

The principle of the Dzog-chen teaching is self-perfectedness, the already-being-perfect of every individual. Self-perfectedness means that the so-called objective is nothing else than the manifestation of the energy of the primordial state of the individual himself.

THE MIRROR

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
INSPIRED BY THE TEACHINGS OF AND UNDER THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF
NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

The teaching of Dzog-chen do not form a part of any religious sect or association, but it is a mean for growth and improvement of one's mental and physical equilibrium, regardless of age, sex, political persuasions or religious beliefs.

THE REAL BASIS OF COLLABORATION IS KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEACHINGS

The International Year of Tibet

The year 1991 has been nominated *The International Year of Tibet* by Tibet House, which is the patron and the main coordinator of the events of the Year.

The Year of Tibet will be the Tibetan year, starting from the 10th of March, 1991, until the 10th of March, 1992. The purpose of the International Year of Tibet is to promote understanding and appreciation of Tibetan Culture, history and religion, and to create widespread awareness of the current situation in Tibet. The events of the Year will be in areas of visual arts, performing arts, educational programs, political and religious dialogue and cultural exchange.



Events will be generally organized and managed and funded locally.

A big event will be the opening of the *Wisdom and Compassion: The Sacred Arts of Tibet* Exhibition in San Francisco, in April. A team of art historians, museum curators and Tibetan specialists have gathered together 155 masterpieces of Tibetan art from great collections around

the world. For instance the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad will lend 31 Tibetan objects that have never been seen outside the U.S.S.R..

In the gala opening the guests of honor will be H.H. the Dalai Lama, and the chairman of Tibet House in America, Richard Gere. In October 1991 the exhibition will move to New York, and in

February 1992 to Houston, Texas.

The main event will be the Kalachakra Initiation in October, in New York.

The overall responsibility for the organization will be in the hands of Executive Director of Tibet House, Anna Souza, with her principal assistants, Chimi Thonden, national events and calendar coordinator, and Yanki Tsering, regional and local programs coordinator. Anna Souza and her assistants can be contacted daily at Tibet House New York, 636 Broadway, Suite 1210, New York, New York 10012. Tel 212-353-8823. Telefax 212-353-9364.

Tuula Saarikoski

The real basis of collaboration is knowledge and understanding of the teachings and our integration of that knowledge into our existence. If we have more of this quality then collaboration will become concrete.

INTERVIEW WITH NAMKHAI NORBU RINPOCHE

Page 2

The Mirror has the potential to be a tool to facilitate direct communication on a global basis and thus to create the space for worldwide collaboration whose dimensions we cannot see at present. It seems to me a wonderful possibility! But it will only work if Dzogchen Community members actively participate.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION

by Joan Goodman

Page 16

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION COMMITTEE



During the September retreat, several people met and talked together about how to make collaboration more effective within the Community.

The Dzog-chen Community has grown to an international level, to the point where many of its projects now have a world-wide dimension and need the commitment of many people who can be a point of reference for all those who want to help the Community in different ways. These people will be in touch with practitioners and will study the best ways to increase collaboration between the Community people all around the world.

Members of the Gadkyils of all countries will be part of this informal "Collaboration Group", together with those who really want to be active in promoting cooperation. The main function of this group will be to act as an "active energy" between the Gadkyils and the people of the Dzog-chen Community, sharing experiences and ideas, which can be presented to the Gadkyils and, through them, become concrete.

Anyone interested in having more information and all Gadkyils can contact:

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One of the great joys that my work gives to me is that in the end the formless matter surrenders and delivers its reward. Then



another miracle takes place: the captive image gets free, flies away to the ten directions, carrying through the world our hope to see our wishes become true.

FACES IN THE MIRROR

by Gianni Dejure

Page 10

DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY PUBLICATIONS



ཤང་ཤུང་འཛིན་གྱི་འཕེལ་བྱེད་
Shang Shung Edizioni

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was chairman of the meeting concerned with the publications of the Dzogchen Community, held at the end of the September retreat. Also present were representatives of Shang Shung Edizioni, the Mirror and Tsegylgar, Susan and George Quasha of Station Hill Press, members of the community from Slovenia Yugoslavia, John Reynolds, Liakos Evangelopoulos of the Greek community, Lee Bray of England, Cristiana De Falco, Jim Casilio and others. One of the main issues to be discussed was publications in the English Language. Shang Shung Edizioni's representative, Giovanni Arca expressed his hope that publishing structures would be organized in English speaking countries as has already happened in Germany, Austria and Yugoslavia.

Shang - Shung Edizioni



THE REAL BASIS OF COLLABORATION IS KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEACHINGS

INTERVIEW WITH NAMKHAÏ NORBU RINPOCHE
MERIGAR, OCTOBER 1990

The Mirror. This retreat in September was very special because it was the first one to be held in the new gonpa in Merigar. What name could we give to this retreat?

Rinpoche. Name? It could be a name related to the inauguration of the Gonpa. But in general, if you understand, all of the retreats we have done have been special. But this retreat is particular because it was held in the new gonpa. For years we have had too little space for the many people who came, and even though we have this new gonpa we have already seen that there is still not enough room. But anyway it is much better than before.

The Mirror. There are a lot of people in the Community who would like to know what retreats and so on they should do next year, because some people say that you will not be giving teachings. People want to know what your plans are for next year.

Rinpoche. I plan to do a personal retreat next year, but that doesn't mean that all of the people of the Dzogchen community have to do personal retreats. They can do their best, they can collaborate. I have transmitted teachings for years and they have received many, many practices that they can apply. Also we have other teachers like Geshe Tenzin Wangyal and we can invite other masters. We can organize things in an ordinary way. I am going to do a personal retreat for one year but the Dzogchen community must think not only for one year but for all of the future.

The Mirror. Have you already invited any masters to come to teach at Merigar in the future?

Rinpoche. Yes, and someone has already promised to come. At Christmas we are inviting a Lama who is now teaching in England. He is from East Tibet and he is a re-incarnation of a great master called Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje, whose main discovery was a practice of Chod related to the Dzogchen teachings. Zenkar Rinpoche Thubten Nyima is

a re-incarnation of this famous Master. He said he would like to come here so if he agrees I would like to ask him to teach the practice of the chod - not so much for the singing and playing the damaru and bell - but more to give explanations of the principles, because the chod is a Terma related to the Dzogchen teachings.

The Mirror. During the September retreat, inspired by your emphasis on the need for collaboration, a committee was formed in all parts of the world to help in the formation of the five main gars and to raise funds for the activities of the Dzogchen community. Could you tell us what are the most important projects to concentrate our efforts on in the beginning?

Rinpoche. The real basis of collaboration is knowledge and understanding of the teachings and our integration of that knowledge into our existence. If we have more of this quality then collaboration will become concrete. When we organize a committee it is a kind of co-ordination of people who are responsible for communication. But that is not the real basis of communication - the real basis of collaboration is knowledge. If this committee works well it will be able to communicate - not just among the members - but much more with people of the Dzogchen community wherever they are living. If we are more alive in our communications then we can discover what is to be done and how we should coordinate things. Many people have different kinds of ideas, but it is not always easy to put them all together. That's why we need this committee. At the same time each gakyil is also a kind of committee of representatives of the Dzogchen community people of each country. This committee we are talking about should function like a big international gakyil. We already know what a Gakyil should be like and how it should inter-relate with people. In the same way collaboration can develop through the gakyils of the

different countries, then I think there will be something more concrete.

The Mirror. What kind of work should we give priority to in the field of publishing?

Rinpoche. My idea about publishing is that basically we should concentrate on providing a service for people of the Dzogchen community who are interested in the teaching. That is the main aim. But if we only publish books of the teachings and practices there will be no possibility to continue because there will be no income. So without forgetting our main aim we should also prepare something for making money, so that there will be some income. We don't need to make lots of money like a big publishing house but we do need enough to continue our main aim of publishing translations and teachings.

The Mirror. Many psychotherapists of the community who have read your article in the Mirror about psychology would like to get together to talk with you about their activities.

Rinpoche. That would be interesting. If we can make a meeting or conference, we can exchange ideas and then maybe people will understand how the teaching must be maintained and continued and which points of the teaching they can use in their activities. So some time we can organize this.

The Mirror. Another idea that people are talking about, to help community projects to succeed, is that an annual meeting could be held of one person from each gakyil in the world to co-ordinate all of their efforts together with the collaboration group which is creating income for the community.

Rinpoche. That's a good idea. The only thing is that we must be careful not to create a bureaucratic system. But somehow we must collaborate and so we must have connections with each other. We should organize this in the same way as, for example, all of the countries of Europe are collaborating these days, trying to make a federation. It is important for committees to collaborate to do things.

The Mirror. It has been announced that 1991 will be the year of Tibet. Since we have the great good fortune to receive precious teachings from Tibet's cultural heritage

we feel it our responsibility to do what we can to help preserve its culture. Should we try to do something as the Dzogchen community or should we try to assist in the activities organized by Tibet House?

Rinpoche. We can do things according to our circumstances and situations. In some places there are more possibilities to do things together with Tibetan institutes and centres. If we have this kind of occasion and possibility then of course we will collaborate with them but the main point is that on this occasion we will try to do our best to do something to preserve Tibetan culture and knowledge. I hope we can contribute something towards the congress concerned with Tibetan language; we are still not sure how we will proceed with this but I think it is very important for preserving Tibetan culture.

The Mirror. Some people would like to go to East Tibet for two or three months to help to realize the projects you initiated there if you agree to this.

Rinpoche. We don't need very much physical effort in East Tibet because Tibetans are very hard working and they offer their collaboration without pay. If someone has specialist knowledge and if the situation requires it we could look into these possibilities.

The Mirror. We heard that you attended a meeting last week concerned with the preservation of nature and wild life. Can you tell us a little about this meeting?

Rinpoche. The meeting was concerned with the preservation of nature and animals etc. It was very interesting because we are living on the earth so we must know the importance of our atmosphere and natural environment otherwise we will not be able to continue on the earth.

The Mirror. We see you working all the time on the Song of the Vajra. Can you explain a little about its importance?

Rinpoche. The Song of the Vajra is like the basis of our energy because sound is the basis from which energy develops. Sound develops through light and colour to a more physical level and then we have movement, that is why we have not only the Song of the Vajra but also the Dance of the Vajra. The Dance of the Vajra is related

to the Song of the Vajra. In some places in Tibet there were some practitioners who used to know and perform a kind of Dance of the Vajra, but in general, in the Tantric teachings, there are many Garcham, sacred dances. A sacred dance isn't just like a show in a theatre, its principle is integrating energy and physical movements into knowledge and contemplation. There is the same principle in the Dance of the Vajra. We have many dances of this kind but for this particular Dance of the Vajra I had many dreams about how to do the dance and what its meaning is. I learned these movements in dreams. I think it is very important because in the Dzogchen teaching the most important thing is to enter into the state of contemplation. Once you have had the least experience of contemplation the most important thing is integrating your existence into the state of contemplation. To do this we also need movements. Through the Dance of the Vajra we try to learn and apply ways of integrating movements into contemplation. So I think that it's very, very important.

Then we are not only dancing but we also have something to do with knowledge of sounds. The syllables of the Song of the Vajra represent the central points of all of the chakras of our Vajra body. At the same time there is the correspondence of our Vajra body to our outer dimension. We could call it the microcosm and the macrocosm, our total dimension. The world has its centres of energy such as sacred mountains and sacred places just as in our bodies we have different energy points. So if we know about the connections or the similarities between these points, then there is the possibility of integrating our impure vision into our real nature. So I think it is very important. But we are still a bit like babies developing. Maybe later, after a few years, we will have a more precise idea.

The Mirror. We hear that some people say they can "channel" energy from the universe taking it through their bodies and giving it to other people. Could you say something about the reality of this?

Rinpoche. Before you can receive the energy of the universe you must have precise knowledge of your own

real nature. Then that knowledge must be realized, it must become something concrete. Only then is there the possibility to do something with the energy of the universe because the principle is the same. But if you have no capacity to control and govern your own energy and you think you are receiving some energy from outside, that's just an intellectual idea, it doesn't correspond to reality.

The Mirror. Apparently there are ways of commercialising the teaching. I have seen people developing huge centres and teaching to thousands of people. This creates doubts in many people's minds. Can you say anything to clear up these doubts?

Rinpoche. Sometimes great Masters give public initiations to hundreds and thousands of people to make a good relationship with many people. This sometimes also plants a kind of seed for having a connection with the teaching. But if someone does that he must have the capacity and knowledge. Then he can make a good cause. But there are also many people who perform large public ceremonies and initiations pretending to have the same position and the same idea while actually making a kind of dharma business. That can be very negative. People need to understand the real meaning of the teaching, not just receive an initiation, otherwise they become blind and have only a kind of devotion to the teaching without knowledge. Then later when secondary causes arise negative actions manifest. People who only have blind faith instead of real understanding destroy the teaching, they don't give it any consideration, the way it happened in Tibet during the cultural revolution. So that's very negative. Many years ago people criticized me for teaching in a different way but I think that people now know what I am doing and they are learning, because teaching must go with the contemporary situation.

