpoche and Rosa to this very spiritual place!

The story of the monastery is that in the fourteenth century, a boy named Sergey was born into the noble family of Rostov the Great. He seemed to be slow of mind for his age. It was difficult for him to read and write, so his parents only trusted him to take care of the cows. One day, when he was doing just that, he ran into an unusual old man. There was a bright light shining over the man's head and his clothes were not ordinary. This meeting transformed Sergey's life and he quickly progressed in learning; showing great capacities in different areas of life. As a youth, he left his parents house to become a monk

and went to live in the forest and stayed alone there for a long time. Sometimes animals would visit him, even wild ones; Sergey and animals had a good understanding and communication. After sometime other monks came to live near him where they built the first church and residences; what later became the base of the Russian Orthodox Church. There was a strong spiritual energy at this place, and not only monks and spiritual people came, but simple people from all over Russia, in order to receive blessings and advice.

During the time of the Soviet Union the monastery remained an active monastery, which was unusual, because it was a difficult time. After "Perestroika" the monastery was revitalized and many pilgrims streamed there to touch its spiritual source.

It was a nice, sunny day when we arrived with Rinpoche and Rosa. There were many birds that looked wonderful against the gold tops of the churches-- as well as many black robed monks and nuns among the lay people. We walked around the monastery, looked in the various churches, drank the healing waters, and made photos with the priests and "babushkas" (old women).

After our tour we went to a small market filled with very colorful Russian folk wares outside the monastery and did some last minute gift shopping, as Rinpoche and Rosa were returning to Italy very soon. We had a picnic near the ancient walls of the monastery among the first summer flowers in the fresh grass. Down below the Russian village unfolded and sometimes the pilgrims, men and women with their walking sticks, would walk by on the criss-crossing roads. They were named the "Russian yogis".

Our day ended there and we felt enriched by the wonderful time we experienced with Rinpoche. We learned how to be in the presence of the moment without fuss and conditioning and studied how to integrate the practice into our daily lives.



Rinpoche, Rosa and the Babushkas

F. Andrico



Santi Maha Sangha in Moscow

J. Valby

Лето 1996 №1

THE RUSSIAN MIRROR

"Zerkalo" (pronounced Zierkalo), will be produced by an editorial board in the Russian language beginning with Issue #0 in August, 1996. The chief editor and designer is Misha Tcherepanov of Moscow. The group of editors and translators includes Tanya Naumenko and Farida Malikova of St. Petersburg, Helena Antonova, Grisha Mochin and Vladimir Maikov of Moscow; the editor for Russian information and financial supervisor is Anna Artemyeva; and of computer publishing, Olga Bondareva. "Zerkalo" will be a smaller edition of The Mirror, containing approximately eight to ten pages in a smaller format and will initially be produced four times a year.

The credit for the idea for this publication goes to Jim Valby of Tsegylgar.

Letter from St. Petersburg

Carissimo Maestro,

We would like to express to you our deepest gratitude for your marvelous work—creating the Santi Maha Sangha Teaching. Studying your books while preparing for the examination, we had a good chance to taste the living tradition of the Dzogchen transmission.

Following your instructions on life and development of the world-wide Dzogchen Community, we decided to organize our studies in the form of group discussions. During these sessions, trying to find right answers together, we came to understand how the Teaching works, and how it spreads among and within us.

Last autumn when we started, our first meetings were rather noisy and confused and perhaps marked with a certain degree of egotism and desire to stand one's own ground. But slowly the cloudy waters settled, all disturbances cleared away, and only the main point stayed—the careful and thorough study of Santi Maha Sangha.

Gradually we began to feel the vivid effect of the Transmission. In the course of our sessions some people, through understanding and sometimes through experience, saw and entered the Mandala of Dzogchen and began to integrate outside vision with inner comprehension in daily life.

At the beginning the language of our meetings was rather confused, but later became much more clear, and we worked out the single view, or Tawa, based on the Teaching. Thus we got a chance to unite our experience and to create "the single field of communication". It is interesting to note that this Tawa helped us to find relevant answers not only when studying examination questions, but also in our daily contacts and interactions.

Our studies were penetrated with a wonderful energy flow. Nobody was tired, on the contrary, these meetings became indispens-

able for us, bringing into our lives deep meaning and aspiration. It was owing to the nature of the Dzogchen Teaching that we learned to discuss Superior Knowledge not in a heavy and boring style, but in a simple and free manner. That's why periods of intensive intellectual work alternated with bursts of spontaneous joy and the Wisdom of the Masters took an easy form of a joke. Being far from the profane, it gave us the feeling of the vivid presence of the Field of the Masters.

As many of us have noticed, our meetings became something like a retreat with our Teacher—certain energy that we could call "Transmission". Santi Maha Sangha started to function, it unites us even more closely, transmitting the Energy of Knowledge and demonstrating that we all are a single body, this body being the Sangha.

We would like to confirm once more our deepest gratitude to you, our precious Master, for transmitting us this unique Teaching. May your lotus feet stay firmly on the Earth!

Members of the St. Petersburg Dzogchen Community-Sangye Ling



Shakyamuni Buddha

Illustration by Jurij Kikanorov

The Lithuanian Community

Aushra & Co. from Dorjeling

Lithuania has a formal membership of about thirty people, and an active membership of fifteen. Most are very young, not very experienced, and try to use every possibility to participate in retreats. The beginning of the Lithuanian Community was in 1992, when Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche came to Vilnius. A year before that we have had a message of hope—Fabio came to teach Yantra Yoga. Then there were several retreats with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in the territory of the previous Soviet Union, a difficult first hitch-hiking experience and then easier journeys to Merigar. We even have a Lithuanian ambassador in Merigar—Augustinas, a thangka painter. There are some older members of the Community in Lithuania who are too busy to travel much, but nevertheless their realizations are sometimes more concrete. One of



them, Salius Maccina, has recently translated Choegyal Namkhai Norbu's book "On Birth and Life. A Treatise on Tibetan Medicine". In general, we don't need to translate much because all of us know either English, Italian or Russian. We gather for collective practices; we may even begin to do Yantra Yoga collectively as we now have an instructor among us—Egle. Once a week we do the Vajra Dance in a house where retired old people live and we hope they will have a good reason to practice in their future lives. After the retreat with Adriana a year and a half ago, we were thrown out of this place, because we were seen as sectarians of doubtful reputation, but now we have transformed ourselves into students of psychology and are lucky to have this perfect hall again. While dancing we hear the bells of the nearby Catholic Church, singing and have a view of the cemetery. Sometimes we dream about a happy future when we will have lots of money and be able to buy the whole building....

Maybe because we dream too much, or because of our slow Nordic character, we don't hurry to pass the exam of Santi Maha Sangha. Only one of us, Valdas, has passed it in Moscow, maybe this will become a good inspiration for the rest of us.... ■

Buryatia Community

by Zorik Dugarov and Oksana Ilina

Though almost everyone had problems getting there, in the end twenty people from Buryatia attended the Moscow retreat. Many members of our Community didn't have the possibility to come, but they were with us in our hearts.

There are two main locations of the Buryatian Dzogchen Community. One is in countryside, and another in Ulan-Ude, the capital of Buryatia. In the countryside we have land where Batodalai built a 'dugan' (little Buddhist temple) and in the future there may also be retreat houses there. The city branch of the Community usually has meetings for doing Ganapujas, studying Santi Maha Sangha and doing Yantra Yoga with the guidance of Aleksander Vyaznikovcev.



Buryatia Community

Sometimes people do different kinds of individual retreats. Bair Ochirov and Nick Dudka were in Dharmasala for six months, studying Tibetan language.

After the retreat in Moscow we have a lot of plans and desires. While in Moscow we had a general meeting and chose our new gakyil. We hope they do all the best.

New gakyil:

Blue: Bair Ochirov, Aleksander Vyaznikovcev, Yellow: Dandar, Nadya Popova, Red: Vera Grigorjevna Naguslaeva,

Oksana Ilina
New address

Community "Kundrolling"
c/o Maria Fedotova
pr. 50-years of October 44-26
Ulan-Ude 670000
Buryatia, Russia

Minsk

The Byelarusia Dzogchen Community

After Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's first visit to the ex-USSR in 1992, the Byelarusian Dzogchen Community was founded. At that time there was already a small group of people interested in Buddhism. In 1991 some of us had gone to Buryatia to receive an empowerment from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who had come for celebrating two hundred and fifty years of Buddhism in Russia.

For a long time preceding this, the Dharma was not taught in



Byelarusia Community

Russia and there were no experienced practitioners; it was quite difficult in the beginning for us to receive teachings and to have any contact with Buddhism. We were forced to go to Russia, Lithuania, and Latvia to have contact with more experienced practitioners.

After the retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in 1992, we decided to follow the Dzogchen Teaching and began to have collective practices.

Now in Minsk there are fifteen to eighteen practitioners. At the last

retreat in Moscow there were fourteen of us, and four of us participated in the Santi Maha Sangha base level exam and first level training. Unfortunately we received the study material very late, and for this reason many were not courageous enough to take the exam, but are still interested.

Our Gakyil is made up of three people: Blue: Nikolaj Achmerov, Red: Russian Malakhouskiy, Yellow: Valery Kishkurno. Soon we will create a new Gakyil.

Now after this last retreat in Moscow, we return home with a new strength for the teaching and practice and are ready to collaborate with the other Dzogchen Communities of the world.





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



The Stupa Project

by Jim Smith

The Tsegylgar Community wishes to make known to the Dzogchen Community world-wide, and to those who have a relationship to the Dzogchen teachings, the wish and intention to construct a stupa dedicated to the health and long life of their master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and to the spreading of the Dzogchen Teachings.

The presence of the stupa brings benefit to all beings by preventing diseases and obstacles, subduing negative forces and imbalances in nature, and bringing harmony and prosperity to the environment, the country and its people. The wish is to realize this project through the donations of Rinpoche's students.

Several of the Tsegylgar Community have already committed their time and experience to see this project through to completion, beginning this fall and throughout next summer. It is our hope that many will participate—not only financially, but actually by helping with many aspects of the project. Rinpoche has given us a design for the Chorten to be placed on the retreat land of Tsegylgar.