The Mirror. Thank you for your great generosity Rinpoche.

Merigar 1990

Photo by
Liane Graf

SEPTEMBER IMPRESSIONS THE RETREAT AT MERIGAR

Otello Balducci



Our Master has returned from his retreat in Tseg-yalgar and this made me really understand how important his presence and the practice of the Dzogchen Teaching are. Many words have very often been spoken, but these remained only like reflections not used to discover the real nature, only scattered in the dark of our ignorance. The personal retreat of the Master is also very important for all those who are following his Teaching because he never closes his wisdom in a metal box but always communicates it to us with a loving gentleness to develop our comprehension. I felt moved when I heard his voice and I could share with others the knowledge he got during his personal retreat through visions and dreams. His ever present Bodhicitta and his strength in working for the benefit of all sentient beings were manifest in his detailed writing of the visions and dreams of awareness and in the communication of them to us as they were related to him by the Daka and Dakini of Oddiyana. From this work he could transmit the Terma of the Vajra Dance to us. This is another instrument to integrate body, energy and mind gathering and unifying the experiences of them. So we could really draw and follow the precious Mandala. The Master himself drew it with precise shapes and dimensions and the practitioners have coloured it with the colours of the elements. Here we began a dance that's not finished yet... Then for the first time since the inauguration, the

Teaching has been given in our new Gonpa. Rinpoche, speaking about the Yidam, told us that in the Kriya Tantra the practitioner builds a statue whose eyes are left white and during the initiation these are opened and painted to make it effective. The arrival of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for the inauguration and the Teachings of Rinpoche had the same meaning for the Gonpa, whose value is real and symbolic, beyond the limitations of time and space. A Yidam is effective if you practise it, and this is true for all kinds of Teaching. Once you have opened your eyes, you need a mirror to watch yourself and your mind to be conscious of your real condition and discover your real nature. During the retreat we really had a mirror in front of us: Rinpoche explained the Ngondro, the basis on which we can work, the stairway to Liberation. The basis is very important and without it we cannot build anything. Unfortunately we have often followed our concepts regarding the Teaching. Someone said: "this is not elevated, I don't care". But the Teaching is not a bank giving interest. Everything depends on the individual's capacity and the individual has infinite potentialities. To discover them we just need to observe ourselves a little. First of all we must develop our good intentions and watch ourselves act for the benefit of others. If we consider the Teaching important for our realization, we must respect it and respect the Master who offers it to us with such compassion. The real practice is not to say

Mantra or to do Mudra. This is relative. The main task is to develop our own presence and awareness in everyday life. Our biggest problem is the ego that develops attachment and all kind of tensions. This is what our Master always repeats to us, because very often distraction becomes our everyday practice. The Master says: "You must work to develop clarity, and you don't work jumping from one thing to another. You need to deepen clarity. Many people have the idea of making wonderful things, but the Teaching is not a mysterious thing or a fantasy. We must walk on the earth and not fly in space. Walking on the earth means working with our existence. Collaborate must become a concrete fact, not only a word. First of all you must discover your limits and watch how often we are egoist, ignoring, when it suits us, the conditions of other people. If someone doesn't care about others, this is proof he doesn't possess knowledge. You must watch and

work to solve this. If you train yourself in this way you can also find harmony in your existence and discover and develop your potentialities." To keep alive and develop the real sense of the Teaching, we must become responsible ourselves for what Rinpoche has precious given us, practising what we have been taught. 1991 will be the International Year of Tibet and there will be many important enterprises to contribute in the spreading of Tibetan culture and the knowledge of the Teaching all over the world. This really needs everybody's participation. There are also many things to do here, for Merigar, because all of us actually are Merigar. Practice is not only sitting and meditating, it is also alert awareness. Instead of working in Samsara to develop passions and distractions, let us work a little to maintain and develop the Teaching.

Otello Balducci
Merigar, September 1990



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EXTRACTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL MEETING Merigar, September 1990



Here in Merigar we need a Committee with a coordinated plan. For instance now in France the dark retreat cabin is ready, and I am sure they will build one also in England. So it's good to cooperate and coordinate the work all together. We also need a complete list and good data about the Community members in the world-wide Community. For instance, if we need to make designs, to be sure there are qualified people who can help us: specialists, editors, writers. Or if we need to make investments, to buy land and transfer ourselves, we also need information, someone to help us. If we lack data and do not know each other well, it will be difficult. This Committee will be responsible for providing information, preparing plans and coordinating the work. It's important that people collaborate and sit together and communicate. We need that. For instance, we all use leather things and in Argentina there are people of the Community working with leather. If we just organize ourselves they can send us their products and everything will be distributed: less costly and good quality. And will the people of the Committee get any money from their work? Of course, if someone gives his time to do work that creates income and he needs to get some money, nobody can say no. I know people who did this job, and afterwards they donated their money to the Community. I think first we must collaborate locally. In places like Singapore it is much easier than in England, because in Singapore everybody meets each other and they all communicate very often, while in London to get from one side to the other it takes two hours. I believe we need to meet, especially when we do practice together, and we build our social contacts on the base of the teaching and then things happen much more easily. So, it is good if we first coordinate our work well locally. At the same time, we all need to coordinate the work internationally, because we exist as an international Community. We must find ways to contribute, not always waiting for Rinpoche's retreats. For instance, in some countries, things are cheaper than in others and we must organize and move and exchange the things. If

we do this, we can live from this work and make things easier for everyone. These two things must go together. For example, this Committee can collect information and give all the information, Jurgen making jewellery, the biological staff, this and that, and make it known to London, to Boston, to Rome and Sydney. Every Committee can collect and exchange information; where, when and how. We can use The Mirror to communicate. All the people who want to come here and work, go to Tibet and work, they will find the way. We are here for the teaching and whatever "business" we try to do MUST be related to the teaching. We must be aware that we must do something in a good way to help a good cause. The work is not going to end. We were working here for the gonpa day and night and it will go on with next year's meeting. If we have this commitment, there will be more and more and more commitment for this. We must be aware of this and forget all narrow-minded ideas, like "well I'll work only two hours a day" and so on. That doesn't correspond to reality, or to Rinpoche's vision. This is definitely the starting point, and we must never forget it. It is just the way things are moving and it doesn't depend on us. Now we have this financial problem, and we need a real demonstration of collaboration (120 million lire by the end of September and 53 million lire by the end of October). We will solve this and we will do many, many, many more things. We must meet seriously before the end of the retreat and organize everything here. We must work with our hearts. We can go as far as Rinpoche goes. Each country must form a special committee of skilled and devoted people and work to organize everything in the best way. This situation is in evolution. Everyone will go back and speak trying to move other people and we will know what to do together. All countries are in the same situation. We must feel our commitment - hundred per cent commitment. We have the fortune to see how Rinpoche is living and we know that he is working always.

PRACTICE FOR SPECIAL DAYS

The fifteenth day of the ninth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to Friday 2nd of November 1990 is a full moon day so try to do the practice of Long Life of Guru Amitayus, Union of Primordial Essences (U.P.R.) either collectively or personally according to your possibilities.

The twenty-second day of the ninth Tibetan month, corresponding to Friday 9th of November 1990 is the great celebration of Buddha Sak-yamuni's descent to earth from the realms of the Divinities. It is an ideal day to perform a Ghanapuca with your Vajra Sisters and Brothers, or if there are none nearby you can do a Short or Medium Thun personally.

The twenty-fifth day of the ninth Tibetan month, corresponding to Monday 12th of November 1990 is a Dhakini day and the anniversary of the very important and quite recent Dzogchen master Adzom Drukpa (1812-1924). He was a disciple of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and a master of some of Norbu Rinpoche's masters, including Chang Chub Dorje and Ayu Kadro. He is a previous incarnation of our master, Norbu Rinpoche (Ed. 1). It is therefore a very important day to practise The Guru Yoga with White A according to your possibilities.

The thirteenth day of the ninth month according to the Tibetan Calendar corresponding to Saturday 17th of November 1990 is a new moon day. It is a good day to try to do Xitrol Naljor in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as much as possible. The best time for this practice is around eight o'clock in the evening.

The tenth day of the tenth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to Tuesday 27th of November 1990 is an important day of Guru Padmasambhava, so try to do the Long Life Practice associated with the Universal Wisdom Union (U.W.U.). Included in the Medium or Long Thun, or if you have the possibility it is beneficial to perform a Ghanapuca.

The fifteenth day of the tenth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to Sunday 2nd of December 1990 is a full moon day of the first month of the season. It is therefore important to do the Long Life Practice of the Dhakini Mandarava. The best time for this the early morning, but it is no problem to do it later when you have



more free time.

The twentyfifth of the tenth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to Tuesday 11th of December 1990 is a Dhakini Day, and the anniversary of Teongkhapa (1357-1491), who made a synthesis of the previous schools and founded the Gelugpa school. Try to perform a Ghanapuca with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters or if this is not possible do the Medium Thun personally. In either case transforming into the Dhakini Simhamukha, creating a vital contact with the energy of the universe, recite her heart mantra as much as possible.

The thirtieth day of the tenth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to Sunday 16th of December 1990 is a new moon day, and an important day to practice Namgos Xithoi Naljyer, the yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations. It is best as always to practice it collectively, but if that is impossible you can do it personally.

The tenth day of the eleventh month according to the Tibetan calendar, which corresponds to Thursday 27th of December 1990 is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. If you have the time and possibility it is good to do a Ganapuca collectively with your Vajra Brothers and Sisters, otherwise you can do the Short or Medium Thun personally.

The fifteenth day of the eleventh month of the Tibetan calendar which corresponds to Monday 31st December 1990 is a full moon day. It is important to try to do the Long Life Practice of the Dhakini Mandarava. Life's Cycle of Vajra L.C.V. is the usual way.

The twenty fifth day of the eleventh month according to of the Tibetan calendar corresponds to Thursday 10th January 1991. It is a day of the Dhakini in general, so if you have the opportunity perform a collective practice

of Ghanapuca, with the transformation of the Dhakini Simhamukha, and recite her heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do a Medium Thun either collectively or personally.

The tenth day of the twelfth month of the Tibetan calendar corresponding to Friday 25th January 1991 we can celebrate Guru Padmasambhava's coronation as Prince of Orgyen at the invitation of King Idradhodl. We can perform a Ghanapuca collectively, or do the Long Life Practice, Universal Wisdom Union (U.W.U.) either with your Sisters and Brothers of the Vajra or personally, according to your circumstances.

The fifteenth day of the twelfth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to Wednesday 30th January 1990 is a full moon day. It is in general a day for honouring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the Long Life Practice of Guru Amitayus, Union of Primordial Essences (U.P.E.).

The eighteenth day of the twelfth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to Friday 1st February 1991 is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Longen Rabjam kLong Chempa, (1386-1363). On this very important day try to do the Guruyoga Agar Lama Naljor Guruyoga with White A by either collectively or personally.

The twentyfifth day of the twelfth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to Saturday 9th February 1991 is a Dhakini day in general, so try to perform a Ganapuca with the transformation of the Dhakini Simhamukha together with you Vajra Brothers and Sisters. Otherwise you can do a Medium or Short Thun in the usual way.

The Thirtieth day of the twelfth month of the Tibetan calendar is the last day of the year of the Metal Horse. It corresponds to Thursday 19th February 1991. It is a very special day for Purification Practices. Therefore try to do as much Purification of the Six Lokas as you can.

The next Tibetan year 2228, is an Iron Sheep Year and begins on Friday 15th February 1991.



DRUGU CHOGYAL RINPOCHE'S TEACHING TOUR IN MALACCA, MALAYSIA

by THAM WYE MIN



After many months of anxious waiting, finally Rinpoche's trip to Malacca materialised. The first Drugu Chogyal Rinpoche, born in 1578, was one of the three principle disciples of Khamtrul Rinpoche of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage in Eastern Tibet. The present and 8th Drugu Chogyal Rinpoche was born in Wari-Chaksam Kha, Nangchen in 1946. H.H. the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa and several yogis recognised him even while he was still in his mother's womb. He was enthroned at the age of four. His root teachers are H.H. the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa, H.H. the 8th Khamtrul Rinpoche, H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and many other famous masters. He has been the trustee of many unique secret teachings. Presently he is residing in Tashi Jong, Taragarh, Kangra, H.P. India. While in Malacca, Rinpoche gave teachings every evening and also on Sunday afternoons. On the instruction of H.H. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, he gave "Konchog Chindu", teachings of Terton Jaton Nyingpo. (Discovered in 1627). This comprised a series of instructions and practices like taking refuge, development of Bodhicitta, purification, purification of six lokas, protection, Abisheka, practice and meditation on Avalokitesvara, Vajrasattva and Guru Padmasambhava, nature of mind and meditation on Dzogchen. From very basic practices, Rinpoche guided us step by step into the actual main practice. Not only is Rinpoche very compassionate, humble and soft spoken, he is really very easy to approach. He is truly the so called spiritual friend. From the moment he stepped out of the airport, the first time we met, we were just like old friends. We could talk and talk, freely of course. Rinpoche is a simple monk. Most of the time, he kept reminding the people here not to spend too much money on his food and other things. He is also very hardworking, apart from his personal practice in the morning and teaching in the night, he would be working on his projects at Tashi Jong. Sometimes he is also busy with people coming for consultation and blessings in the afternoon. He has also performed a few pujas by the beach, on hilltop and mountain-side for the benefit of sentient beings in the region.

After his teachings in Malacca, he went on to Singapore on 9th September, 1990. This was his second trip to Singapore. Rinpoche finally left for Nepal on 23rd September 1990. We all prayed hard for his good health and hope he will come back again soon.

CENTRO 2A



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BOOK REVIEW

THE STAIRWAY TO LIBERATION INSTRUCTIONS ON NGONDRO NAMKHAÏ NORBU RINPOCHE

The Tibetan word "Ngondro" (sngon 'gro) literally means "that which goes before". In Buddhism it is a general term that indicates any kind of preliminary practice, namely those practices that have to be done before the essential practice. What is commonly understood by Ngondro is a cycle of practices generally including prostrations, mandala offering, purification through the Vajrasattva mantra, etc. Practices of this kind are generally included in the Ngondro of many traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. For example, the Ngondro of the Tantric path typically includes, as its first step, a meditation upon four basic subjects: the value of human birth, impermanence, karma and suffering. Then we find:

a) Refuge, whose ultimate meaning is recognizing that the only refuge from the suffering of Samsara is the primordial state of one's own mind. The Tantras speak of "taking refuge in Guru, Deva and Dakini", which are expressions of the path, while the Sutras refer to "taking refuge in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha", i.e. in the teacher, the teachings and the spiritual community;

b) Bodhicitta, i.e. the vow to act for the benefit of all sentient beings, to lead them out of transmigration;

c) and d) Prostrations and offering of mandala, which are both ways to accumulate merit;

e) Purification through visualization of Vajrasattva and recitation of his mantra in order to purify oneself from the bad karma accumulated through many existences.

In general, each of these practices should be repeated one hundred thousand times, called in Tibetan a "Boom" ('bum). Without having completed this cycle, one is not allowed to enter into the main Tantric practices.

We find the same practices of Ngondro in Dzogchen (rdzogs chen), and in Dzogchen as well it is considered very important to perform them, although not as an obligatory step toward a higher level. According to the first statement of Garab Dorje¹, in Dzogchen the disciple receives from the beginning a direct introduction to the essence of the teachings. It would be a waste if someone, having the capacity to understand directly the ultimate meaning of the teachings, did not use this capacity from the first instant of his/her practice. If one has made attempts at practice and discovered that there are

some obstacles to one's understanding, then it is necessary to do certain preliminary practices to clear away these obstacles. In this case one should apply the Ngondro to develop one's capacity and understanding, otherwise whatever practice one does will not get results. Beyond this, in Dzogchen the practitioner is free to apply any kind of practice, belonging to any level of the path, according to his/her particular condition and needs.

In addition to the traditional Ngondro, there is also a kind of Ngondro unique to the Dzogchen teachings, which is the subject of this book: The Stairway to Liberation: Instructions on Ngondro (Tib. sNgon 'gro'i khrid yig thar pa'i them skas), written by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in 1976. The book is based on instructions from some of the most important Dzogchen masters, such as Longchenpa², Jigmed Lingpa³, Sengei Wangchug⁴, Adzam Drugpa⁵ and Changchub Dorje⁶. Basically the book is divided into three main sections, followed by a final invocation and dedication.

The first section contains seven statements of subjects similar to the ones already mentioned (impermanence, karma, et al.) in which the mind should be trained. It then explains three methods that lead the practitioner to experience the state of mind which is called "the wisdom beyond any concept" (Tib. mi rtog pa'i ye shes). These three methods are:

1. through the union of pleasurable feeling and emptiness;

2. through the union of clarity and emptiness;

3. through leaving the mind in its own natural state, being present in every thought that occurs.

The second section explains a kind of Guru Yoga with the Primordial Buddha Samantabhadra (Tib. Kun tu bzang po), who is visualized blue in color and naked, as a Dharmakaya form, surrounded by many manifestations of the Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya dimensions. This Guru Yoga is an excerpt from Longchenpa's instructions for the practice of one of the main tantras of Dzogchen, the Kunjyed Gyalpo⁷ (Kun byed rgyal po), the principal tantra of Dzogchen Semde⁸ (sems sde).

The third section explains the actual Ngondro that is peculiar to Dzogchen. This Ngondro includes two main kinds of practice. The first kind consists of those prac-

tices that help the practitioner to understand the difference between the ordinary mind and the nature of the mind. These practices work



by separating the two realities, making it easier to distinguish one from the other; they are therefore called "Korday Rushan" (Tib. 'khor 'das ru shan), meaning "to separate Samsara from Nirvana", i.e. the mind conditioned by thoughts as distinct from the pure, unconditioned state which is the nature of one's mind. There is an "external Rushan", which works mainly with the body, and an "internal Rushan", which works more with visualization and recitation of mantra. The second kind consists of practices to train the Body, Voice and Mind, namely the "Three Doors" (Tib. sgo gsum), so that one can understand and realize their real nature, their indestructible Vajra nature. Following this realization they are called the "Three Vajras": Vajra of the Body (Tib. sku rdo rje), Vajra of the Voice (Tib. gsung rdo rje), Vajra of the Mind (Tib. thugs rdo rje). These practices are called "The Training of the Three Doors" (Tib. sgo gsum sbyang ba). The Training of the Body (Tib. lus sbyong) is known as "the position of the Vajra", whose purpose is to exhaust the body so that all mental work stops automatically. The Training of the Voice (Tib. ngag sbyong) works with the sounding of "Hum" and with various kinds of visualization of this syllable, representing the nature of the mind. These kinds of practices also help to develop one's power of concentration by focusing one's prana and consciousness in a single point. The Training of the Mind (Tib. blo sbyong) consists in recognizing that the origin of thought is void, that thought itself is void, and that its consequence is also void. In this way, by observing the nature of one's thought, one comes to understand truly - not only intellectually - the illusoriness of all appearances. Then we

find instructions on how to relax into the "natural state" (Tib. rnal ma). The Tibetan word "naljor" (mal 'byor, Skt. yoga) means "to possess" ('byor ba) this "natural state". At the end of the section there is an explanation of how to overcome the main problems that one may have during the practice, such as drowsiness⁹, mental agitation¹⁰, etc. With these instructions the actual Ngondro is completed.

The book ends with an invocation to the Guru, in the words of Longchenpa. At the end of every session of practice (Tib. thun) it is very important to have the intention to continue the practice by applying its meaning in one's daily life, and to dedicate the merit accumulated through it to the benefit of all sentient beings.

Cristiana De Falco



NOTES

¹ Garab Dorje (dGa'rab rdo rje) is said to have been the first human teacher of Dzogchen on this planet. According to the texts of the Dzogchen Upadesha, he was born in 184 B.C.; according to Vairocana's Vairo rgyud 'bum, in 516 B.C. (see N. Norbu, Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State, Arkana, London, 1989, p. 84, n. 3). He expressed the principles of Dzogchen with three statements, called "the Testament of Garab Dorje." They are:

1. To introduce the disciple directly to the state of Dzogchen, the primordial state of every individual;
2. To not remain in doubt: after one has received a direct introduction to the primordial state and has had an experience of it, one no longer remains in doubt as to what it is;
3. To continue in this state, which means to bring the knowledge of this state into every action, every circumstance of one's daily life, so that one is never separated from it and one's whole life becomes the way to realization.

² Or Longchen Rabjampa (Klong chen rab 'byams pa) (1308-1363). He is considered a manifestation of Vimalamitra, a great master who realized the Great Transference (Tib. 'pho ba chen po), the highest realization in Dzogchen. Longchenpa was a very important scholar of the Nyingmapa (rNying ma pa) school. He systemized the Dzogchen teachings. He composed a large number of treatises, commentaries and texts, such as the mKha' gro yang thig, the Bla ma yang thig, and the Zab mo yang thig. He expounded the main points of the Nyingma doctrine in the mDzod bdun. He was born as Kun mkhyen, "the Omniscient".

Many of his teachings were transmitted, through pure visions, to Jigmed Lingpa ('Jigs med gling pa) (1730-1798), another great exponent of the Nyingmapa school and tertön (gter ston).

³ Kun mkhyen 'Jigs med gling pa (see the preceding note). He edited and compiled the Klong chen snying thig cycle, based on the teachings he received, through pure visions, from Longchenpa. He also edited the rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum - the main collection of Nyingmapa tantras - in its final form. He initiated the anti-sectarian movement, called Ris med ("without divisions"), that flourished in Eastern Tibet. For a history of the Nyingmapa lineages, see E. Dargay, The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet, Motilal Banarsidass, N. Delhi, 1977; Tulku Marion, Massachusetts, 1984; Tulku Thondup, Buddha Mind: An Anthology of Lonchen Rabjam's Writings on Dzogpa Chenpo, ed. H. Talbot, Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York, 1989; Tarthang Tulku, "The Vajrayana Lineages in Tibet," in Crystal Mirror, vol. V. Dharma Publ., Emeryville, California, 1977.

⁴ ICe btsun seng ge dbang phyug, another great Dzogchen master, who lived in the 11th century CE. He received teachings from Vimalamitra, through pure visions, and revealed the cycle of teachings called ICe btsun snying thig. He is said to have realized the "Rainbow Body" (Tib. 'ja' lus) (see N. Norbu, Un'introduzione allo Dzogchen: risposte a sedici domande, translated and edited by Adriano Clemente, Shang Shung Edizioni, Arcidosso, 1988, p. 51 n. 66 and Tarthang Tulku, "The Vajrayana Lineages," pp. 216, 251).

⁵ A'dzam 'brug pa 'gro 'dul dpa' bo rdo rje (1842-1924), a great Dzogchen master, disciple of 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po (1829-1892) and of dPal sprul Rinpoche (1808-1887), both leaders of the Ris med movement (see above, n. 3). He was also a tertön (gter ston). Namkhai Norbu has been recognized as the reincarnation of this master (see N. Norbu, "The Cycle of Day and Night", translated and edited by John M. Reynolds, Station Hill Press, Barrytown, New York, 1987, pp. 95, 96, 101; see also N. Norbu, "The Crystal and the Way of Light", RKP, London, 1986, pp. 2, 3, 45, 46, 92, 153, 154 and pp. 1).

⁶ Namkhai Norbu's root master (Tib. rtsa ba' i bla ma), Nyag bla Rinpoche Rig 'dzin Byang chub rdo rje (1826-1978). He was a disciple of Adzam Drugpa and also received teachings from a Bonpo master of Dzogchen, Shar rdza bkra shis rgyal mtshan (1858-1933), who is said to have realized the Rainbow Body. He was also a disciple of Nyag bla padma bdud 'dul, another Dzogchen master who realized the Rainbow Body (see N. Norbu, "The Crystal", pp. 40, 125). In addition to giving teachings of Dzogchen, he practised Tibetan medicine: he was a very well known physician. He headed a community of lay practitioners called Nyag bla sgar, in East Tibet. He introduced Namkhai Norbu directly into the experience of Dzogchen (see N. Norbu, "The Cycle", pp. 98-99; "The Crystal", pp. 10, 15, 40, 101, 102, 107, 108, 109, 120-22, 131-35, 156, 57).

⁷ This text is called Byang chub kyi sems kun byed rgyal po' i don khrid rin chen gru bo. It has been translated into English and published as "You are the Eyes of the World", translated and edited by Kennard Lipman and Merrill Peterson, Lotsawa, Novato, California, 1987.

⁸ Dzogchen is comprised of three series of teachings: Sems sde, the series of the nature of Mind, kLong sde, the series of Space, and Man ngag sde (Skt. Upadesha), the series of Secret Instruction into the state of Dzogchen and of the methods used to develop into the knowledge of this state, but they are in no way three schools or three different points of view.

⁹ Tib. bying pa.

¹⁰ Tib. rgod pa.



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Sculpture from Bonpo Monastery Dolanji

Another popular form of divination especially used among lay people is divination done with dice and known as *sho mo*. As with the above divinatory methods, transmission and empowerment for the patron deity concerned is first required from a Lama. One wide-spread form of dice divination is associated with the war goddess dMag-zor-ma, "our lady of the weapons of war", one form of dPal-Idan lha-mo, "the glorious goddess", regarded as the chief of the female protectors of the Buddhist teachings. The Bonpos know her as Srid-pa rgyal-mo, "the Queen of the World". In this method of divination, three dice are employed. The Lama meditates on the goddess and invokes her presence, blowing her mantra on to the dice. The possible result of a throw of the dice ranges from three to eighteen. Having obtained this result, the Lama consults the *mo-dpe* or divination manual and under the appropriate numerical heading the prognostications are arranged according to the categories mentioned above.