May contributions to this project be beneficial to Rinpoche, all those suffering from sickness, and those experiencing obstacles or are dying!

PASSAGES

Gerd and Veruschka Manusch announce the birth of their baby girl, Chiara Rossalina Dronma on April 10, 1996 in Germany.

Stephen Ezequille and Nicole Bini were married in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA, on April 30, 1996. Nicole Bini is the new gekos of Tsegylgar, and began the position as of May 20, 1996.

The family of Mark, Emily and Jeremy Alston-Follansbee are happy to announce a new addition to their family in the form of Annie Rose, born July 13, 1996, in Massachusetts, USA.

Kumar Kumari

Yantra Yoga for boys and girls

by Laura Evangelisti

The winter program of activities for children is drawing to a close at Merigar this June. Beginning in November of last year each Saturday afternoon the children met in their room at the Yellow House to do sessions of Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga under the guidance of different parents who alternated leading the course.

Starting in January, when the booklet of Santi Maha Sangha level 1 was ready, those children who had already followed the base level of Santi Maha Sangha and had done the exam met after Kumar Kumari to study the new first level training. Parents took turns to guide the group in reading and discussing the text and doing a short practice together. This first level is one of three levels which Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche has programmed for the children.

Since there were quite a few children participating, they were quite lively and it was not always easy to direct their concentration, but in spite of their joking and playing around, it was an important and positive time because they tried to learn how to give a little more respect to each other and those around them.



Liz Granger

All in all, the program has been a learning experience for both the children and those adults who participated. On this basis, we warmly recommend to those with children to consider organizing similar groups in other parts of the world.

Maria Margherita Maglietti, one of the children who participated in the course throughout the winter wrote a report about her experience:

"Last November we started to do Kumar Kumari Yantra and we finished the last lesson at the beginning of June. Previously we hadn't done anything for a few months, so it was a big change for us when we started.

Each Saturday we met in the children's room and as soon as we arrived we would tidy it up a bit and then start to do Yantra Yoga—first of all we would do the warm-up exercises of Hatha Yoga and then real Yantra Yoga.

During the course we learned all the Kumar Kumari that Rinpoche had prepared for us and almost every time we would practice a new exercise. In the first part of the course most of all we did the nine purification breathings, the cigyon, and the lunsan and at the end, of course the nine breathings, the zadul and the three yantras. Almost all the children who live around Merigar, from five to fourteen years old, both boys and girls, participated in the course. I have to say that sometimes the smaller children were more dedicated and less distracted than the big ones.

So that one single person did not have too much to do, four of our mothers took turns to teach us and we thank them very much for helping us to practice Kumar Kumari.

Since I have the possibility to say something about my experience I want to advise all children to get their parents to help them practice Yantra because besides the many benefits described in the text, I have really experienced that at the end of each session, you feel better and more relaxed and if you were nervous or angry before, you even forget the reason why."

For advice and suggestions about Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga, write to:

Laura Evangelisti, Merigar,
58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

NEW GAKYILS

GERMANY

BLUE

Florian Roman (Director), Birgit Gewehr

RED

Roland Seeser, Hans Vogel

YELLOW

Helmut Reile, Tassilo Eisgruber

Oddiyana Edition Yantra Yoga:
Gerd Manusch

Newsletter - for one year in cooperation with the Frankfurt practitioners and the Blue Gakyil:

Marie Krupp

ARGENTINA

April 7th, 1996

President and Gekos: Martin Bortagaray

Secretary: Maria Alonso

Treasurer: Hugo Berbott

BLUE

Laura Yoffe (coordinator)

Patricia Feldman

Alejandra Moran

RED

Beatriz Rossi

Adolfo Portillo

Adriana Battisti

YELLOW

Hugo Berbottot

Ana Lia Falcon

Marquita Garcia Ruvira

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Singapore

Tel: 65 4521135

RED:

Chan Keen Tuck

151A, King's Rd. #07-03

Singapore 268158

Tel: 65 4756853

Fax: 65 2242691

UK

YELLOW

Geoffrey Blundell

RED

Peter White

BLUE

Choh Goh

Songs from Tsegylgar

to this place in the woods
holy place, sacred land
walked upon by a vajra guru
a living buddha.

to this place i have come to give my offering,
do my best, give what i can to you
samaya bound wrathful ones.
neither riches nor fortune are mine to be given.
nor awareness nor presence.

i have barely enough to matter.
but this i can give for you to enjoy.
the sweet smoke of a juniper bough.
cool beer poured upon the ground.
sweat of my brow from work to be done.
drops of blood from cuts on my hands.
intention from the heart to see it all done.

these i can give to all of you.
fiery red wrathful ones.
so from now until forever
may you guard and protect
this holy place, this sacred land.

—Conway Joe



A Golden Week in Japan

Dzogchen Retreat on the Izu Peninsula, May 3-6, 1996

by Edgar Cooke

The end of April through the beginning of May is referred to as "Golden Week" in Japan. At this time, several holidays occur in close proximity, so that it is one of the few times in the year when many Japanese can take an extended vacation break. It seems especially golden when Rinpoche comes for a retreat! Rinpoche had requested that the retreat be held someplace warm, so the four day retreat was held at a remodeled four hundred year old farmhouse in a beautiful natural setting not far from the ocean in the hills of southern Izu Peninsula, about three hours by train from Tokyo.

The area, famed for its hot springs, is also known for frequent and severe earthquakes, but although Rinpoche's powerful Dharma talk shook many of us up, no physical destruction occurred. We were also blessed with good weather, only having the opportunity to integrate with the water element that falls to the earth element through the air element from the space element for one brief session.

The retreat was attended by more than seventy people, mostly Japanese, but assorted others from Italy, Spain, the U.S., etc., and Mr. Tetsu Nagasawa rapidly and accurately interpreted Rinpoche's English into Japanese. An added benefit was a lesson in basic Yantra Yoga provided following one afternoon session, an added kindness since many participants had been unable to attend

the Yantra Yoga courses held in Tokyo before the retreat. "Prof." Fabio Andrico attempted to teach us the Vajra Wave, which many students are now using to break their leases in the tiny apartments most of us live in.

Of course, Rinpoche himself was radiant with energy as he taught the Dharma. At the first "A", I was no longer sitting there, listening to Rinpoche, but became a mere point of view in an arena of consciousness with Rinpoche manifesting as Buddha in the center speaking directly from heart to heart. As if by automatic pilot, I tried to keep enough presence of mind to take careful notes, but examining them afterwards, I found they had miraculously transformed into dakini script (which I can't read).



Rinpoche and his son Yeshe

R. Namkhai

Hopefully the tapes of the retreat will become available. The initial teachings were followed by a whirlwind transmission of numerous practices, and finally a Ganapuja, which had Rinpoche bouncing with laughter at our lack of competence. Evil karma had prevented my attending Rinpoche's teachings until this retreat, although I had read a number of his books.

But actually coming into contact with Rinpoche, I realize that the teaching occurs on many levels, and mere words printed on paper are no substitute. At times it almost seemed that Rinpoche was speaking just to hold the attention of us children while he transmitted the real message beyond words.

Although Rinpoche has visited Japan several times already, the Dzogchen Community here has not seemed to thrive. This time, however, some students have been inspired to start a weekly Yantra Yoga collective practice, and home collective practice initiated by Hiroyuki Sawamura, (a long-time follower of Rinpoche who had lived in Europe and knows how the Community operates there). Hopefully, by next visit, our collective efforts will be a pleasant surprise for Rinpoche, who has given us so much to enrich our lives.

brief introduction about the Dzogchen Teaching, and about our Master Choegyal Namkhai Norbu and his successive lineage that originated with the first human master, Garab Dorje. Then the subject regarding transmission was dealt with and the Tibetan syllables OM-A-HUM were introduced; beautifully drawn by thanka painter Glen Eddy.

Some quotations from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's teachings about the attitude to practice were read aloud and afterwards everybody practiced Shine with fixation on an white A.

Both before and after lunch the complete explanation of the Short Tun was given and we all practiced this. Then the explanations continued with the principles of the Ganapuja, which we did together later in the evening with a larger group of older students since it was the New Moon and the anniversary of Nyag-la Pema Dud'dul (1816-1872) the master of Chang Chub Dorje, the main master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

After many hours of explana-

tions and practice we relaxed a little and watched a video of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's earlier teachings from Conway. Then a convoy of cars took the new people to the Buckland land where everybody enjoyed the Dzogchen Community's land with the outdoor Mandala, the beautiful pond, the retreat cabin and the new guardian cabin that is under construction.

The next day we repeated the explanation of the Short Tun before we practiced it and rehearsed over and over the many mudras of the Ganapuja. Before we ended the weekend, Jim Valby, the Tibetan translator, gave an explanation of the Santi Maha Sangha training and also shared a little about the Vairocana translation project which is involved in translating the tantras on which most of the Santi Maha Sangha is based.

Before people left Tsegvalgar to return to their homes and daily lives again, there were many positive expressions of a full and inspiring weekend. Most of all, they looked forward to coming to the retreat with the Master in September.

a shrine. They are meeting three evenings a week. If anyone would like to help, donations can be sent to:

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Gardner, MA 01440-046
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Also, if anyone is interested in becoming a Pen-Pal, they can contact the above address.

Rinpoche in Singapore

by Ian Gan

Flight No.QF 5 touched down in Singapore from Australia on April 15, 1996 bringing along with it our most anxiously awaited guests--Rinpoche, his wife Rosa and Fabio.

We were all so thrilled to see the imposing figure of Rinpoche with his distinct hat emerging from the immigration checkpoint. Although Fabio sported a ponytail, he could not escape our identification from where we stood. And who was that petite looking lady standing between Rinpoche and Fabio? Oh, it must be Rinpoche's wife!

After four days of rest, Rinpoche started to give his three day teachings at the Singapore Buddhist Lodge. There were approximately two hundred participants despite the fact that there was hardly any publicity. We were glad to get to know that a vast majority of the participants were first timers to Dzogchen. They included serious TM (Transcendental Meditation) practitioners and members of some of the major Tibetan Buddhist sects in Singapore.