A more involved method of divination is that done using pebbles or small white stones. This process is called *rde!-mo*, from *rde'u*, a pebble and *mo*, divination. This is a very ancient form of divination which belonged originally to the Bonpo tradition, although it has now also been adopted by the Buddhists. This method is under the patronage of the Bonpo god Phu-wer dkar-po, who has come to be identified with the Buddhist god of wisdom Manjusri. Often the latter is depicted as a golden colored eternal youth, a *puer aeternus*, whose attributes include the sword, the bow and arrow, and the book of wisdom. In many respects he corresponds to the god Wotan or Odin of the ancient Germanic tribes and to the god Lugus or Lugh of the ancient Celtic tribes who was the chief deity of the Druids (21).

According to the interpretation of G.Dumezil, he would represent the priestly function in the tripartite division of primitive Indo-European society; the other two functions being that of the warrior (power), and that of the cattle-herder (fertility and wealth). Manjusri is consistently associated with learning and culture, having taught humanity the arts and sciences of civilization and being their patron. Like Wotan who sacrificed himself on the world tree (a kind of shamanic initiation) in order to discover the secrets of the runes, Manjusri revealed a mystic alphabet known as Arapachana. Again like Wotan and Lugh, he has shamanic associations. As shamanic deities who journey to the otherworld in order to discover treasures of knowledge and power (the classical exploit of the shaman), these three figures point to a cultural link between ancient Europe and ancient Tibet, probably by way of the Scythians. Many ancient Bonpo myths and deities resemble those of the Iranian and the Scythians (22). Moreover, in many respects, Manjusri corresponds to the ancient Greek god Apollo especially the Apollo of the Hyperboreans, who was the patron deity of *manteia* or the mantic arts. In the Buddhist tradition Manjusri is regarded as the eldest son of the Buddha.

The divinatory practice known as *ma sangs rde! mo* in the Bonpo tradition uses forty-two small stones. After making the invocation of the god Phuwer (phu-wer dkar-po), these stones are arranged into three piles and then various groups of stones are placed according to a certain procedure into a grid of nine squares. The first three columns of three squares each signify prosperity, home and enemies; the place of the gods is the square in the center, and so on. Taking readings vertically, horizontally and diagonally, various series of digits are derived and then the *mo-dpe* is consulted and the appropriate prognostications ascertained. There also existed among the Bonpos in ancient times a divinatory system using colored threads or cords and the knots made in them according to certain procedures. This method of divination is known as *ju-thig* and a practitioner of this method is called *phyu bon ju-thig-can* (23). This divination was revived in the nineteenth century as the result of the studies of the famous Buddhist scholar and polymath Mi Pham Rinpoche (d.1914). Since this divination method is under the patronage of the god Phuwer, he is invoked first. There exists a possibility of 360 different results and these are known as the 360 gods of the knots (*mdud lha*). This procedure of *ju-thig* is also associated with the ancient cult of the mountain god Gekhod, known as the subduer of demons and custodian of the fierce secret incantations (*ge-khod bdud 'dul gsang-ba drag-can*). Originally the wild tempestuous Gekhod was the god of the sacred mountain of Kailas which lay at the center of the old kingdom of Zhang-zhung. He may also have had some relationship to the Hindu god Siva who is said to live in a timeless paradise at the summit of Mount Kailas. According to the Bonpo myth, Gekhod descended from heaven in the form of a gigantic white yak and dissolved into the mountain. His foot print, made when he first touched earth, remains today and is nowadays popularly identified as the cave of Milarepa, the famous thirteenth century Buddhist yogi. Gekhod is considered to be one of "the five supreme gods of the celestial citadel" (*gsas-mkhar mchog lnga*) who are the

DIVINATION AND

by John My

principal meditation deities (*yi-dam*) of the Bonpo Tantras (*spyi-spungs rgyud*). The retinue of Gekhod consists of the host of the 360 gods of Zhang-zhung (*zhang-zhung lha tshogs*), which bear a relationship to the 360 days of the lunar year and to the 360 knots in the *ju-thig* system of divination.

Furthermore, there is found among the Tibetans a method of divination corresponding to the Western procedure of skrying or crystal ball gazing (24). In ancient times in Tibet this might be done by gazing into a bowl of water or at the surface of a lake. The latter is still used as one of the methods employed to discover the whereabouts of the next reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. By gazing into a mirror or into the surface of the water, visions of the future and of distant places are seen to arise spontaneously. In Tibetan this method is called *phra* and the verb *phra phab-pa* means to make predictions by way of visions appearing in a mirror. A Lama will often use a child to do the skrying in the mirror for him, in the same way as the English Elizabethan magus Dr. John Dee employed the clairvoyant Irishman Edward Kelley. One method of *phra* is connected with the goddess gYu-sdon-ma, "the lady of the turquoise lamp". The practitioner, having already received the initiation for the practice, first meditates on the goddess, reciting the mantra and another special invocation in order to evoke the power of clairvoyance. Absorbed in an altered state of consciousness, he gazes into the mirror and the visions arise.

In Eastern Tibet, another wide-spread method of *phra* is connected with Gesar, the hero of the famous Gesar Epic. He is also a chief of the Dralha Werma warrior gods (*dgra-lha wer-ma*). Gesar came from the mysterious land of Phrom lying somewhere north of Tibet where Buddhism flourished before the tenth century. But it is more likely that we have in this name, Gesar of Phrom, an echo of the Kaiser of Rom (the Caesar or emperor of Byzantium), in as much that in Sassanian times the Iranian name for that city was From (25). Later the figure of Gesar, hero in the battles against the demons and the forces of darkness, became linked



Buddha Wall Tibet

with the Shambhala cycle of myths which derive from the Indian Buddhist Kalachakra Tantra. According to the text, Shambhala was a kingdom in ancient Central Asia, the king of which, Suchandra by name, journeyed to Southern India in order to receive at Dhanyakataka the astrological teachings of the Buddha known as the Kalachakra or "the cycle of time". In recent years the Dalai Lama has given several times the initiation for the Kalachakra Tantra in the West, both in America and in Switzerland. After the time of Suchandra these teachings are said to have been preserved in Shambhala by a line of initiate priest-kings known as Kulikas until the present day. But after the Muslim invasion of Central Asia in the ninth century, the kingdom of Shambhala is said to have gone into occultation and disappeared from the eyes of men. This kingdom continues to exist even today, but in a state of concealment behind an impenetrable wall of snow-capped mountains. Only the pure of heart may find entrance there. But at some future time, not too far distant, a king of Shambhala named Rudrachakrin will emerge from that hidden land, together with the hosts of his army and with Gesar as his general. And there will occur an apocalyptic battle between the forces of Shambhala and the Mlecchas (or Muslims) who are attempting to conquer and enslave the whole world. Rudrachakrin, after his victory over the Mlecchas will establish a new spiritual commonwealth in Eurasia which will endure for more than a millennium. The similarities of this prophetic cycle with Judaeo-Christian apocalyptic notions is obvious. In this system of divination, visions of Shambhala itself and of the Dralha Werma spirits often occur in the mirror (26). Besides divination per se, there exist in Tibet texts dealing with signs (*rtags*) and omens (*ltas*) which may appear in nature and in everyday life, such as the flight of birds or various kinds of meteorological phenomena. Nothing that occurs is without meaning, everything is part of a webwork of events related to karma, both individual and collective. In India a method of divination according to the flight and cries of black birds is known and the relevant texts have been translated into Tibetan. Moreover, the direction in which a sign or omen appears can be very important. This may indicate the coming into manifestation of the energies, positive and negative, of the earth gods or chthonic spirits known as the *sa-bdag*. In any locality there are the lords of the soil. To discern what *sa-bdag* may be active in what direction or whatever day of the month, a figure with nine squares is made - each square is ruled by a particular *sa-bdag*. The results of these calculations will be found in the astrological almanac for the year. Here astrological and geomantic calculations are combined and integrated.

Dreams are very important in terms of divination for the Tibetans and there exist manuals for dream interpretation in the Tibetan language similar to those used in ancient Greece and even to those in use nowadays. A number of these manuals inspired by the Hindu god Mahadeva (Siva) have been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan. In the Mahayana Tantra are found the Buddha's teachings with regard to the practice of dream yoga and this practice is now wide-spread among Tibetan Lamas. Dream Yoga, which is considered an excellent preparation for the after death experience of the Bardo, consists of four stages: (1) inducing lucid dreams in which one is conscious while dreaming and recognizes that one is dreaming, (2) transforming the different aspects of one's dream, (3) calling the dream animals to oneself

ORACLES IN TIBET

John Reynolds

part 2

and riding on their back in order to journey to distant places and even to the Heaven World for the sake of acquiring knowledge (a practice directly related to shamanism), and (4) absorption into the Clear Light. Prophetic dreams are especially important because they are considered to have been sent by the gods or to have come from one's inner Guru or higher self. A Lama will largely guide and direct his life by means of these prophetic dreams. However, the Lamas are well aware that most dreams arise from unconscious memories and from karmic traces (*bag-chags*) of past lives. The omens and signs which appear in dreams may relate to everyday life or they may indicate success or failure in terms of one's practice of meditation (*sgrub rtas*). For example, the seeing in one's dream of a completely white or glacial mountain indicates a purification of one's negative karma. Students regularly report their dreams to their Lama during the period of their training in the practice of meditation (27). Also, at certain pilgrimage places a type of dream incubation may be practised, especially with regard to the healing of diseases. For example, a deity or a spirit may appear to a Lama in his dreams there and indicate to him the means to cure a particular disease. This is reminiscent of the practice at the temples of *Esklepios*, the god of healing, in antiquity. Furthermore, many teachings of the Buddha and other illustrious figures of the past, like *Padmasambhava*, for example, may be revealed to a Lama in his dreams. These are considered *gter-ma* or hidden treasure teachings and there now exists in Tibetan a large number of these texts deriving from dreams, visions and other sources.

Geomancy is not only employed in Tibet to answer specific questions such as was the case with *rdel mo*, but there exists a more general system of geomancy pertaining to the relationship between man and his works, on the one hand, and the natural features of the landscape, on the other hand. This was one of the ancient Bonpo sciences and it has also been adopted by the Buddhists. It is called *sa-dpyad*, "examination of the earth", and is similar to the Chinese art of *Feng Shui*, "wind and water" (28). In the view of *sa-dpyad*, the



Sorcerers' Dance

earth is alive, a living breathing organism, an earth goddess called *Sa yi lha-mo*, corresponding to the ancient Greek *Gaia*. And moving through the earth is a vital energy or breath, *dbugs*, which creates the natural features of the landscape. It raises up mountains and carries water along its courses to the sea. Without this vital energy, the land would be dead. This energy is exhaled through the surface and inhaled toward the depths of the earth. It is ever pulsating expanding and contracting and it is what makes the land fertile and inhabitable. This energy is sometimes spoken of as the breath of the dragon and these dragon veins are like a network of nerves. Elevations in the ground are a sign of its presence. In term of any site one might consider, this energy should be concentrated by means of the surrounding hills to the left and the right: otherwise it will scatter and dissipate. The rapid movement of water along a straight line will carry off this energy, so straight lines are to be avoided. Therefore, it is very important that any house, temple, or shrine be correctly oriented in a harmonious relationship to these earth energies which flow through the landscape. When a Lama is called upon to select a site for a house or a temple, ideally there should be a tall mountain behind, hills on either side, and two streams converging in front. Surveying the natural features of the landscape, he looks to discern the presence at that site of the four guardians of the earth (*sa yi bsrung bzhi*): (1) To the east, a white path or whitish rocks or cliffs indicate the presence of the white tiger (*stag skya-bo*). The mountain in the east should not be as high as that in the north, and in the east no ravines or other lines should cut across the valley (2). To the south there should be a stream or river or some other body of water, as well as the flourishing of green vegetation. This indicates the presence of the turquoise dragon (*gyu 'brug*). The stream should run into an open valley and should not disappear into the earth (3). To the west there should be no pitfalls or obstacles along any path found there (4). And to the north there should be the bare rocks or cliffs of a mountain resembling the back of a tortoise - this indicating the presence of the great black tortoise (*rus-sbal rgya-bo*). The top of the ridges may be jagged, but they must form a solid mass, and not be like gaps between teeth, because these would be the teeth of the god of death (*gshin-rje*). The streams should have their source in that direction, but the flowing water should not be obstructed or overly agitated. When these four guardians are present, the land is perfectly endowed.