Rinpoche expounded on the Four Noble Truths and reminded practitioners to practice with concrete experiences and not to waste time on concepts and wild imagination as time is precious. He also gave a detailed comparison between Sutrayana, Mahayana, Tantrayana and Dzogchen. This was followed by a detailed introduction to the Short Tun, the importance of Guruyoga in Dzogchen, the Four Exercises for Mind Training, etc. Already familiar with the kindness

of our Guru, he once again transmitted all the essential practices to us including Kilaya Drago, twenty-one Semzins and the practice of Rushen. At the conclusion of the Teachings, he reminded us again of the importance of collaboration amongst practitioners.

Rinpoche was invited by the Sakyapa Community in Singapore to give a talk at their newly completed Tibetan temple and those who attended had a deep insight into the meaning of Lung, Initiation and Mahamudra from the Sakyapa standpoint. It was as if Rinpoche had transformed into a Sakyapa master with his most succinct deliberation of the subjects.

After Rinpoche's Teachings he was joined by his son Yeshe and we had a tour of the Botanical gardens, the Zoo and the cable car ride to Sentosa Island where the family had a swim and did some sun-bathing. The night before their departure to Japan they were treated to a sumptuous Steam Boat dinner.

Reflecting on the kindness of our Guru and his exemplary character, our hearts cannot help but melt into tears of joy and gratitude towards his kindness in making an effort to visit us despite his illness. This cannot truly be repaid until we work towards the fulfillment of the objectives that are of great value to him.

As flight JL 712 departs for Japan on April 29, 1996 with Rinpoche on board, our hearts followed him and our profound sadness of missing his presence reminds us of our needs to put more effort into our practice and realize while the opportunity presents itself.

May the lotus feet of our glorious Master remain fixed upon the earth and may he enjoy good health, happiness and longevity!

Newcomer's Introductory Weekend at Tsegvalgar

June 15, 1996

by Marit Cranmer

Every now and then the same questions appear from several people addressed to the Dzogchen Community: How do I do it? The practice and the rituals? What does it mean? Who can teach me the mudras? I had this and this experience, and is that really OK? So, the Gakyil at Tsegvalgar finally decided to conduct a weekend especially for the new participants interested in the Dzogchen Community.

Letters were sent out and on Saturday morning, about twenty people, old and new students, were gathered in the annex at Tsegvalgar's Old grammar School in Conway, Massachusetts.

The two older students who took responsibility to introduce and guide were Gerry Steinberg and Marit Cranmer. A small program was prepared and it contained a

Inmates at Correctional Institution in USA Practice the Dharma

Approximately twenty - five inmates at the North Central Correctional Institution in Gardner, Massachusetts, have established a Buddha Dharma Center. They have been operating with a very limited amount of books related to Buddhism and meditation, and are requesting donations of books and any other related material. Eventually they would like to set up

Tashigar News

The new Gakyil was elected in Tashigar, active from April 1996 until April 1997.

There is no telephone yet in Tashigar, because there are no wires set up, so we are trying to get a cellular phone in the near future. For the moment we have three numbers for international communication:

Fax: Tashigar/Martin Bortagaray: (54) (541) 98300
Fax and phone: Laura Yoffe: (54)(1)788-1728
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with *Tsultrim Allione*

Transmission, explanation and lots of practice.

JULY 25-26

CHOD PRACTICE PILGRIMAGE ON THE TARA
MANDALA LAND
with *Tsultrim Allione*

JULY 30

STUPA CELEBRATION

AUG. 2-11

FAMILY RETREAT
with *Tsultrim Allione* and facilitated by
*Carol Fitzpatrick, Jeffrey McIntyre and
Nancy Miriam Hawley.*

AUG. 16-18

"LOVINGKINDNESS" VIPASSANA LECTURE AND
RETREAT
with *Sharon Salzberg*

AUG. 23-25

WHITE TARA RETREAT
with *Gangteng Tulku Rinpoche*

Gangteng Tulku Rinpoche is a master of the
Nyingma and Drukpa Kagyu traditions and
received his training from H.H. Karmapa,
Dudjom Rinpoche, Dilgo Kheytse Rinpoche
and currently studies with Ven. Chatrul
Rinpoche and Penor Rinpoche.

AUG. 28- SEPT. 2

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with *Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche* and translation
by *Anne Carolyn Klein, PhD.*

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receive teachings from one of the most senior
living Lamas and Dzogchen masters in the
Nyingma tradition and perhaps the most eminent
Nyingma historian alive today.

FOR FURTHER PROGRAM DETAILS CONTACT:

TARA MANDALA,
P.O. Box 3040,
Pagosa Springs, Colorado 81147
(970) 264-6177 or fax (970) 264-6169.

Book Review

continued from page 5

have made the format easy to use. The text has been broken into chapters with clear headings, the root text highlighted in the commentary, and the names of individuals, texts, locations, titles, etc., clearly identified. It is thoroughly researched with extensive bibliographies, footnotes, and glossaries, thus making it a very usable text for academics, translators and the general reader. A thorough glossary of English, Sanskrit and Tibetan technical terms is included. It is indexed on the English terms but I hope that in future translations and offerings from Snow Lion, a few extra pages can be added so that the glossary is also indexed on both the Sanskrit and Tibetan terms. This addition would increase its usefulness greatly.

My only significant reservation with the translation is the use of the word "cause" to translate the term "hetu" in Sanskrit and "rgyu" in Tibetan in the chapter on karma.

This choice immediately puts the reader in the familiar Western notions of causality. However, something quite different is happening in the philosophy of karma. The "rgyu" are more like seeds, the actions that we do acting as seeds that then grow into an experience of the world. The analogy is often used of a seed growing into a tree that bears fruit. In English, we cannot say that an acorn, for instance, is the cause of an oak tree, so "cause" is clearly wrong. I feel the choice is unfortunate for it obscures the quite brilliant treatment of karma that Kongtrul offers in this chapter.

Most Western students of Buddhism are primarily interested in practice. What use, then, will this admittedly technical text be to them and what does it contribute to the Western library? I see four potential contributions. First, it is an excellent reference text with authoritative and concise explanations for many of the technical terms that a person meets in their reading and study. It also provides comprehensive and surprisingly detailed accounts of the cosmologies of Tibetan Buddhism.

Secondly, it provides the raw material for cultural comparisons. These cosmologies pervade the structure of thought and spiritual practice for educated (monastic) Tibetans.

Third, this book offers a comprehensive account of cosmologies that in no way depend on a creator figure. This is an interesting and important difference between Buddhist world views and most Western religious world views. Here, we are truly the creator of his world and the responsibility for it rests with us. There is no God or Creator to appeal to save us or to fix things. Finally, it provides fascinating contrasts with the highly technical Newtonian and Einsteinian cosmologies that permeate our culture, cosmologies in which human existence is largely unexplainable except as an accident of physical, chemical, and/or biological processes. These cosmologies offer a view of the universe in which the organizing and creative principles are the actions of sentient beings and the awareness that is the essence of being.

Ken McLeod

May at Tara Mandala

*The Beginning of the
1996 Summer Retreat Season*

by Patricia Yenawine

Several of us returned from the exhilarating and exhausting Mandarava pilgrimage to reinvent summer camp here in Pagosa Springs, replacing the old Coleman two burner camp stove and two propane refrigerators which are due to arrive in a couple of weeks.

As our base crew of staff and long term residents settled in, various stupa building enthusiasts began to arrive. The moment that really opened the season was the Stupa ground breaking ceremony on Saturday, May 18. Many old friends appeared from last year's retreats and from the pilgrimage. The ceremony itself, led by Tsultrim with guidance from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, was very beautiful.

The Stupa site, now properly consecrated, is the focus of our work. We had a tree-cutting (Shog Shing) ceremony on the Monday after the consecration to obtain a spine for the Stupa. Since then we have dug the foundation and drainage trenches, and the deep central pit for weapons and the

negativity ball. In all this digging and planning we were guided by Dave Petit and Jim Smith.

When not digging, we have been exploring the new road to the Hidden Valley for beautiful building rocks. This land is very rich in sandstone, good for building, good for carving. It is also rich in clay, which translates well into tsa tsa making and possibly future pottery. The energy around all this work is very powerful.

At the end of May, Khenpo Gyurmed arrived from Pema Osal Ling in California. He is in the lineage of Nyala Pema Duddul, from Nyarong Tibet. He assisted us with the Stupa planning and tsa tsa making and was a very cheery addition to our community. He also guided us in completing the subduing negativity phase. We buried the "negativity ball" and the weapons on Sunday, June 9, with his help. We are now beginning the next stage, accumulating precious substances. Offerings are welcome. Please send jewels, silks (new fabric) or money to us as soon as possible. ■

Jürgen C. Aschoff

Annotated Bibliography of Tibetan Medicine (1789 - 1995)

Garuda Verlag, Dietikon/Switzerland and Fabri Verlag, Ulm/Germany
1996. XVIII + 426 Pages, cloth, ISBN 9802975 9 4, SFr. 126.-

The author has listed and commented more than 1700 printed works published in different languages. According to the sources, more than 80% of the commentaries are in English, about 20% in German language. Tibetan original texts are not considered. For orders or further information please contact:

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'In the Footsteps of Mandarava'

A Tara Mandala Pilgrimage

by Meg Thompson



Practice at Maratika

C. Hoy

Tara Mandala sponsored the pilgrimage dedicated to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's health from March 25th to April 20th, 1996. Twenty-two people from all around the United States made a pilgrimage to India and Nepal. We focused on the practice of 'The Sphere of the Vital Essence of the Vajra' or 'The Long Life Practice of the Immortal Dakini', (the dakini Mandarava), a mind treasure discovered at the cave of Maratika in 1984 by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The journey was oriented around two major pilgrimage sites: Tso Pema and Maratika.

The assembled group that met in Los Angeles to fly to Delhi, without sleep, got on the bus to meet Tsaltrim in Dharamsala. In Dharamsala, without having slept, we walked to the monastery of Khamtrul Rinpoche, perched on the hillside overlooking Kangra valley. The teachings on Mandarava's life story, profound though they were, fell upon the ears of twenty-two people who were a bit tired. Hopefully, our tiredness simply moved our egos out of the way and allowed the teachings to sink deeply into our beings. For many of us, our time in Dharamsala was our introduction to the Tibetan people. The large nunnery of Ganden Choling hosted the teaching graciously. At the end of the teaching we were invited into the shrine room and sang Song of the Vajra and the nuns sang part of their daily prayers.