According to the Bonpo tradition, the mountain to the west is called the *lha ri*, "the mountain of the gods", and on this should be erected a *gsas-mkhar* or small shrine to the local gods and spirits who are active in the area. A consecration ceremony is performed and colored wool cords tied to the top of the shrine extend into the four directions. These serve as conductors for the energies of the celestial gods, the *gsas* or *lha*, which are invoked and which descend from heaven. In the ancient Bonpo cosmology, the world consists of three zones inhabited by various kinds of worldly gods and spirits (*Gr. theoi* and *damimones*) - the *lha* inhabit the atmosphere and the heavens, the *gnyam* inhabit the surface of the earth, and the *klu* inhabit the underworld. This division is reminiscent of the ancient Greek distinction between the heavenly gods, the *theoi ouranioi*, and the nether gods, the *theoi chthonioi*. There exist different cults with respect to these classes of gods and spirits (29). For example, the



Tara

lha and the *gnyan* are largely propitiated with sacrifices (generally nowadays symbolic) and with the fumes of burning juniper boughs. The *gnyan* are often tree spirits like the Greek *dryades* whose lives were bound up with their trees, whereas the *klu* are water spirits like the Greek *naiades* who live in and give life to lakes, rivers, springs and fountains. These *klu*, the chthonic spirits who rule over the water element and the powers of fertility, are propitiated with libations poured out upon the earth. The *klu*, now identified with the Nagas of Indian tradition, are shape-changers who can

appear as human, as serpentine, or as half-human half-serpent. Their characteristic color is green and they are famous as powerful magicians. They live beneath the earth or beneath bodies of water in fabulous bejewelled palaces. In many ways they are reminiscent of the old pagan gods of Ireland, the *Tuatha Da Danaan*. The daughters of the *klu* are very beautiful and enchanting and occasionally they mate with human beings. Like *Kekrops*, the first king of Athens, who was half-serpent half-human, certain *klu-rgyal* or Naga kings became the ancestors of various local dynasties in Tibet. Thus the cult of the *klu* or Nagas very much resembled the chthonic cults in ancient Greece as recorded in *Pausanias* (30).

The precincts around the Bonpo *gsas-mkhar* and the corresponding Buddhist *mchod-rten* or *stupa* are sacrosanct and used only for the making of prayers and offerings to the gods. The principal difference in practice here between the Buddhist and the Bonpo is that whereas the Buddhist circumambulates the *stupa* clockwise, keeping the monument always to his right in imitation of the path of the sun, the Bonpo circumambulates the *gsas-mkhar* anti-clockwise, keeping it always to his left. This is because the Bon tradition retains many elements of the old pre-historic matriarchal religion. According to the Tantric practice in both Buddhism and Bon, male energy revolves clockwise and female energy revolves counter-clockwise. Since ancient times *gsas-mkhar* and *mchod-rten* have been built on the various power spots of the Tibetan landscape as determined by geomancy and this practice serves to harmoniously link and integrate the energies of sky and earth. These power spots are connected with *ley-lines*. The same principles were operative in the erecting of early Christian Churches in Western Europe. They were often built above places of power and not infrequently atop the foundations of pagan shrines and temples. In this way, the new religion subdued the wild telluric energies of the land, bringing them into integration with a higher spiritual order. For example, there exists a legend that the land of Tibet was once a gigantic rock, as Tantric Master *Padmasambhava* erecting and consecrating stupas at the key points of her limbs at the borders of Tibet. This subdued her and held her in place. This action by *Padmasambhava*, as well as subduing the local gods and demons, permitted the spreading and establishing of the Buddhist teachings in the land of Tibet.

There exist many signs or indications of positive or negative energy to be read by the Tibetan geomancer in the configurations of the landscape. For example, a road to the southeast will bring friends and good fortune, whereas a road to the northwest will bring evil spirits. A spring below the house will be bad because this will be like a vase with a cracked bottom and a spring above and behind the house will also be bad because this will be like the shedding of tears: whereas a spring to the left or the right of the house will be good. Inauspicious features in the vicinity of the house must be balanced by the opposite, like water being opposed to fire, and so on. Negative or inauspicious characteristics in the landscape may be removed by erecting stupas, Buddha images, *mani* walls and so on. When a site is chosen for a building, then there exist various tests of the site and the soil to be made by the Lamas. For example, the Lama may conduct a *lto-phye brtag-pa*, or an examination of the serpent-bellied earth spirit. A chessboard pattern of 360 squares is laid out at the site and a drawing of a chthonic serpent deity is made inside of this, with its head in the east and its tail in the west. Certain calculations are made to determine the precise location of the power spot. A hole is dug there and if any defects are found, they are removed and the site is purified with mantras. A *gter bum* or treasure urn filled with relics, mantras and precious stones, etc. may be buried there by the Lama in order to invoke the blessings and aid of the chthonic spirits - the *klu* and the *sa-bdag*.

Not only is geomancy under the patronage of *Manjusri*, who corresponds to *Apollo*, but also astrology. It is said that at the beginning of the world, *Manjusri* emanated a gigantic golden tortoise which swam about the surface of the cosmic ocean. Then taking his bow, he shot this tortoise with his arrows. Dying, it vomited smoke and fire, and rolling over on its back, its body became the surface of the earth. From this tortoise derived all the elements of existence. From its head in the south came the hot breath of fire and from its tail in the north came the cold fresh waters. From its head came fire, from its flesh came earth, from its blood came water, from its nerves came wood and from its bones came metal. Thus the five elements came into existence, but these are not elements in the sense of modern chemistry, but rather they are modes of the manifestation of energy.

All the bibliography and footnotes will be published within the last part, in the next issue.

John Reynolds

To be continued in the next issue



The World of R



Paolo first heard of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's teachings in India and Nepal in 1968. The Lama living in Rome. On his return to Italy he went to Tivoli. At that time he was unable to personally meet the Rinpoche until 1976 that Rinpoche finally began to teach. Paolo attended his first retreat in Subiaco. Paolo feels that the most important of the retreats he attended was the one he attended in Nepal in 1984 when Rinpoche taught the Life Practice of the Dakhini Mandarava and gave him a most extraordinary and illuminating teaching. Paolo has made more than three hundred films for the Italian National TV network, as well for many international networks. He has been invited to show his films at many international film festivals and has won the prize for the Best Reportage at a Moscow film festival. His latest production made together with Shang-Shung Edizioni, was called "Lama Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's journey to Tibet" about Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's journey to Tibet working for the preservation of Tibetan culture. It is a continuous effort during which more than 10 years have passed. Paolo wishes to convey his gratitude to Fabio and the members of the Dzogchen Community who have supported him.

Photos by Yeshe Namkhai Rinpoche

Paolo Brunato



npoché when he was following Dharma
ere he was told that there was a Tibetan
taly he met Rinpoche for the first time in
rsuade him to give teachings. It was not
n to give public teachings and Paolo

ie many retreats he has followed was the
Rinpoche received the Terma of the Long
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h Fabio Andrico and in association with
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ays around the world giving teaching and
culture. It is the result of three years of
han 75 hours of film were shot. Paolo
bio Andrico, Fulvio Rossi and all the
who gave their support to this project.

he, Fabio Andrico, Paolo Brunato.



FACES IN THE MIRROR

Often I've been asked to talk about my work. It seems that it needs to be explained. Everytime I have been asked I have been puzzled by the question: "What do people want to know about my work?". Of course rather a lot could be said, but as a matter of fact, my work is not mysterious: it can be seen, it can be touched, it speaks for itself. Well, this work first of all is an act of disobedience, next a search for everlost innocence and last but not least, an attempt to love and live better. I have always believed, and I still do, that a task done with care and diligence, with love and perseverance, will justify itself and find its own reward and accomplishment.

My dissatisfaction with society is based - not on a refusal of conformity - which can be acceptable when it is decent - but on my refusal to participate in the "system" and its surrounding waste. As long as a child dies of starvation on our small planet, our "system" doesn't grant the slightest relief to the suffering of humanity and we are inclined to become unsatisfied and also cruel. But I'll leave to others the task of enumerating the deficiencies of our samsaric society, this is not my purpose. My purpose is to refuse my complicity. That's all. One of the reasons I like my work is that through it I met the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, and later on my Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. And it is through his living teaching that I finally succeeded in putting some order into my confused search for freedom. A lot still has to be done!

By the end of the seventies

the petroleum shortage put an end to my brilliant career in the data processing world. I was 'fired' and found myself, overnight, without a job or hope of reinstatement, as I was considered too old, at 36, to be a data processing business engineer in a highly competitive context. The marketing school I attended later on, in order to retrain myself, confirmed my intimate, firm belief that our so called "Liberal Avancee de Consommation" society was on a bad course, having lost its common decency.

As usual, we think that something has to be changed - it has always been the same through the ages. But it never occurs to us that if there is something to be changed, it might be us. So, waiting for this change to happen, I remembered all at once that when I was a student I had attended 'Beaux Arts' in Paris, for more than one year. I started to sculpt again in order to keep myself busy and within a few weeks I "gave birth" to a bust of Julius Caesar, then one of Augustus, not to mention Caligula, whose demonic glance became the cause of his destruction. I couldn't stand this gaze any longer, so I suddenly decided to bring things to a head: in a sort of murderous rage, I settled his hash with a hammer. Then I allowed myself a break from the tyrant, and went to the Musée Guimet, with little idea that this day in June would be a turning point in my life.

For the first time I was struck by Oriental aesthetics which I had never met before. Something peaceful emanated from those sculptures, especially from their faces. I found myself sitting in front of a

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AND THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

Gianni Dejure



majestic Thai Buddha, whose ineffable smile and elegant attitude gave him such a noble aspect that I felt stupefied with admiration. I said to myself: "My God!" two or three times, almost breathlessly. I spent days and days of my life trying to reproduce that strange smile, which seemed to be beyond time. I tried to catch it. I came to the conclusion that behind this smile there was something to discover. I bought myself some books on Oriental Art, with beautiful polychrome images and I literally plunged myself into the discovery of Buddhist Thai art through the centuries. In this way I learned about the innumerable styles of this art and its evolution through places and time. A peerless explosion of artistic invention. Unfortunately all this did not improve the quality of my sculpture's smile. Then, finally I understood that it was necessary to penetrate the meaning of this smile.

Since then I've been on the Path. Little by little I homed in on Tibetan Tantric Buddhism, Vajrayana, and then on the living teaching of my Master, the refined gold of the wisdom of many lineages of wise men. That happened apparently by a mere chance. I remember that the Master encouraged me to continue with this work, not only as an aesthetic research, but also to make a living out of it. I remember listening to him with veneration, and undertook the task full of enthusiasm. My work is exhausting in the long run and needs a lot

One of the reasons I like my work is that through it I met the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, and later on my Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

of application. It strains my eyes and cannot be done in any way but standing solitarily. Movements must be precise and slow. There is no room for automation, no machine can be used in any circumstance and each piece must be carefully treated in all its details. The golden leaves are laid one on top of the other, often 3 or 4 times, in order to obtain a perfect brilliance. Each time I must repaint, go over the same details, polish and polish again. No piece will come out of my hands if it doesn't mean anything to me: if it doesn't recall to me the first impression I had when I saw the Buddha statue in the

Musée Guimet. Although they come out of the same matrix, none of them, in the end, will be identical.

What is important is the finishing. The work of finishing will decide its price. Raw materials are scarcely taken into account. As far as the materials are concerned, the little and medium statues are made of a product which comes from Germany, similar to the sort of ceramic used by dentists, that the distributors in France call 'Staturoc'. This product has the advantage of being perfectly neutral and of not producing those pestilential vapours that are harmful to one's breathing, unlike some resins sold today, that are risky to use. This product is sold only on retail in France, and is very expensive. So I would like to make a request: is there anybody, especially in Germany, who could send me information about whether it would be possible to buy it in bulk and cheaper? If so, please let me know. Thank you!

For the big statues I've found nothing better to use than white cement, Lafarge mixed with sand and alabaster gravel, in other words a sort of 'concrete'. One of the great joys that my work gives to me is that in the end the formless matter surrenders and delivers its reward. Then another miracle takes place: the captive image gets free, flies away to the ten directions, carrying through the world our hope to see our wishes become true... Also I am delighted when

those who like my work show, through their attitude, that they take into account the spirit of it, not only the matter. I will never forget the attention and love given by a young Indian lady to a small statue of mine of Sakyamuni Buddha during a retreat in England. But many others have also honoured my work with their pure minds, free from prejudice and speculation, and I want to take this opportunity of saying "Thank you" to all of them.

Should I tell you my hopes? One is to see all the wonderful projects Rinpoche is working on become true, participating in them with my work and being able to make a living out of it.

I have two more requests to make through "The Mirror": my statues are copies of originals which are the results of a careful preliminary research, because I do not intend to reproduce whatever falls into my arms. The originals must be of good quality. The preliminary research is not easy, because high quality pieces are at least 50 years old. Most of the existing pieces are at present in the hands of private collectors. Is there among the readers of "The Mirror" a holder of statues with sublime features? If someone among you is moved by this announcement and would like to collaborate, I can be reached at:

Atelier Tashi Shok
6 rue Montgolfier
93500 PANTIN Paris
tel: 48430540

Needless to say, the piece will not in any way be at risk and it will be given back undamaged three weeks later matched with its double, which could make one of your friends happy.

Edited by:
Nina Robinson and
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MIND AND MENTAL DISORDERS IN TIBETAN MEDICINE

from "Tibetan Medicine, a holistic approach to better health"

Dr.Lobsang Ragpay, Dharamsala

Traditional Asian philosophical-religious and medical systems of thought share fundamental belief in the existence of a vital force or energy that pervades the human organism. Termed *prana* in Sanskrit and *ch'i* by the Chinese, this life force moves in channels throughout the body, underlying the psychophysical process. This energy is said to dissolve in death, to be blocked or disrupted in disease, and to be channelled or controlled in the practice of meditation. A similar energy has also been postulated by western practitioners of such therapies as bioenergetics.