After leaving Dharamsala, we visited the community of Tashi Jong and His Eminence Dorzong Rinpoche. The monastery sits like a little jewel on the side of the mountain. The monks there had prepared a tea for us in the most exquisite garden setting. Dorzang Rinpoche gave us a warm reception telling stories of his life in India and Tibet. Our visit coincided with the annual performance of the Lama Dances and we were fortunate to see the Black Hat Dance held under a huge colorful tent.

Our day at Tashi Jong ended as we all piled back into the bus and headed off to Tso Pema (Lotus Lake) or, Rewalsar. The view from a bus window, in the Himachal Pradesh area of India, is of the terraced hill-sides used for farming, making beautiful patterns. We remained at Tso Pema during the time of the full moon and total lunar eclipse. Here was where Mandarava and Guru Rinpoche were burned alive by Mandarava's enraged father and later emerged from the flames unscathed. Forming round him was the lake of floating islands which exists today. Above Tso Pema is a cluster of caves where Guru Rinpoche once lived and now is a sacred area; home for an active community of yogins founded by Lama Wangdor. At Tso Pema we practiced extensively both in the caves and at the monastery of Ontul Rinpoche, where some of us stayed. While at the caves above Tso Pema, we learned that it is possible to sponsor practitioners for \$250 a year. Many of them are quite elderly and some are in need of medical care for things like respiratory problems and arthritis. If you would like to sponsor a practitioner write to Holy Cave, P.O. Rewalsar 175023, Distt Mandi (H.P.), India.

The day following the full moon, we returned to Delhi to board our flight for Kathmandu. While in Kathmandu we had the good fortune to meet Tsok Nyi Rinpoche, Urgyen Tulku's son, who was conducting a Dzog Chen teaching retreat. On the fifth morning of the retreat, we had an audience with him. He was kind enough to give us many relics for use in the Stupa being built by Tara Mandala on its land in Pagosa Springs including a relic from the Buddha, as

well as special protections from his father Urgyen Tulku who had been cremated the day before our arrival.

For most of us, one of the peak experiences of the pilgrimage was meeting the "Devi", a forty five year old Newari woman who, since the age of nine, has been manifesting varying aspects of the goddess, particularly Agima, Fire Earth Goddess. Being with her was like being with an ancient tantric siddha. The next day, we visited Parping and the cave of the Self Arising Tara. We were able to see the caves which contained the Emerging Tara as well as the Self Arising Ganesh. These images are said to be, on their own, arising from the solid rock.

Our days in Kathmandu ended as we boarded the huge Russian helicopter which would take us to the village of Lamidara. It was here in this tiny, remote cluster of humanity perched on a red hilltop that we began our two day trek to Maratika and the cave in which Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche had received the long life practice of Mandarava.

Now, according to the estimate we had received, this first day of trekking was to take us about three hours over rolling



Pilgrimage group in cave at Maratika, taken from cave top.

hills. Well, be warned! Sherpa hours are different from human hours! What they consider rolling hills, might also be called mountains. Anyway, that first day was grueling.

We climbed up and up and up for four hours. (It took some of us five or six hours.) We camped for the night on a terraced hillside, fell into an exhausted sleep and started out early the next morning. We arrived at Maratika early in the afternoon and went immediately to what we thought was the cave of our destination. It was a very large cave, very well used by the local populace. Shortly after arriving at our campground, it was discovered that there was another cave much closer to where we were camping, much less used, and, after looking at photographs of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche taken at the time he received the teaching in the cave, much more likely to be the cave we were interested in. Our campsite was situated in a valley which was surrounded by hills where the local people lived. Their village was on the hillside above us. We could look up from our campsite to their Stupa.

Each one of us had our own personal experience of that valley. For some it was very physically difficult. Others found their challenge in the emotional arena. But whatever the situation was for each individual, the group energy was

magnificent. When one of us needed something and someone else had it, it was shared. When someone could not come to a meal, someone else saw to it that appropriate care was given. When someone was not strong enough to carry a pack, someone else carried it.

Practice and teaching were the spiritual mainstays of our time in the valley. The cooking and camp care provided by our porters were our physical mainstay. We were, as well taken care of as we could have been considering where we were.

As you can well imagine, our group was quite the object of observation among the local residents—especially the children. Our clothes were examined. Our tents were peeked into. We were asked for every manner of trinket we had—pens, pencils, ribbons, cookies. Over the days, we really developed quite a relationship with the kids. We put Band-Aids on their wounds, smeared antiseptic cream into their infected eyes and once were asked to help a woman with a broken bone. We left them with a stock of medicine and bandages.

Finally, it was the last day in the valley. The helicopter was to pick us up at noon. We were packed, tents down, baggage waiting at the edge of the helicopter pad. Yes, it was a real helicopter pad. Who knows why it was there but we were glad it was. We climbed the steps out of the valley for the last time. And we waited. Twelve-thirty and no helicopter. One o'clock and no helicopter. And now the wind began to kick up. Oh dear, helicopters can't fly in heavy wind.

One-thirty arrived. We still waited. Then suddenly, in the distance, came the sweetest sound we had ever heard, the sound of a Russian helicopter. We watched as it came in for a landing, not worrying about being covered by all the dust it was kicking up. And then came the magic. Just as the helicopter touched down, the sky gave us about thirty seconds of rain drops. What a blessing!

The baggage went quickly aboard followed immediately by the passengers. There were waves to the children and the porters and we were off—back to Kathmandu. As soon as we returned, we went to see the Devi and she gave everyone a final blessing. She described details of the journey to us on our return. She also said there was a great yogini among us at Maratika with long black hair and a red shirt and white skirt. This yogini was blessing us and checking our meditation. The Devi had not been told that our pilgrimage was for Mandarava!

The next evening, we closed the pilgrimage with a ceremony in the beautifully Tibetan style Pagoda Room on the roof of the Vajra Hotel. We sat in a circle looking inward. Facing us from the center of the circle were twenty two Tara statues, twenty one which Tara Mandala had purchased and one which had been given to Tsaltrim by Ontul Rinpoche and Tashi. By coincidence, there were exactly twenty two of us.

Each of us spoke about the pilgrimage, about what gift the pilgrimage had given us and made a vow to take a concrete action when we got home, an action which was to be connected to what had been learned from the pilgrimage.

At the end of the evening the Taras went home with each of us, a metaphor for the deeper understanding of our own Buddha nature we were taking home, they are now all reunited at Tara Mandala Gonpa, and the dakinis have woven another web. Pilgrims all, we were changed irrevocably by this journey. Some of us may never see each other again but there is now a vajra bond among us. Blessings on us all.

C. Hoy
Tsok Nyi Rinpoche will give a ten day retreat at Tara Mandala for those who have already received pointing out instructions and are practicing Dzogchen, August 22-31, and the Devi will be here earlier in June or July for several weeks. ■

She
must have been
a
'Dakini',
She
could not
have
been
'real',
the
blond-haired lady;
hitch-hiking
with
her
13
valises,
to
Rome.

from "The Highway Queen" by Louise Landis-Levi,
published in Vienna, 1994.



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Songs of Namgyalgar & Merigar

མེརིག་གི་ལུ་

Merigar gi lü

The Merigar Song

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

འདིར་རྒྱུ་ལ་ལོག་པ་ལོ། དེ་ཅག་གི་ཁྱོད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་ལ།
Dir jyonba legso, nejaggi drog co Merigar la
Welcome my friends to Merigar!

འོ་དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ། དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ།
Ho Galas Kagbo red, Galas Kagbo red.
It's not so easy here, it's not so easy here.

ང་ལས་དེ་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ།
Nayis de jyas na Kon drag, kon gis de jyas na na drag.
I think that he's better, he thinks that I'm better.

ཡང་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་མ་མཐོང་ན་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ།
Par jyas cur jyas samno dan dus na ran nis ran drag ga
If we put it that way then we are both fine.

ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལས་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ལ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལས་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ལ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ།
Son son son! Lasga jyedkar son! Son son son! Lasga jyedkar son!
Go, go, go! Go and do some work! Go, go, go! Go and do some work!

ཡང་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ།
Par jyas cur jyas lasga tonbar gyis!
Try to finish the job somehow!

ལས་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་མ་མཐོང་ན་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ།
Las ga de med na Merigar la dod tab yodba ma red.
There's no way to stay at Merigar if you don't work.

འོ་དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ། དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ།
Ho Galas Kagbo red, galas Kagbo red.
It's not so easy, it's not so easy.

ང་ལས་དེ་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ།
Nayis de jyas na Kon drag, kon gis de jyas na na drag.
I think that he's better, he thinks that I'm better.

ཡང་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་མ་མཐོང་ན་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ།
Par jyas cur jyas samno dan dus na ran nis ran drag ga.
If we put it that way then we are both fine.

ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ།
Son son son! dogas sakar son! Son son son! dogas sakar son!
Go, go, go! Go and eat! Go, go, go! Go and eat!

ཡང་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ།
Par jyas cur jyas dogas ragba gyis!
Try to find something to eat somehow!

ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ།
Dogas de med na Merigar la dod tab yodba ma red.
There's no way to stay in Merigar if there's no food.

འོ་དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ། དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ།
Ho Galas Kagbo red, galas Kagbo red.
It's not so easy, it's not so easy.

ང་ལས་དེ་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་དེ་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ།
Nayis de jyas na Kon drag, kon gis de jyas na na drag.
I think that he's better, he thinks that I'm better.

ཡང་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་མ་མཐོང་ན་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ།
Par jyas cur jyas samno dan dus na ran nis ran drag ga
If we put it that way then we are both fine.

ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལས་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ལ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ། ལས་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ལ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ།
Son, son son! Lasga jyedkar son! Son, son son! Lasga jyedkar son!
Go, go, go! Go and do some work! Go, go, go! Go and do some work!

ཡང་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ།
Par jyas cur jyas lasga tonbar gyis!
Try to finish the job somehow!