Both *prana* and *ch'i* have come to be equated with such phenomena as the breath, air, wind or creative force, yet in a more accurate sense these are only aspects of a more universal energy. "All forces of the universe, like those of the human mind, from the highest consciousness to the depth of the sub-conscious, are modifications of *prana*. The word *prana* can therefore not be equated with the physical breath, though breathing ("*prana*" in the narrowest sense) is one of the main functions in which this universal and primordial force manifests itself." (Govinda, 1960, p.137). Breathing serves as a means of extracting this energy from the environment (Evans-Wents, 1958, p.126), and thus control of the breathing process in meditation is one means of affecting the movement of *prana*.

The Chinese view this concept similarly. "Another fundamental concept underlying Chinese medical and psychiatric theory is the holistic and dynamic theory accounting for both health and disease according to traditional formulations which described them in terms of the flow or impediment to the flow of vital energy through the body. This vital energy, may have any or all of the connotations indispensable for the maintenance of life. The Chinese character for *ch'i*, which literally connotes gas or air, also contains a modifier meaning "grain" or "rice". Thus air, and food together in the body, as symbolized by this ideogram, collaboratively suggest the process of combustion or metabolism which creates energy" (Kao, 1977, p.13).

Traditionally, *prana* is described according to three aspects - the underlying energy itself, the channels

in which it moves, and the movements or currents within these channels. The underlying energy is conceptualized as the life source, often symbolized by semen, which is the "seed" of all forms the being takes" (Rao, 1979, p.53). It permeates all things and yet is in itself not definable. "But in its own essential and inalienable nature, it is 'zero', 'naught'. It lacks the dimensions of existence, and is thus not grasped" (Rao, 1979, p.13).

The channels in which this energy moves are termed *nadis* in Sanskrit and *tsas* in Tibetan. These pathways make up a kind of psychic nervous system whose anatomy is well known to all practitioners of Tantric meditation. The Chinese also postulate the existence of energy channels in the body through which the *ch'i* moves (these channels are usually referred to as "meridians").

The movement of this energy within the channels of the human organism is termed *vayu* in Sanskrit and *rlung* in Tibetan. The word *vayu* is derived from the root 'va', 'to breathe' or 'to blow', which refers to the motive power of '*prana*'. The '*vayu*'... controls the bodily functions; and thus each has its own place and duty. Health, essential for the yogin, depends upon keeping each vital-air normal, or its own channel of operation" (Evans-Wents, 1958, p.132).

The Tibetan tradition has probed, explored and described the complex pattern of this energy as profoundly as any. Both medical and religious texts lay a strong emphasis on these currents of psychic energy, and much of Tibetan psychiatry and medicine is concerned with the manifestations and treatments of disruptions or blocks in the flow of *prana*. Whenever the Tibetan tradition refers to *rlung*, therefore, it is referring to the movement or flow of this energy within prescribed pathways in the human being.

In fact, when Tibetan medicine is examined with an eye toward descriptions of mind and mental disorders, it becomes clear that what is being discussed is how these currents of *prana* function in health and disease. Tibetan medical texts are filled with descriptions of the manifestations of dysfunction of the *pranic* flow, and Tantric religious texts voluminously elucidate the reorganization of these currents that occurs in death or in meditation. An understanding of the Tibetan approach to mind is not possible



sible without an appreciation of the character of these *pranic* currents.

Systems of Psychology

Tibetan concepts of personality derive from two major branches of the Buddhist texts: the tantric teachings on the nature of mind (particularly those termed "Highest Yoga Tantra") and the sutra system of Abhidharma. The tantric teachings emphasize the spiritual and emotional aspects of mind, with particular reference to subtle states of consciousness that manifest during death, intermediate state and birth, and that are specifically cultivated in advanced meditation practices (Lati and Hopkins, 1979).

The Abhidharma is a system of psychological theory derived from moment-to-moment observation of the workings of the human mind in meditation. It describes the make-up of the mind as a constellation of wholesome, afflictive, and neutral mental factors of perceptual, cognitive and affective qualities, and goes on to analyze the radical restructuring of mental contents that occurs through the practice of meditation. Of the three types of mental factors, the afflictive factors (such as greed, hatred, pride, envy,

lack of insight, etc.) are seen as the ultimate underlying causes of both physical and mental diseases, and it is only through the practice of meditation that these afflictive factors can be rooted out and destroyed (Goleman and Epstein, 1981). Three afflictive mental states in particular are singled out as the roots of all unwholesome states of mind; desire or attachment (grasping after pleasant objects or experiences), hatred, anger or aversion (pushing away or avoiding unpleasant objects or experience) and ignorance or confusion (not clearly understanding the nature of a given object or experience). Mental health is defined as a mind free from the influence of the afflictive mental factors, and that is the goal of the process of meditation. For those who have not realized this goal, a certain amount of mental disharmony is inevitable. In dealing with problems of mental disturbance, Tibetan medicine recognizes the imperfection of the unenlightened mind and does not seek to accomplish the impossible. Therefore certain "less-than-enlightened" and mental influences are readily accepted as contributing factors in the etiology of

disease.

In terms of psychopathology, the classification of nervous and mental diseases occurs within the major medical texts. Psychiatry, in the Tibetan view, is one aspect of the medical system as a whole. Concepts of etiology, methods of diagnosis, and means of treatment are similarly applied to diseases of both body and mind. Medical practitioners are trained to recognize and treat mental disorders as well as physical ones and there is no distinct class of specialists in the treatment of psychopathology within the medical profession.

Fundamentals of Tibetan Medicine

A. History

According to historical sources, Tibet first opened its doors to the cultural and religious influences of the societies surrounding it in the 7th century A.D. The Tibetan alphabet (1) was adapted from the Sanskrit during the reign of King Srong-btsan-sgam-po (627-649) and the first translations of Indian and Chinese Buddhist texts were begun. The process of investigation, translation and preservation of Buddhist teachings continued into the 13th century, at which time it was curtailed due to both the Moslem invasion of India (and consequent destruction of Buddhism) and the ascendance of Genghis Khan in China. The centuries of cultural transmission brought medical theories and practices to the Tibetan people along with religious teachings. Some of the most famous of the early translators and religious leaders were also accomplished masters of medical theory.

The origins of Tibetan medicine may be traced to a medical conference organized by the above-mentioned King Srong-btsan-sgam-po, who invited doctors from India, China and Persia to his court. Each translated a text into Tibetan and then collaborated on a text growing out of their mutual discussions. The Persian doctor, Galenos (whose name may reflect the Greek origin of his teachings), remained in Tibet to serve as the King's physician (Rechung 1973, p.15). An even larger international conference took place during the reign of King Khri-srong-ldes-bstan (800-815), with representatives from India, Kashmir, China, Persia, Nepal, Afghanistan and Sinkiang attending the King's court. Again each attendant translated at least one text of

their tradition. Discussions and debates were held at Samye, and seven Tibetan youths were chosen to master the accumulated medical knowledge. (Among them was one of the most celebrated of Tibetan physicians, gYu-thog-Yontan mGon-po (786-911). This time, the Chinese representative remained in Tibet to serve as the royal physician (Rechung, 1973, Finckh, 1975).

The most fundamental of the Tibetan medical texts is the four-part, 156-chapter *rGyud-bzhi*. The *rGyud-bzhi*, whose full title translates as "The Four Secret Oral Tantras on the Eight Branches of the Medical Tradition", is a re-working of a Sanskrit text, the *Amrita Astanga Guhyopadesa Tantra*, which is thought to have been compiled in the 4th century A.D. (Tsarong, 1979). The original Sanskrit work is no longer to be found, and there remains not even a reference to it in the Indian medical tradition (Dash, 1976).

The *rGyud-bzhi* remains the most popular, widely studied, and frequently commented upon Tibetan medical text.

It is divided into four parts; the first or Root Treatise (which contains an overview of the eight disease groups: bodily diseases, childhood diseases, female diseases, nervous diseases, wounds, poisoning, diseases of the elderly and infertility); the second or Explanatory Treatise (which further classifies the range of diagnosis, treatment and disease); the third or Treatise of Instruction (which describes each disease in detail, including a section on nervous and mental disease); and the Fourth or Final Treatise (which describes methods of diagnosis-questioning, examination of pulse and examination of urine - and methods of therapy - including diet, behavioural modification, herbal medicines and moxabustion) (Finckh, 1975). Translations of the early sections of the *rGyud-bzhi* are available (Tsarong, 1981; Donden and Kelsang, 1977), but translations of the more detailed later sections have not been completed. In addition to this fundamental text, scores of other medical texts are available in untranslated form (catalogued by the Tibetan Medical Center, Dharamsala, India).

Dr. Lobsang Ragpay

is a Tibetan Buddhist monk and physician and has a PhD from Visva Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal, India, in Tibetan Medicine and Buddhist psychology. He has studied for many years with leading Tibetan teachers and has travelled widely all over the world lecturing in major medical schools, universities and health centres. Dr. Ragpay runs a clinic in New Delhi and works closely with the Department of Behavioural Medicine, Beth Israel Hospital, Harvard Medical School, USA. He is also a Research Associate of the New York Heart Research Foundation, New York, and an elected member of the Council for International Association of Traditional Asian Medicine. He has written several articles and two books and is presently involved in a number of projects to promote Tibetan medicine and explore the use of Buddhist psychotherapeutic techniques for the treatment of mental illnesses.

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THE SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

One of the first things to read in the Tibetan Calendar is the "day of the week", to see what is better to do and what better to avoid on particular days. I will give you an explanation of the meaning of the seven days. In Tibet the week begins on Sunday, day number 1, and ends on Saturday, which corresponds to 0.

The first day is Sunday. The planet corresponding to Sunday type is called the "Planet of the Gods" or also the "Planet of the King's Soul". When we say "Planet of the Gods", and "King's Soul" it means it is an important day for important persons such as, for example, a king.

What is good to do on Sundays

It is good to do something like, for example, a coronation, or founding a Royal Palace, or to reign; to exchange something important; to receive important things; to become a monk or something like that; to prepare medicine (because usually when you prepare medicines you always establish the most favourable day, as this has its effect.) It is also a favourable day to do whatever is connected with "Fire"; to put up a flag to show the sign of a nation or of a reign; to make war and generally actions involving strength; to steal, if for example one wants to steal an important picture on this day one can do it. (We must not be surprised, because all kinds of things exist including stealing. It's like when a hunter is praying to kill an animal); to place ornaments, not only on the body; to give birth to a son; to make a horse gallop; to tame animals; to make a big celebration; to call for yan, the Glory (in the Bonpo tradition a big ceremony is performed, especially for the monarchs); to do an artistic work; to make big commercial exchanges; to make bets; to do glorious actions, positive deeds.

What to avoid doing on Sundays.

(If one does these things one will easily find obstacles)

It is best to avoid taking an oath, signing an agreement, a pacification; making a funeral (in Astrology it's important to establish when to make a funeral, because this is something not only for the dead person, but especially for the surviving members of the family who sometimes still carry with them the negativities of the dead); beginning a new life in a new house, moving into a new house, taking a house; founding a temple (but this day is good, as said above, to found a Royal Palace); starting a long journey; wearing new clothes (in ancient times when one needed to wear new clothes a favourable day was chosen but today people wear new clothes very often, so this is not very useful). It is a day to avoid medical surgery, such as for example moxa, not so much for the indirect way of doing it, as for the direct way, especially on some important points; irrigating some fields, sowing or ploughing fields and planting trees or flowers. One should also avoid putting together a treasure; beginning manuscripts; parting with anything important (if you have something valuable, precious, and somebody wants to buy it, not only is it better not to sell it on this day, but it is also better not to give it as a present; in the same way it is not good if you throw something out of the house).

The second day is Monday.

Monday is usually called "The day of the Nagas" or the "Planet of Female Souls".

What is good to do on Mondays

Monday is a good day to decorate, to put ornaments on the body; to plant flowers or trees, to sow; to prepare wine (in Tibet it's very important to choose the most favourable time to do this, because sometimes fermented wine is delicious and sometimes it is not good at all); to prepare medicines (mixing the different ingredients); to do purification of any kind, also through the Practice; all work connected with Water; to irrigate the soil and generally all works with the soil; to do glorious deeds; to adopt a child, or employ a person to work in the house; to trade; to honour the Divinities, to do ritual ceremonies; to make celebrations, sacraments, agreements; to show a flag, the significant symbols; to marry; to take a new house and begin living in it; to wear new clothes; to do *Jud-len* (feeding on the essences that strengthen the physical body). It is a favourable day to reign, to govern; to give an assignment for instance to a prime minister; to do medical surgery such as blood-letting; to tame wild horses; to construct a temple, a church, an important statue; to do artistic things. It is also a good day to do a *mo* (a kind of divination); to make astrological calculations; to do rituals to get rid of negativities and others to increase benefits; to call for yan, (make a ritual calling for Glory); to prepare incense; to come into possession of treasures.

What to avoid on Mondays

On Mondays it is best to avoid parting with things; taking oaths and things like that; doing things connected with death, for example funerals or preparing tombs; leading an army to war; becoming a monk or a nun; starting a journey; doing "ferocious" deeds; doing the type of rituals to pacify negativities, and also performing the ritual of *jinseg*, (the ritual of Fire); making a horse race; wearing new clothes (but it is considered good to prepare them, like cutting out and generally working with clothes).

The third day is Tuesday.

In Tibetan Tuesday is called *migmar*, *mig* means 'eyes' and *mar* means 'red'; so we call it 'red eyes'. It is called the "Planet of the Semigods", while Sunday is called the "Planet of Gods". Regarding the Elements, Sunday and Tuesday are both Fire days, that is why

we are speaking of Gods and Semigods. Tuesday is generally called the "Day of Male Souls", especially of warriors, because Tuesday is a little 'ferocious'.

What is good to do on Tuesdays

Tuesday is a good day to do military actions, to conquer, to give assignments to generals; to do all kind of 'ferocious' actions, for example ferocious rituals; to do athletic activities, matches, and games of that sort; to promote a cause "actively"; to do some banditry; to begin to reign; to make a loan; to start a family; to go and live in a new place, for example a new house; to get rid of negativities, either through rituals - the type is very good - or in different ways; to do a horse race; to do rituals with Fire; to do *ntu*, (using Power), or *sor-med-ba*, very frequent in Tantrism; to do moxa; to participate in a lottery, because it is possible to win.

What to avoid doing on Tuesdays

On Tuesday it is best to avoid becoming a monk, because afterwards it could be easy to spoil it; getting married, because it is more possible to end in divorce; taking sacraments; making a purification; placing ornaments; giving a name, a title or anything like that; doing things connected with death, for instance a funeral; adopting children, or employing new persons for the work or for other reasons; participating in a secret meeting; working on the building of a house, or something sacred like a stupa or a statue; building a city; preparing medicines; artistic activities; making big meetings and celebrations to honour divinities; making an important journey; sowing and irrigating; planting trees and flowers; showing



something; doing business; making an important agreement; doing a "transference" practice; receiving the keys of a treasure; doing all the pacific actions needed for growth.

The fourth day is Wednesday.

Wednesday is called the "Day of the Yaksha" and also the "Day of the Prince's Soul". Many are the favourable things of this day, and few the negative ones.

What is good to do on Wednesdays

Wednesday is a good day to take vows, not only as a monk or nun; to make sacraments; to give a name to a child; to travel to do business; to make an agreement, important or not; to make a marriage; to call for Glory (a *yan* ritual); to take persons into your home to work for the family; to sow and to make irrigations; to build a house and do work connected with this; to dig a well looking for water; to build a new sacred thing like a stupa or a statue; to make an engagement connected with a treasure, such as for example to receive the keys of a treasure; to do all kind of artistic activities; to plough the soil and to plant flowers and trees; to do the "transference"; to make a divination, like the *mo*; to practice astrology; to do things connected with death. These are the good things to be done on Wednesdays, but the best things you can do on this day are: to conclude something important; to do surgery like moxa and similar treatments; to make a marriage and to establish important relationships. It is good to make every kind of positive action.

What to avoid doing on Wednesdays

On Wednesday it is best to avoid becoming a monk (even though it is good to take vows, this means it is not good for a person who has to renounce and make changes as in the case of for a new monk). It is also best to avoid preparing wine; changing the position of a corpse in a cemetery; parting with important things, for example a particular object one cares for very much and wants to give as a present or to sell. One should also avoid preparing medicines; stopping water courses, building dams; making war, leading an army to war; engaging in banditry because on this day the police may shoot. On Wednesdays it is especially unfavourable to do rituals to get rid of negativities, and generally all ferocious actions.

The fifth day is Thursday.

Thursday is called the "Day of the Bodhisattvas", that means

"Spiritual Day". It is also called "Day of the Buddhist Souls". It is a day of monks in general, not only Buddhists.

What is good to do on Thursdays

Thursday is a good day to become a monk; to make initiations and sacraments; to take vows; to do positive actions; to construct a Mandala; to do rituals with fire; to marry; to wear new clothes; to sow; to work in the fields planting trees and flowers; to study science - for example giving a conference about philosophy or work involving the use of your brain; to give a teaching; to begin to reign; to prepare medicines; to do blood-letting or moxa; to do *mo* divination; to make astrological calculations; to prepare wine and generally to make fermented things; to build a house; to take a new house and generally to do all the work connected with the house; to make important sacred objects like statues; to give a name; to wear a ring and ornaments in general; to do things connected with horses and all wild animals (like taming them); to do business; to do all kind of work connected with iron and metals; to give an exhibition; to make a celebration or an agreement; to make a *ntu* (sending Power); to apply medicine; to do glorious actions and positive deeds. On Thursdays it is especially good to do these two rituals: the *mdos*, (a ritual of the Bonpo tradition to pay karmic debts) and the *sor*, a ritual to pacify negativities.

What to avoid doing on Thursdays

On Thursdays it is best to avoid leading an army against somebody; taking an oath; making a funeral; constructing the roof of a house; getting rid of any animals one possesses. If you have to go to jail Thursday is the worst day for it to happen. It is also a day to avoid artistic activities.

The sixth day is Friday

Friday is called "Day of the Bon", that means the "Day of Power", magic force. Friday is also called the "Soul of Medicine".

What is good to do on Fridays

Friday is a favourable day to give Teachings; to do rituals and honour the divinities; to do some kinds of sacraments; to honour the positive local Guardians; to do rituals to overcome obstacles and problems arising from negative forces; to construct something sacred like a stupa, a statue or a church; to make a friendship, small or big (big is an agreement between nations and small is between friends); to sign something; to work the soil, to sow, to plough or to harvest; to do business; to prepare medicines, or incenses and perfumes; to give a title, a name; to decorate; to found a temple, a new house; to wear new clothes; to do works connected with the house, like building it, or connected with wells, pools and channels for irrigation; to do surgery, or blood-letting or moxa; to enter for the first time in a house; to build city walls; to work with gold, silver and precious gems; to make *mo* divinations; to make astrological calculations; to travel; to give scientific explanations; to make an important celebration; to construct a dam or something similar; to plant trees; to reach intimate knowledge.

What to avoid doing on Fridays

On Friday it is best to avoid: making a claim, quarrelling with someone; doing 'fundamental' things. It is not a very good day for someone who has had a serious disease. It is not a favourable day for stealing or banditry; moving a corpse in a cemetery, from one place to another; doing the practice of "transference".

The seventh day, Saturday, is day number zero for Tibetans Saturday is called the "Neutral Day" and also the "Day of Children's Souls".

What is good to do on Saturdays

On Saturdays it is good to open the roof of a house; to build a house; to occupy a new place; to work in the fields, to sow, to plant trees; to make a small pool; to dig a well; to make a cemetery; to work with water; to work with the Magic Force; to reply, if there is something to be said; to make a Long Life ritual; to perform, in the morning, a ritual to call for Glory; to buy or acquire animals; to make astrological calculations; to engage in banditry (they also need some space...)

What to avoid doing on Saturdays

On Saturdays it is best to avoid leading an army against someone; building a city wall; working with iron; doing a ritual *sinam*, to pacify negativities; saying important things, such as for example, "Today we are victorious!" or "Let's build our nation!" It is also an unfavourable day for giving the keys of a treasure; giving a name, a rank; becoming a monk; making sacraments or celebrations to honour divinities; wearing new clothes; reigning; doing moxa; preparing medicines; going on an important journey; ploughing new land; preparing a new field; making rituals to pacify negativities; getting rid of animals and making big expenses; making *mo* divinations; building a temple and important things; doing business; making agreements; doing important things to get big gains; making shows; doing the "transference". It is never good to give anything on Saturday but it is always good to receive. In Tibet, before the Chinese came, offices were always closed on Saturdays, like here on Sundays, because when offices work they need to spend money, and Saturday is not good for expenses. That is why it is called the "Day of Children's Souls", because children are innocent, they don't have many concepts, so for them it's a good day, unlike for adults who generally have to do many things. Sometimes we also say "Saturday is lame". "Lame" means not being able to walk normally, so it means it is very easy to fall into negativity, that is why it is difficult to do things on Saturdays.

Lama Tenzin Wangyal in Texas

Spring 1990

In the spring of 1990, Tenzin Wangyal came to visit Houston, Texas, at the invitation of Anne Klein who teaches at the Department of Religious Studies at Rice University.



On three consecutive evenings Tenzin Wangyal gave teachings at the Yoga Center of Houston and was able to introduce a number of very interested people to Dzog-chen, teaching practices from the *Akhrid* cycle, and *Shang-Shung sNyan rGyud*. He also taught two classes at Rice University. In the first, an interdisciplinary lecture course on Asian culture, he discussed the early history of Bon and his own studies at Dolangi. The second class was a seminar on Buddhist theories of perception; it had focused on basic sutra ideas of conceptual and non-conceptual thought, especially the way in which Gelukba finds conceptual reflection to be an important part of meditation practice. Tenzin Wangyal spoke to the class about Dzog-chen's very different perspective, drawing in part from a text containing Geluk critiques of Long-chen-ba (the *dbU ma chos dbying*, "Reality of the Middle Way" by Geshe Denma Ngawang Cho-rag). The three hour class was enormously important to the students, acquainting them with the extensive range of Tibetan Buddhist thought. Student evaluations in both classes enthusiastically praised Tenzin Wangyal's participation with them.

During the same visit Tenzin Wangyal began to tell me about a Bon-po collection of Dzog-chen texts called the *Gal mdo tshad ma*. Dating from the 10th century and said to be a rediscovered text from the 8th century, it has the unique feature of being a debating text on certain practical aspects of Dzog-chen. When Rice University granted me some research funds for the summer, I invited Tenzin Wangyal to come to Houston to work on this and other materials, and to continue to teach Dzog-chen practice to students in Houston. To my surprise and delight he was able to make time in his busy schedule to come here for two weeks in August.

During this time we read the second of the *Gal mdo* texts known as *The Sun Cycle of Important Sutras and Tantras Ascertaining the Essence of All Things* (*Bon thams cad gyi yang snying gtan tshigs nges ba'i gal mdo tan tra nyi ma'i khor*). In addition to its interesting debates, this text is a treasury of poetic quotations from even more ancient writings, most of which apparently no longer exist. In celebration of our summer's work we would like to offer a sampling of ancient verses cited in this text of the *Gal mDo Tshad Ma*.

From The Totality of Samantabhadra's Mind Tantra (Kun du bzang ba'i dgongs pa thig la'i rgyud): 78.6
In conceptualizing faults and features of samsara and nirvana

Ignorant erroneous conceptions differ from primordial wisdom

Within the essential basis, these are not two.

From the same text: 91.5-6

Once hatred is renounced, love cannot be discerned
The single nature of the mind renounces nothing

Once ignorance is renounced, wisdom cannot be discerned

The single nature of the mind renounces nothing

Once desire is renounced, generosity cannot be discerned

The single nature of the mind renounces nothing

From the same text: 125.5

These phenomena, without a base or root,
Howsoever they are imputed, so they appear,
Just as the six beings see water six ways.

From The Essence That dwells like the Sky Tantra (sNying po nam mkha ltar gnas pa'i rgyud): 108.1

I am the great self-arisen naturally abiding one
Known from the beginning as the origin of all things.
You, strenuously seeking me and yearning for me,
Fatigue yourselves; even over many ones you do not find me.

This nature of mine is unique among all things,
not comparable to what is not me or what tries to be me.

From The Dance of the Svastika Tantra (gYung drung gar dbang rgyud): 114.4-5

This primordially existing essence,
Unrealized because we are unaware,
Is clearly seen once instruction is given
As one whose face is unseen
Sees it when given a mirror.

From The View which Burns like Fire Scripture (Ita ba me ltar 'bar ba'i lung): 120.4

In the mind of Samantabhadra,
Experience called "present" or "absent" is erroneous.
That one excludes not the other is the ultimate excellence
Clarified without effort, neither ascertained nor conceived.

From The Treasure Source which is an Ornament of Presence (Rig pa rgyan gyi mdzod phug): 121.2

Since conceptual minds do not influence
The five doors' clear unceasing senses,
Understand that neither moves from the mind-base of all.

Such is the superior method of setting the mind.

From The Scripture of the Blissful Samantabhadra (Kun bzang bde ba'i lung): 123.5

This Great Completeness, distillation of the essence,
Is not ascertained as one, it is many.
Not being many, it dwells as one
Separation of one and many does not exist;
Even its nonexistence is beyond saying "non-existence"
And this very convention of saying "beyond"
Was never mentioned by Shen-rab.

From the same text: 101.2

When everything is realized as Buddha
Meditation and the view do not exist apart
This very meditation is the superior view.

Buddha is neither found in meditation
Nor lost in lacking meditation
Continuously remain in non-distraction



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THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY

USA

There were 25 to 30 of us from California (including six Gakyil members) who travelled the 3,000 miles to attend the Tsegylgar retreat in Massachusetts. During the retreat we met five times amongst ourselves and once with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche when we discussed ideas and asked for some guidance on how to proceed. Here is a brief overview of the outcome:



Community Spirit: Although we would like many things, we want to put first things first. We want to proceed slowly and surely. All agreed that the basis for any type of collaboration with land and business ventures begins with sharing, working and playing together. We want to make group practices and retreat weekends a focus for the coming year, to proceed in getting to know ourselves and each other. Out of this more cohesive Community, we wish to move towards doing our future projects.