ལས་ཀྱི་ཁྱེད་ལ་ཚོ་མེ་རིག་པ་མ་མཐོང་ན་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ་འདྲ་ལ།
Las ga de med na Merigar la dod tab yodba ma red.
There's no way to stay at Merigar if you don't work.

འོ་དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ། དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ།
Ho Galas Kagbo red, galas Kagbo red.
It's not so easy, it's not so easy.

འོ་དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ། དག་ལ་ལས་ཁག་ཡོད་པ།
Ho Galas Kagbo red, galas Kagbo red.
It's not so easy, it's not so easy.



ནམ་གྲུ་ལ་ལུ་ལུ་

Namgyalgar gi Lü

The Namgyalgar Song

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

མི་དེ་ལ་ནི་འཕྲུ་མ་འཛིན་ཆོ་དབང་ཅེས།

Mi de lani Tenzin Tsewan ser,
The man is Tenzin Tsewang.

གསུང་དབང་ལ་ནི་ཀུ་ཀུ་མ་ཅེས།

Sun van lani kukubara ser,
the voice is the kukubara's.

རང་སེམས་ལ་ནི་ཐེན་པོ་ལོ་ཅེས།

Ransem lani deva qenboi nan,
the mind is in a state of total beatitude.

ལུས་ལེམས་འདྲེར་མེད་ནམ་གྲུ་ལ་ལུ་

Lus sem yermed Namgyalgar la dü.
one finds body and mind, inseparable, at Namgyalgar.

ལུས་ལེམས་འདྲེར་མེད་ནམ་གྲུ་ལ་ལུ་

Lus sem yermed Namgyalgar la dü.
one finds body and mind, inseparable, at Namgyalgar.

རི་དེ་ལ་ནི་དྲོ་མེ་དེ་ཅེས།

Ride lani Dromedary ser,
The mountain is called Dromedary.

ཁྲོང་དེ་ལ་ནི་ཁྲོང་ཁྲོང་ཅེས།

Dronde lani Tilba Tilba ser,
The town is called Tilba Tilba.

གནས་དེ་ལ་ནི་ཤི་ཁྱི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

Nas de lani zhi gyid Namgyalgar,
The place is called 'Happy Namgyalgar'.

དྲོ་ཤི་ཁྱི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

Dorjei bun drog qyognam gun nas dü.
Brothers and sisters of the Vajra flock here from every direction.

དྲོ་ཤི་ཁྱི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

Dorjei bun drog qyognam gun nas dü.
Brothers and sisters of the Vajra flock here from every direction.

འཛོམས་པ་ལ་ནི་མི་རིགས་ཡོད་པ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

Zomba lani mi rig yod gu zom,
Those who meet here are of all nationalities.

ཁྱེད་ལ་ལ་ནི་ལས་རིགས་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

Jyedba lani las rig na gu jyed,
they do all types of work.

ལས་མེད་ལ་ནི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

Las med lani ji jya di yin med,
Those who don't have any work have no idea what to do.

ལས་ཀྱི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

Las jan bundrog nam la phan de dü.
For the brothers and sisters who work there will be benefits and happiness.

ལས་ཀྱི་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

Las jan bundrog nam la phan de dü.
For the brothers and sisters who work there will be benefits and happiness.

Many years ago, before Merigar became the modern place that it is today, before there was running water, electricity or even a telephone, when we were cleaning the manure out of the stalls, digging rocks, mixing cement by hand and doing heavy manual jobs, we would sing this song as we worked side by side with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche as a sort of work song in order to get on with the job. Finally the words have been translated and written down so that we can recall the spirit with which we worked at that time. And it's still not so easy, even now...

While Rinpoche was still in Sydney, Australia earlier this year, before leaving for Singapore, he composed the Namgyalgar Song for which he asked permission to Tenzin Tsewang, his student and a musician, to use some of his words and one of the melodies from his recording entitled "The Cuckoo's Presence - Tibetan Songs and Improvisations for the Flute" composed and performed by Tsewang. We thank Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for his gift of these songs.



The Author

Death Among Natives

by Elio Guarisco

In the Himalayan border regions where the belief in a cycle of birth is accepted as a given fact, among other beliefs of minor importance and less crucial to the lives of human beings, death is dealt with as a painful but natural phenomena.

Contrary to common practices in Western countries where death is concealed so as not to undermine the established values of physical beauty, material wealth and productive dynamism, in these 'backward' regions, death is exposed to the naked eye and to the acceptance of anyone. The disposal of the dead body, which in the West is restricted by a number of regulations and is a matter for competent authorities whose main concern is hygiene, in the Himalayan regions this is luckily (though not for long) still a free business to be handled according to ancient traditions based on inner knowledge.

Among Buddhist practitioners in particular, death is an occasion to deepen awareness of the human condition and learn from it. A day without the awareness of death is a wasted day. At a higher level of understanding, death is a luminous awareness to be actualized long before one dies. This makes natural death something to witness in order to deepen one's awareness rather than something to shun.

Often when a person falls critically ill, a lama belonging to one of the various tribes or castes is called to perform a divination and a consequent ritual. Divination among natives may be done by throwing a handful of rice in a copper plate, separating the grains by numbers until all the grains stand in separate configurations. The prognostic is based on the configurations and their numbers. Further investigation is carried out related to the animal of the year of birth of the person. This is then compared with the animal of the birth year of other members of the family. It is believed that enmity between signs of members of the family and that of the ill person can be the origin of the problem.

Regardless of whether the outcome of the prognostic is positive or negative, a ritual is carried out to attempt to improve the condition of the person, who is placed on the floor in a crossed legged position if possible. The rite performed among native Buddhists who do not have a deep knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism and of its often complicated rites, is a mixture of recitation of separate sacred formulas connected together not by a trend of thoughts like usual Buddhist recitation, but by external gestures made to exorcise the illness and force it out of the body. Illness is never just a physiological phenomena, but a force linked to one's disposition and decline of inner luck. The gestures of exorcism include wiping the body of the person several times from top to bottom with palm leaves. Finally when the 'momentum' of expelling the illness has taken place, the person is turned with his shoulders towards the door of the house and his eyes are covered by the hands of one of his relatives as it is believed that if he looks outside his life energy will depart. While he is kept in this posture, a symbol of the illness is carried outside in a great rush and left at the junction of three roads.

When a person finally succumbs to death, more qualified monks or lamas are called to perform rites and prayers at the house. The corpse is placed in a rough coffin on the floor of the house, which is essential in Indian death procedures. Depending on the school of affiliation of the performing monks, the rites include the transference of consciousness, the Chod, practices related to the peaceful and wrathful deities, prayers for a good rebirth of the person (usually in the pure land of Amithaba), burnt offerings and initiations. Prayers and rites continue until the auspicious day for the cremation, determined by the divination of a reliable lama. In the case of common people, the custom of keeping the body for three days as specified in the Buddhist scriptures, is often overlooked. There is no way to determine rationally and beyond belief how much these rites actually help the deceased in the face of the strength of his good or bad predisposition which mainly determines his future destiny. However, it is evident that these prayers soothe the pain and sorrow felt by the relatives of the person, who, by means of these rituals, feel they are still in touch with their beloved and are doing all they can for him. Somehow they are not left with a sense of impotency in the face of death as usual-

ly happens in Western countries where an almighty God decides the future.

The body is then taken to the cremation place in a procession led by a monk holding a white scarf attached to the coffin. Usually the place is open ground covered by a small roof on the top of which stand a small Buddha statue. Some cremation grounds are considered more suitable than others, generally those far away from inhabited areas and situated in high spots dominating the valley. The coffin is carried on the shoulders of the men. Women do not attend the cremation



Machig Labdron

Illustration by Glen Eddy

because it is considered to be 'men's business'. There are reasons for this. A woman relative of the deceased, perhaps his daughter or wife, would be devastated to see her loved one with whose body she identified with for so many years, burn, crack and finally disappear.

At the cremation place, the corpse is covered in a sheet and placed on a pyre of rough wood. Usually if qualified monks are present, contemporary to the cremation they will perform the powerful tantric rite of fire offering. The fire is ritually lit by the relatives of the deceased who are shaven on the spot as a sign of sorrow. The body of the corpse gets heated and the skin becomes dry and finally cracks, exposing the white tissue under the skin. The experience of seeing this is both painful and awakening. All the gloom of impermanence is felt. Men and women spend most of their lives swinging between the two poles of attachment and hatred, attributing reality and importance to situations, people, etc., but in the end they burn just like wood and dissolve into nothing.

As I watch the figure of my wife's father returning to the earth, I am reminded of an old man's words: "You can only die with him" and "Death is the end of rational thought. People are afraid because they cannot envision a world without rational thought."

Death is a teaching about life and how to live. Life and death may be an illusion yet one cannot help feeling compassion for the ordinary man or woman who dies. One cannot help being aware that however important we think ourselves and our work to be, however much greater than others we feel, at the end, the saint and the sinner, the learned and the ignorant, the rich and the poor, the famous and the insignificant will all become the same. The struggle of the small self for affirmation in this life, for being somebody, just end in nothing. Then why not be now an inseparable part of humanity and mingle without pride among anyone with the course to help? Natives accustomed to cremations feel uneasy only for a few minutes when the fire first eats up the characteristic physical traits of the person they know. After some time, in a somewhat profane way that shows ignorance, they just turn the corpse left and right with long wooden sticks to allow it to burn quickly, accompanying the

job with laughs and jokes inspired by the grotesque shape the human body takes on while being devoured by the fire. It takes the corpse about four hours to burn almost to the end. Drinking alcohol is a common sight at the cremation ground and throughout the funerary rites and not at all considered to be profane. Finally when only the last lump of coal coated flesh remains, everyone leaves and lets what is left burn in the embers.

The next day, some monks and lay people go up to the cremation ground to recover the skull which is kept for forty-nine days. Once it has been taken, the ground is cleaned, a few ritual offerings are made and then everyone goes to stay at some distance waiting for some imprints to appear on the ground. It is believed that if the deceased person will be reborn as a human, imprints of human feet will show on the ground; if, on the other hand, one will be reborn as another kind of being, the imprints of the feet characteristic of that being will show. Depending on the direction in which the imprints point, evaluation is made as to whether the person will be born in the surroundings of his previous house or far away.

The skull is placed on a simple shrine in the deceased's house where food is also offered to the spirit of the deceased every mealtime as if he were still alive. It is customary to perform prayers and rites for forty-nine days, as it is stated in the Buddhist scriptures that this is the time limit for a new reincarnation. The period of forty-nine days is called 'bar do' or 'in between' death and a new life. Every seven days the deceased dies momentarily as a ghost in the 'bar do' to be born again in that state, until he reincarnates. At the end of the forty-nine days, the skull is ground up and mixed with earth from which votive images are made. These are thrown into big rivers which flow into the ocean. Monks performing the ritual may be qualified or not. Qualified lamas, i.e. lamas not attached to worldly concerns because of the purity of their minds will be more helpful to the deceased person. However, since this type of lama is hard to find, even unqualified monks who attend funerary rites to get some remuneration will do, as it is believed that the words of the Buddha contained in the scriptures have a blessing in themselves that springs forth regardless of the good or bad nature of the person pronouncing them.

Food and drink is a must in the house of the deceased since the house should not be left empty for the forty-nine days and the more people there are, the better. There is no better means to keep people around than to entertain them with food and drink. A final celebration, also with prayers, food and drink called 'Ghewa' is held after three or seven weeks. Natives do not know the meaning of the name of the celebration, 'Ghewa' means virtue or merit, and they perform it because it is an established custom. In fact this celebration which involves giving food to many people on behalf of the deceased is a way to create 'merits' by making others happy and that merit is dedicated through prayers to the deceased as a kind of 'inner provision' on the road to his next life. Many are the social and anthropological considerations that can be made on the way of dealing with death as just described, but these are not the occupational interest of the one who writes here. The point in question is that the reality of impermanence and death is an inescapable fact of life that concerns all, regardless of age, a wall against which childish dreams shatter and a mirror in which higher values can be envisioned. The knowledge we have on how to deal with the impermanence of ourselves and others is in itself the very measure of how much we recognize our actual condition as human beings.

Elio Guarisco, born in 1954 in the province of Varese in Italy, was a disciple of Geshe Rabten from 1974 until his passing. He studied Tibetan language and took complete ordination as a Buddhist monk, studying psychology and logic as well as Madhyamika philosophy in Switzerland and Italy. In 1986 he gave up his vows and moved to Milan. Since 1987 he has been working with the translation committee at the monastery of Kalu Rinpoche in India translating the works of the famous master Kontrul Lodro Taye.

One of the most difficult notions to understand in Buddhist theory and practice is no-self, selflessness, or egolessness. Experientially, no-self becomes realized at the deeper stages of practice, leaving most practitioners trying to grasp the import of the concept cognitively. For this, we need clear analytical explanations of what these key words mean. Part of the difficulty in understanding these terms in English is that people are not aware that the range in mean-

lessness." In English usage, self/ego are not necessarily cognate and each has a broad range of uses. Each, however, has (a) a technical psychological use, (b) a meaning associated with pride, (c) a usage referring to "I." One confusion occurs when people mistakenly think that Buddhism is negating ego or self in the technical psychological sense. As to ego, Freud in the early twentieth century began to employ das Ich ("the I") as a description of one part of his tripartite psychologi-

word mana and not by the terms atta/atman. In English, however, the concept of pride is often referred to as ego. Therefore, two Buddhist teachings are mistakenly covered by one English translation equivalent. A subsidiary cultural issue is that Westerners meditating on absence of self (absence of ontological ego) often develop spiritual arrogance (ego in the sense of pride). This raises questions about our mode of practice, our culture and the relationship between insight into

core that subsists, even beyond death. Another relates to our psychological selves. In fact, for the most part, when we in the West today talk of "self," we are usually talking primarily about a highly differentiated, historical, psychologically complex individual. There is even a rich branch of "psychoanalytic psychotherapy" entitled "self psychology" which explores the growth and development of the self. For professionals in that field, healthy selfhood is the psychological ability to effectively connect one's actions to one's goals and ideals. Here the metaphors are of function.

What is denied in Buddhist texts is the perdurable substratum of an identity. Any holding on to an independently existent, or unchanging identity, is seen as a source of bondage. Undoing this attachment is the ultimate focus of most Buddhist meditations. The Buddhist texts do not indicate that one is to abandon healthy psychological functioning or that the enlightened lack this type of "selfhood." Au contraire. The intelligent, tireless, compassionate functioning of Buddha is clearly held out as an ideal to be emulated. According to Theravadin abhidharma, after enlightenment Buddha still had a functioning body/mind (namarupa) and within the mind, operative mental factors (citta/caitta). (Mahayana is a bit more complicated because at least some schools hold that Buddha gave up

all ordinary conceptual operations. Buddhas, however, do not lose their ability to function effectively in the world!)

What often has happened to Westerners who have heard about selflessness and egolessness is that we hear meanings associated with pride and psychological autonomy. If we have had a difficulty in our family of origin that has impaired our ability to act meaningfully toward our goals and ideals, we may wrongly interpret the Buddhist teachings of no-self as undermining psychological autonomy. Buddhist teachings can then become a support for lack of engagement with life that at its roots has psychological underpinnings in our personal history. For those who would say to such practitioners, "You have to have an ego before you can give it up," I would translate this and say, "In order to do meditative/philosophical work of realizing there is no persistent independent substratum to the person (ego in the sense of atman), you need to be endowed with a healthy ego (in the sense of psychological self)."

Harvey B. Aronson has a doctorate in Buddhist studies from the University of Wisconsin, and has studied with meditation teachers in the Theravada and Tibetan Buddhist traditions for over twenty years. He is the author of *Love and Empathy in Theravada Buddhism*, and is currently a psychotherapist in private practice in Houston, Texas.

Ego, Ego On The Wall, What Is Ego After All?

by Harvey B. Aronson

(reprinted from the Spring, 1995 edition of *Inquiring Mind*)

ings of these concepts in the source languages of Sanskrit, Pali or Tibetan is very different from their range in the target language, English.

All these terms are concepts whose meaning is contextually determined. Much as the word "habit" means something different to a nun and to a smoker; so too, the words atman (atta in Pali; bdag in Tibetan), "self," "ego", and "I", mean exceedingly different things in different contexts. Confusion can occur when we are not mindful that we are taking concepts out of a Buddhist historico-linguistic context, translating them, and depositing them into our own cultural-linguistic framework. If I tell you, "She's picking up the habit," you had better understand the context of my statement or much confusion can ensue.

Historically, the notion of the atman can be found developing in the Hindu Upanishads. There it seems to be best translated by "soul" or "inner self." Without doing a nuanced analysis of the various meanings of atman in the Upanishads, we can minimally say that it is used there as a philosophical term, not psychological, and it refers to the ontological issue of the substantial or metaphysical substratum of the individual. (Ontology is the study of the fundamental nature of things.) In the Upanishads, atman is discussed in terms of the ultimate substance or essence of the person.

In the early Buddhist scriptures, represented by the Theravada tradition, it is this atman that is being discussed and rejected. The Theravada tradition has Buddha attacking the idea of a persistent substratum of the individual, hence the Pali term anatta—absence of self. Sabbe dhamma anatta ti—all phenomena lack self. It is through understanding this in a deep and profound manner that one can become enlightened.

Recent translators, for the most part, translate anatman/anatta as "selflessness" or "ego-

cal structure of the ego, id and superego. In this usage it refers to the structure of consciousness that cognizes, discriminates, assesses and operates in the real world. It is an accident of translation history that Freud's translator chose "the ego" rather than "the I" as his equivalent of das Ich. Nonetheless, ego in this sense refers to a "hypothetical structure" which has no physical correlates. Instead it describes psychological functions and entails no ontological claims as to the subsistence or essential nature of these psychological functions. The operative metaphors in these discussions are structural and functional.

If we look at the Theravada record, it seems evident that in its version of his life story, Buddha seems capable of cognizing, discriminating, assessing and operating in the real world. There is no indication that he lacks ego in the sense of healthy psychological functioning. Confusion arises when we understand the healthy functioning ego to be negated through the realization of anatta. According to the Theravada psychology, no enlightened person gives up ego functions in the psychological sense. One continues to function in a healthy manner and, at the same time, to understand that self in the ontological sense of an independent and enduring substratum does not exist. This is the core task of meditation practice, according to Buddhist teachers. In fact, we can say that, according to Buddhist practice texts, there are psychological benefits that accrue to the wholesome minds that achieve deep insight. In some sense, as one realizes that the self/ego is ontologically less, one becomes psychologically more (the psychological ego is enriched).

Ego/self in the sense of pride is part of the Buddhist discussions of selflessness. It seems clear that it is a goal of practice to give up pride. It is in the standard lists of things to abandon. However, in the Pali/Sanskrit texts, pride is referred to by the

lack of self (ontology) and sense of self (psychology of pride).

Finally, how do Buddhist teachings of selflessness/egolessness relate to self, oneself or I. The Hindu-Buddhist debate was really about the ontological existence of a persistent substratum of personality. Simply put, Upanishadic Hinduism asserts the existence of such a self under the term atman, while Buddhism denies it. When we use terms such as "ego/self" to refer to ourselves, there may be several different connotations. One relates to the sense that we have an inner

Western Buddhist Teachers Conference

by Tsaltrim Allione

A group of twenty-eight Western Buddhist teachers from Europe and America, as well as one from Mexico, met in Delhi on March 14th to take the night train to Patankot and mini buses to Dharamsala. The journey was made in order to convene the third conference of the Network of Western Buddhist Teachers with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other invited lamas. As we sat on the train platform in the New Delhi station waiting for the late Jammu Mail Train, rats ran between us, and faces were glowing with new acquaintances and old friendships.

Once in Dharamsala we had a week together, three days before meeting with His Holiness, two days with him and two days afterwards to digest and talk about our own issues. We sat in a circle on velvet chairs for two days in an unceasing down pour at the Him Queen Hotel for two days and discussed what issues we wanted to bring up amongst ourselves and what we wanted to discuss with His Holiness and the lamas he had invited to participate. Some of the issues we decided to talk to Dalai Lama about were: Monasticism in the West, is it possible? Mainstreaming Buddhism, are we going to get 'Dharma Lite'? Transmission to western Buddhist teachers in different communities? Teaching Methods in the West, what works and what doesn't?

Some of the topics we decided to talk about amongst ourselves were: Inter Buddhist Community Communication, money, right livelihood and how teachers support themselves, community building, lay tradition and Sangha, how do we conduct ceremonies for refuge, births, deaths etc., inter-religious dialogue, are we doing it?

How we manage our lives as teachers, time, money, etc., what is our practice now?

The meetings were productive in terms of dialogue. The Dalai Lama was very interested in hearing from us. He stressed the importance of teaching for those with a deep interest and not for propaganda. He said we must always be thinking most about how to improve ourselves.

For mentally ill people he suggested just giving them a technique, and said that the spreading of methods is more important than "Buddhism". If the interest is based only on this life then it is not Buddhism, not going toward Nirvana.

In the section reserved for teaching methods for Westerners I was asked to give a demonstration of the way I teach the understanding of demons in Chod, so I led the whole group in an exercise and talked about my work with AIDS patients and Chod. His Holiness asked several questions and seemed very interested.

At another point His Holiness said that there is no big wall between East and West. Buddhism works with emotions, and that is beyond culture. I was struck by how unusual he is even amongst other great lamas. He truly goes beyond all limits, even the limit of being the Dalai Lama, there is always a kind humorous simple person surrounded by his cumbersome position. For me, meeting with the other teachers, as well as meeting people I had heard about or whose books I had read face to face, was wonderful. The sense of real dialogue and friendship was great, and we look forward to continued meetings in Europe and America. I left with a full heart. ■

Through Five Steps

An Interview with Helena Antonova, one of the founders of the Dzogchen Community in Russia

(reprinted from issue 8/95 of *Inward Path*, a Russian Spiritual Journal)

Q: When was the first time you had a thought that our world is not really as it seems?

HELENA ANTONOVA: Already in my childhood I tried to understand how our world was organized and why we live. I remember when we were young girls we would play with a dish trying to "call up the spirits" and I always asked the same question: "What is the meaning of life?" This question continued to haunt me. Since I didn't have the answer, in some moment I decided to just live honestly; to build a house, plant a tree and give birth to a child. Everything was going well on the external plane, and of course, sometimes there were problems. I always had this internal impulse that there must be something else.

Q: When did this feeling begin to become more concrete?

HA: It is difficult to say. All that belongs to the spiritual path isn't that simple. It is impossible to give a simple explanation. I can say I began to look for it, gradually found some good books, and met interesting people. All my life I've been lucky with people and have been attracted to others interested in the same things as I. In 1971 I began to take a Hatha Yoga class which was something new and revolutionary in Russia. There I met Vitaliy, my husband. Vitaliy was very important to me, and for sometime was my teacher. We were going through life parallel to each other and then at some point we crossed. We continued the spiritual quest together. We learned the "4th Path" of Gurudjieff. We listened to the music from America of Pink Floyd, and then read the book the "Center of the Cyclone" by John Lily. We did the translation and began to study. We then contacted a sphere of people who were close in spirit with us. A spiritual community had arisen...

Q: Who was in this community?

HA: We called it "Context" and I'm not sure why. The name came from an artist's circle we associated with at the time. Our meetings didn't have an organized character; they were usually made up of artists, scientists, philosophers, psychologists...then people began to bring their friends. Many of the participants in "Context" had had a realization on the material level, but didn't feel satisfied, they wanted to understand life better. My husband Vitaliy was an informal leader. He had a capacity to touch people, and they reached out to him. Sometimes we met at our house and sometimes at friends.

At that time our apartment became like an inn; I don't know how my mother could stand it. We were living in an old house from Pushkin's period. The tenants from

the first floor moved out and we would sometimes use their space. There were always people coming and going, people spending the night, doorbells ringing; it was a wonderful and amazing time.

Q: Did you have any problems with the authorities?

HA: Sometimes someone would come, have tea and ask strange questions and it seemed they were not really interested in what we were doing.

Q: What happened at your meetings? What did you discuss?

HA: We were not only there to drink tea and chat. We exchanged information, discussed everything that excited or worried us, from not very profound things to deep philosophical questions. Every time it was something new, not at all predictable, and a true creation. We didn't generally have a special program, but sometimes our meetings had a subject or theme. At one meeting we discussed the book "Time, Space, Knowledge" by Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche. We only had a simple, typewritten translation at the time. Some of the ideas were difficult to understand, and the translation wasn't completely ready. Not everyone wanted to go deeply into this text, but we ventured. For me the most interesting part was the part about space and the methods of working with it. It brought back definite experiences of childhood; when you lay on the grass and look up in the sky and it's as if you are dissolving into it.

We studied many things: Buddhist philosophy, Sufi parables, Transpersonal Psychology and the Bible. At that time there was not a lot of information. But we read everything we could find. We did the translations ourselves; usually my husband and I. Of course we each had our own preferences, but it wasn't too important which tradition we adhered to. We met for the sake of exploring the greater view. The texts were a support for our spiritual path. Our main teacher had been life. Our lives and the different situations we have been given are to help us look beyond the material side of life, as I understand it. Someone can learn to examine the life and not squander precious time on senseless experiences of emotional highs and lows. One, hopefully, can accelerate with one's own internal development, become a little more wise and free and take more responsibility. Of course, sometimes it is not so easy. "Contexts" became an important "life's lesson" for us.

Q: How did you become interested in Buddhism?

HA: At the end of the 1970's we found the texts of Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche who was holding seminars for scientists and psychologists



Rinpoche and Helena Antonova (second to right.)

in America. We translated his book "Gesture Of Balance" for ourselves. Then we made the acquaintance of Choegyal Trungpa Rinpoche through his books "Meditation In Action" and "Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism". These are wonderful texts. I felt a big gap in my knowledge. I understood that the base of all traditions are the same, but the methods are different. I wanted to do more than just love; I wanted to understand too. I felt that Buddhism gave me that possibility. At that time I also began to study Tibetan in order to better understand Buddhist terminology. It was difficult and interesting. At the beginning of the 1980's we went to Ulan Ude, in Buryatia, to meet with teachers. In 1982 my husband went with our friend Vladimir Maikov to receive teachings from His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who had been in Mongolia. Vitaliy received an initiation of Avalokiteshvara, along with policemen and the local authorities. The next year I went. For a long time I had wanted to feel the clear energy of Buddhism in the places of its traditional existence. Two months before the trip we met with a great Tibetan Lama called Vakula Rinpoche in Moscow. We were lucky, because in that time generally Lamas only passed through Moscow on their way to other places. He gave us an initiation into Buddhist practices which was the first initiation for me, and he said that we could now ask any other Lama for a deeper explanation. In fact, the Lamas of Buryatia accepted us with kindness and we went to Datsans (temples) and met with students of Dandaron, a Master in Buryatia and one of the most important in Russia.

At one Datsan we met a young Lama who was studying in Mongolia and we showed him our translations of Buddhist texts. He approved. Then we realized that our translations were helpful for more than just the people in our closed group. The interest in Buddhism refreshed our "Contexts" group; the subject of death and impermanence emerged more, a subject deeply analyzed in Buddhism. Some of us had experienced the deaths of relatives or close friends and some experienced unusual conditions during serious illnesses or medical treatments. This particular subject excited my husband Vitaliy; possibly he had a premonition of his own death because not too long after this he died. The commemoration was unusual as if he was sitting among us and laughing as he did sometimes saying "So, that's how it is to be at one's own funeral."

Everybody felt his presence. Our group continued on. He was remembered as a man with a great and noble heart.

Vitaliy and I had had many things we wanted to do together. At that time, in the beginning of the 90's, we registered as a Buddhist Community of Moscow. We began to build a house in a village so we could invite teachers and have retreats. In the last two years of Vitaliy's life we had become acquainted with the texts of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and began to learn about Dzogchen. The Dzogchen teaching states that one's inner work includes not just solitary meditation in the mountains; but also integration in daily life, going beyond numerous limits and obstacles into spiritual development through concrete methods and practices.

In 1989 my friends and I received an invitation to the Christmas retreat held by Rinpoche in Italy. We didn't have enough time to get the necessary documents. Our life was going along as usual when in an instant Vitaliy was gone—his heart stopped. When he died I felt like I wanted to follow him. I felt very badly and was not able to do anything. I wanted to follow him. I then realized that to follow Vitaliy was premature and that I had to work with my inner problems. I would have to become more independent about reading and translating the texts we had been working on. It was a new period of inner growth.

1990 brought a new invitation from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to attend a retreat in the USA, at Tseggyalgar. I obtained a visa and so I, and three others, attended the retreat in Conway, Massachusetts, and we were able to feel the life energy of the Master's transmission.

After the retreat we went back to Moscow and registered as a Dzogchen Community. It wasn't so easy. We started from almost zero. Gradually people began to come. Some people already knew about Dzogchen. The Community was formed and I became the chairperson. At the beginning I didn't want that position and for a long time I resisted. But at some moment I understood that I must do this. It was my main work and a way to overcome myself and is a part of my spiritual development.

We began to do collective practices and rituals. I never was a fan of rituals, but I found the experience very helpful. The results showed that the practices were working; when I did them they were effective. First disappeared some particulars and later more serious problems. Intuitive knowledge began to awaken and gradually my world view began to change. All of this manifested on the level of daily life and impacted the communication between people as well. Rinpoche had said that it didn't matter how many mantras we had recited or how many retreats we had attended, the index was how well we collaborated with others. If in our human relationships we haven't any progress, then the teaching is not alive in us.

In the last few years Rinpoche has been to Russia twice, and gave us the wonderful opportunity to receive the living energy of his transmission of the Teachings We have also had seminars of Yantra Yoga and the Vajra Dance. Now we have many newcomers in the Community and they are very active. Now I begin a new period of my life; to be alone a bit and work.

Q: What are you working on now?

HA: I translate texts. Do practice. Read over and over again the texts of Rinpoche, reflect and try to come to a better understanding. I study the work of some Western research. I try to be in the stream or the flow. I make many mistakes.

Our group "Contexts" still continues, but on different level. The meaning of the word means something much more; it is an outward event that enables us to go more deeply into our inner world and development. ■



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H.H. the Dalai Lama

continued from page 4

globe. What we need is global disarmament in the twenty-first century.

His Holiness concluded by pointing out that, as a Buddhist his conviction is that true happiness does not derive from outside, from things and from material progress. Certainly material progress can accomplish many things, but it is important to bear in mind that humanity has the potential to develop inner values. "If we can combine material progress and the growth of man's inner values, we can hope for the happiness of future generations." ■

Mountain & Sea

Mother Sea Father Mountain

Warm & cold

cozy austere

sensitive fearless

fat & thin

short & tall

Both are dead now

These people who fought

to get me

during the divorce

so unhappy when

the other one won

These people who

two dozen years later

took turns in

throwing me out of

their flats

in need of solitude

Both are dead now

THE MIRROR

Mountains can crumble

in earthquakes

The seas can dry up

in deserts

The sky, the space

always welcoming

always there

O, Buddha, the space,

you never created me

in passion

never rejected me

in fear

always loved me fearlessly

remained for ever

not remaining

loved not grasping

O, Buddha, you were always there

for me

Zeljka Jovanovic



Gheshe Namgyal Nyima reads the Mirror.

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30. KIL EPISODES

Galyil Notes

by Glen Eddy

Other People's Bedrooms

by John Shane

Other people's bedrooms are always interesting. There are so many secrets hidden there: our bedrooms are where we go to dream.

I'm trying to see your room now, but I don't know where you are.

I often write in my bedroom; in fact I'm sitting there right now at a little desk that is set into one wall of the room. This wall is lined with built-in wooden bookshelves some of which I use as a kind of ready-made shrine. Most of the shelves are full of my Dharma books and notebooks, but there is an empty space of white wall in the middle of the rows of books where I have hung a small *thanka* of Rigzin Chanchub Dorje, Choegyal Namkhai Norbu's root master.

I have also placed two statues, one of Vajrasattva and one of Tara in two parallel niches that are at my eye level when I'm standing. Their presence seems to change the whole space of the room, and above them, in another niche between the statues, there is an almost life-size print of a photograph I took many years ago. It is a big close up of Choegyal Namkhai Norbu's face, and he stares out of the photo from among the books as if he was looking in through a little window at you, his eyes seeming to follow you around the room.

Maybe, through the miraculous capacity of the eye to perceive light and through the extraordinary capacity of the human brain to assemble the tiny patterns of these printed words and letters into mental images you can feel Rinpoche's eyes in the photograph in my bedroom following you, where you sit in a room I cannot see.

There are so many mysteries in just this moment, as we breathe one breath after another, there are so many wonders to this living. It is such an intricate weave of processes that produces what we perceive as our reality, our hearts beating all the while without us having to remember to get them to make each beat—although our lives depend upon their steady rhythm.

The wall with the bookshelves in my bedroom is in my line of sight from the bed, so that I can focus on it before I go to sleep and when I wake up. There is a white Tibetan letter *Ah* in a thigle conveniently placed for me to fix my attention on. Perhaps you have something like this in your house too, close to your bed?

I sometimes feel the *Ah* connects me to all the other practitioners in the world who use it as part of their practice. This is particularly true when I try to fall asleep concentrating on the *Ah*, attempting to hold it in awareness in my dream. The images of my waking life begin to swirl and shift, becoming less solid and more fluid, and different times and places merge together in my mind's eye. I often see faces of people I know, sometimes of people I don't know.

You are probably in a different time zone to me, and maybe you are sleeping now as I write. I don't know when you will read this, and perhaps as you read I will be asleep and dreaming. But even though we are so far apart I sense that invisible threads connect us, the transmission linking us in the same way that unseen forces link planets orbiting around a common sun.

I have not seen Choegyal Namkhai Norbu face to face in my waking life for many months now, though I have been in touch with him often: through my dreams and my practice, and also, on a completely different wavelength, through the mail and through e-mail on the Internet. But—all being well—I will see Rinpoche this summer in Italy. So right now I am perhaps at the point on my orbit that is farthest away from him in the physical sense, and am now beginning to move slowly physically closer to him each day as the arc of the year follows the Earth's turning around the distant sun. But even though we are physically far apart, the sense of deep inner connection to Rinpoche is strong, and its force draws me inexorably towards him as I practice the Santi Maha Sangha training here in my room.

Choegyal Trungpa Rinpoche, my first teacher, always used to say that the right way to develop the relationship between master and disciple was similar to the way that when one is preparing a meal one has to correctly regulate the flame under the pots on the kitchen stove: if the flame is too low, the pot doesn't boil, but if it's too high the pot will burn. Following this metaphor, Trungpa Rinpoche suggested that the student needs enough of the master to keep his or her practice cooking through the renewal of the transmission and the inspiration of receiving further teachings, but he also emphasized that too much proximity to the master could encourage the student to become a collector of teachings rather than a practitioner. In the same way that a sick person who goes to the doctor should not become fixated on the person of the doctor but should concentrate on diligently taking the medicine the doctor has prescribed, a student needs space to put into practice what they have been taught by the master.

For most of us it's hard to get the right balance in this, and we are usually just incredibly grateful to be able to be in the presence of the master at any time. I have been lucky in the past to spend a lot of time with Chogyal Namkhai Norbu over the last seventeen years, but now that my children are in school and I have had to assume many other responsibilities following my father's death, I have been able to see less of Rinpoche. But if anything my devotion to him has increased as my life has settled into its new routine.

And Rinpoche's presence is very much here with me now: on another wall of my bedroom, the other side of the big bed with the colorful American patchwork bedspread, on the side of the room away from the windows that look out of the ocean in the distance, there hangs the original of the big *thanka* of Rinpoche that Glen Eddy painted for me. It was published as a poster last year and this year has been used as the cover illustration of the new Snow Lion Publications edition of

'Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State'. The *thanka* seems to grow more beautiful the more I look at it, and the image it presents to me each morning and evening of Rinpoche pointing with his finger raised in the *mudra* of Direct Introduction is a stern reminder to me not to become distracted during my day.

As I apply the Santi Maha Sangha practices I received from Rinpoche in Italy last year and go about taking care of the small details of everyday things in my daily life, I notice how in my practice, although I am physically distant from the person of the master, I am drawing closer and closer to what I could loosely call my own center, a quiet space where the trajectories of all my relationships come together. This center is no-center, no physical place. It is timeless, sovereign unto itself, yet inter-dependent with every 'thing' and every 'one' that surrounds me. Here the internal master awakens as a living force.

And so the rhythm of my life proceeds as I approach my fiftieth birthday, which is coming up this November. Almost half a century on this planet and I am still after all these years one of the many planets orbiting around the radiant sun-like energy of the internal and external master as we dance together through the infinity of endless space, taking now this form, now that, among the innumerable stars, among the infinite constellations and the countless galaxies that fill the boundaryless vastness of primordial space.

I move closer physically to the master and then farther away again: I move in deeper to my personal practice and then that practice moves outwards as I work in my family, our community and the world.

I sense that I am a 'member', literally a limb, an integral part of the universe. I am not separate from this 'universe'—a word rooted in the Latin 'uni-versare', meaning 'the one-turning', or 'the one out-pouring' of all that is.

'I' am essentially, as it were, the awareness with which this 'one-outpouring' perceives itself.

And from where I am now on this long journey from no-place to no-place that we are making alone and together, I send you greetings along with the curl of the incense smoke that wafts up and away from the table under Glen's *thanka* of Rinpoche.

The words 'curl of incense smoke' first wrote themselves on the moving stream of my mind where they then disappeared like water mixing with water, but by then my fingers had shaped them into bits and bytes of digital information that will soon flash across the world down invisible wires and cables that will bring them to where they will be reassembled into a physically perceivable form that will be imprinted on the matter of dead trees to be sent to you as a newspaper through the mail.

I cannot hear the footfall of your mail-man, the crunch of his

shoe on the driveway outside your house as he delivers the paper to your door. I cannot smell the coffee that you drink as you read this over breakfast, or taste the wine that you sip as you read my words after work.

But in so far as I can sense your presence and you can sense mine even though we are physically so far apart, there is something larger at work here than just the flesh and blood that earths us on this planet; there is something here beyond the material stuff that gives shape to our lives; there is something more in all this than the merely mechanical processes of biological life, extraordinary though those are in themselves.

And so for one brief moment I want to celebrate the mind's capacity to create the magical display that makes this whole dimension appear to us.

For no reason other than the joy in my heart on this Spring morning as I approach my fiftieth year, I want to marvel with you for an instant at the extraordinary fact that we are all of us sharing in this very instant the vision of this beautiful, fragile and so-fleeting world.

But before I finish, I want to share with you, too, the tiny incident that sparked the train of thought that became this article this morning.

An hour or so ago, we dressed Susannah, our irrepressible red-haired four-and-a-half year old, and got her ready for school. She went off happily out the front door with her patient big sister Jessie, now ten-and-a-half, and disappeared down the steps towards the house of the neighbors with whom we car-pool, each family taking alternate weeks to do the morning school run. Since it isn't our week to take the kids, my wife Jo and I then relaxed for a moment to drink tea and read the newspaper.

But a minute or two later Susannah came rushing back. We thought she might have forgotten her lunch-box or something like that, but she shouted:

"Mummy! Daddy! Come quickly! Come and see what's in our garden!"

When we went outside with her and turned the corner of the house, she showed us a flower.

"Look!" she shouted. "An Easter lily! In our garden!"

The flower had not been there the day before and its appearance to Susannah was a miracle.

That sense of wonder is really a gift, one of the greatest among the many gifts that our children bring us: just to notice the little things that are right in front of our noses is something we adults are often too caught up to enjoy.

Our lives are built out of the small details of everyday things, each perfect in itself; it's such a pity to miss them because we have our heads in the clouds looking for something big to give our lives meaning.

(By the way, if you would like to write to me, I can be found on the Internet at this address: jshane@ibl.bm) ■

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