Land: We are selling our land in Cazadero with three considerations in mind:

- 1 Receiving a fair market price;
- 2 Expediency of sale so that we may be of economic assistance to other Communities while there is need;
- 3 Attention to the land's ecological fate. The land has tripled in value

within the short time we have owned it. It has been a great investment but there have been too many bureaucratic problems in developing it for Community use.

Finances: When the land sells, we will give Norbu Rinpoche 25% of the profit. This we expect to be in the area of \$ 40,000-50,000. At that time we expect to be in a position to lend additional funds to Merigar and to help Tsegylgar. We have just borrowed \$ 10,000 that will be repayed when the land sells. This money goes to Merigar (\$ 7,000) and Tashigar (\$ 5,000) immediately to help meet expenses.

Future land: We would like another parcel of land in California suitable for group endeavours and private retreats. In discussing our ideas with Norbu Rinpoche, he made clear what qualities the next piece of land should have. Foremost, it should be accessible to practitioners. The land need not be large. Just that it be easy to get to, a quiet place for private retreats and group practices, without the hassels with neighbors and officials which the North American Communities have been plagued with.

Norbu said that when we were ready, we could build a dark retreat cabin (which many are interested in as a future goal) using information from Conway.

The old military installation in San Francisco, named the Presidio, may be leasing space to non-profit groups. We are exploring the possibility of developing a city center there which would be shared with other Tibetan Cultural groups. Norbu Rinpoche said that this is fine as long as the Tibetan groups don't partake in political activities, which might jeopardize Norbu Rinpoche's ability to act in Tibet and China.

Publications: We want to continue to support translation projects here, in collaboration with the Shang-Shung Institute. Also, Norbu Rinpoche suggested to prepare pamphlets from sections of transcriptions and tapes which would include the general view and exclude practice methods. Such pamphlets would be suitable for the general public and could spark interest without affiliating with Buddhism or any other label.

There will no longer be a California newsletter in its previous form. At this time it is more important to consolidate and focus on our splendid international paper, The Mirror. We will of course send out regular news bulletins.

The next Gakyil meeting is September 9. Everyone is invited. The new Gakyil will be decided at that time. Norbu Rinpoche stressed that the new members we choose should have enough time to fully participate and the ability to be active and responsible, as well as flexible in communication and collaboration with other individuals and other Gars.

As we deepen our focus of what we want to do amongst ourselves, collaboration then is defined as the willingness to work and practice together regardless of whether or not the master returns.

MAIL

Australia

A night of lightning and rain

I have just finished reading the latest edition of "The Mirror", feeling overwhelmed as I customarily do when reading of the formidably energetic activities of the Dzogchen Community, not only in Italy but throughout the world. It brings home to me, what? More than anything, it places in perspective and clarifies for me the very nature of what constitutes community, what constitutes participation.

As a member of the Australian Community who has been exposed to the Precious Teachings of our Master only two and a half years ago, it is only now that the frenzy triggered by the initial impact has waned, to be replaced by a more balanced approach to the Teachings and to practice in general. On first exposure to Rinpoche I tried desperately to seize the Teachings as if they were to be appropriated for my personal salvation almost at the cost of life itself! Needless to say, these attempts failed dismally, albeit not without (melo) drama; instead, I found myself floundering in a welter of experience, the nightmare, the phantasmagorical, the bliss and the despair of an emotional outpour whose roots had lain in murky, subterranean depths for three decades, and more. The experiences, need I say it, were anguished and painful. Yet, in the descent, a shaft of light always penetrated the darkness, always providing a depth of illumination. Thus, through a hefty initiation into experience, was I reborn into life and the human race. Until that time I had drifted hazily in a twilight realm.

And yet, still there lingers this sense of being somehow on the periphery. Is it mere justification, mere rationalization of a fear of commitment and a grasping to ego that makes me cast away the early dreams I harboured for more overt participation in the stated objectives of the Dzogchen Communities that I have contacted through various individual members on the two retreats I have attended in this country, and through the published newsletters I have seen and read? A doubt remains, an uneasiness persists, perhaps a form of as yet amorphous yearnings which will later gain clear definition.

For the efforts, the accomplishments of Dzogchenpas throughout the world I have an overwhelming admiration—accompanied by a firm, grounded awareness that for the time being at least, my capacities, my limitations keep my activities within the bounds of the smaller, immediate community of which I am a part, living out my daily existence here in the bush of Wat Buddha Dhamma, in the heart of Hawkesbury River sandstone country in Dharug National Park, a drive of two and a half hours from Sidney in Australia. It is to this small community of fellow practitioners, fluid in membership with a few hardy stalwarts who have remained a number of years, that I owe my shared humanity in the experiences we have all encountered, many of them unpleasant and certainly unsought. This is the family which has endured many wrangles but which remains basically loyal.

As I move now into a growing awareness of and appreciation for Rinpoche's Teachings, I look at my brothers and sisters and feel my heart in them and in all we have laboured so earnestly to achieve. The Dzogchen Community seems so expansive, so beyond the cozy familiarity of this immediate 'nuclear family' that I am blinded when I look even at the reflections, the recorded activities, of its dazzling illumination. My limitations loom large, thrown as a shadow on the ground of my being. And yet this is humbling. I'm rescued from the grandiose spectres of my ego's ambition. I've grown in responsibility and commitment to those around me. The Dzogchen Teachings have shown me that life is here, is lived now, that love and care know no selection, that we are all one. Thank-you, Rinpoche, for this blessed Teaching. And thank you, Fabio, for saying "Don't be Shyl".

Susanya

Zambia

Dear "Mirror" and friends in Merigar,

Greetings from Zambia, where I have worked now for two months. Last Christmas I had a chance to attend the retreat at Merigar and I do have good and warm memories of this time. There was so much sunshine, that it was a miracle after cloudy, gray and rainy Finnish winter weather. I especially enjoyed the meditations near the white stupa. The air beside the stupa was so clear, bright and refreshing. Special thanks to Jean Mackintosh, who kindly looked after me while I was coughing above her bed in the dormitory.

I write this letter to you to make the subscription of the Mirror finally. Before I left Finland I had already received the two first issues. They have both given me really good moments of reading. To settle down in a new country has taken quite a long time and meanwhile I expect one or two issues have come out. I would be pleased if you can send me the copies which have been published after the second issue in April. Among other articles I will look forward to read the series of interviews with Lama Tenzin Wangyal. Looking forward to hearing from you. With best wishes and lots of love to everyone,

Paivi Ahonen

I wish to express much love and thank you to all at Merigar. This was a wonderful retreat, and for the first time I was an international Dzogchen traveller. I was always comfortable, welcomed and taken care of. It is true that we can travel anywhere in the world and be at home in the Dzogchen Community. Please come to Conway soon. Much love,

Sara Renner



Merigar

ABOUT ME ... LOUISA

I don't think it possible to communicate my experience with the Teaching. I think I can't do it, but anyway I am happy I have this chance to "say" what was

pushing me towards it. I feel that the starting point is the same for everyone: the search of my "I", the real one beyond all conditioning, familiar or social, beyond all schemes and rules of stories written by other people. The wish to find the "I", the "can be", has been the beginning of my story: the story that I have been writing and that "initiated" me into the wide and open freedom the Teacher has communicated, and I can't find the words...

It has been a path of reflection, with moments of action and moments of complete and necessary non-activity, and some not so simple to live. The dominant note has always been the certainty of our loneliness, and sometimes I felt it was a disaster, our difficulty in "meeting" each other and making grow the compassion that alone can give to the "others" the possibility to be what it is, well to be free. When I found the Teaching I also found the possibility to live my loneliness together with other people and this is extremely important. I consider myself very lucky to be able to "live Merigar", a place where meeting means first of all improving oneself, and then being able to improve the whole world (let's do it! Awareness and compassion must rule!). Here we are at a starting point, and I want to thank Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche who made possible the existence of Merigar. My "thank you" comes from all the people all over the world gathering here to "meet" each other in a true sense.

Luisa Vattucci

BOX

24 HOURS IN THE DARK RETREAT

by Rosanne Welsh



Those of us who attended the summer retreat at Tsegylgar this year were able to spend 24 hours in the dark retreat after receiving the teaching. I had been wanting to do a dark retreat since I first heard about it. The cabin sits in the forest (as does everything in rural Massachusetts). There are four rooms upstairs, and two rooms plus bathroom and washing-up area downstairs. When the six people in our group entered the cabin there was a general rush for the upstairs rooms because they are quieter, and because that's the location of the room Norbu is rumored to practice in. Not being fleet of foot I took a downstairs room. After a short orientation we closed our double windows, the attendant closed the outside doors and we started our retreats.

When I sat down I felt as if I were floating in space. For the first 30 minutes I thought I saw light around the edges of the window. Was this the memory of light, the expectation of light, or a habit my brain didn't want to relinquish? During the retreat I felt a great spaciousness, very relaxed and open, and very lucky to be there. At last, nothing pulling me in different directions, no necessity to talk, no obligations, no distractions. Wonderful!

The room was comfortable, with a futon (a Japanese cotton mattress), a bottle of water, and a box for food. When people started coming down the stairs to use the bathroom I knew the advantage of the upstairs rooms; and when I had to use the bathroom myself I found out why the others had taken so long - I couldn't find the bathroom! Round and round the cabin I went, fumbling and banging into things. I advise everyone to practice finding the bathroom with closed eyes before you start your retreat. I also advise you to be careful about the food you order because taste and especially smell are quite enhanced. When I opened the food box I was almost knocked over by the smell.

What with taking care of my physical needs, doing the invocation and the special visualizations, I felt too busy; so I decided to spend the majority of my time just looking. The visualizations were said to wake you up if you felt sleepy, but I found them tiring. I didn't want to move much, or to expend any effort, so if I felt too tired I just went to sleep. Rinpoche said the dark retreat could really help your practice of the night and it did. The two things I had been worried about - taking my thyroid pill on time, and my phobic fear of bugs - turned out not to be any problem. The birds were sufficient timekeepers, and there was only one bug.

I thought I had a few hours left when the words rang out "This retreat is over". I sat a bit longer and then slowly opened my window. It was still very dim in the room. When I went outside the sun was an assault on my eyes. The retreat went much too quickly. Next time - three days.

Rosanne Welsh

U.S.S.R.

NEW COMMUNITY IN RUSSIA

Greetings to the Master and to the Dzogchen Community!

Dear "The Mirror", we are a group of followers of Dzogchen Teachings in Buryatia (Transbaikalia). Many of us arrived here many years ago in search of Buddha Dharma. We practice some Vajrayana Teaching.

It was about two years ago that we became acquainted with Dzogchen Teachings through Rinpoche's books ("The Crystal and the Way of Light", "Talks in Conway" and others). Those who have perceived the Path with all their hearts and have chosen it as their Primary Practice, have formed a Dzogchen Community "Baikalsogar", but we hope Rinpoche will give a name to our Community himself. Now we appeal to your newspaper and to the all-world Dzogchen Sangha for help in receiving necessary information and books to understand and to practice the Teaching properly. We need manuals on Semde, Longde and Mannagde practices, explanations on Tun with illustrations of corresponding mudras, the text of Ganapuja (in Tibetan) with explanations on the ritual part. We have sent a letter to Rinpoche and we also would like to contact you and other Dzogchen centers which would be interested in contact with us. We would like to know about the rules of life and training in Gakyils and the structure and characteristics of the Blue, the Red and the Yellow Gakyils. That is why we ask you to send the statutes of the Dzogchen Community which is necessary for registering ourselves according to the legislation of this country.

We have a great number of problems and difficulties, so your participation would be very useful to us. We can translate from Tibetan and English and we have begun to study Italian, but corresponding in English is more convenient.

We are waiting for your answer.
Peace and success to all of you!

Our address:
Seraphim Sidorov
26, Tayozhnaya St.
Novokizhinginsk
Buryat ASSR
671454, USSR



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Spain

A SAND MANDALA IN MAJORCA
For the visit of H.H. the Dalai Lama

by Alba Papini



Before, while going home after receiving Teachings, I could always feel the difference between ordinary life and the days of the retreat, but this time, coming back from the inauguration of the Shang-Shung Institute by the Dalai Lama at Merigar, I read in a newspaper that he would be coming to our small piece of earth in the sea, Majorca. It would be possible to meet him again, no separation - everything was perfectly intertwined. Each person is in each place for a special reason and there are no boundaries for the Teaching.

His Holiness was to be in Majorca for the final ceremony of an exhibition of Tibetan thangkas from the Monastery of Namgyal, to be shown in the Church of S. Domingo in Pollenca. It was a precious opportunity to admire ancient representations of the Teaching. The organizer of the exhibition, Basilio Baltasar, writing in a local newspaper invited everyone to welcome the representatives of Tibetan culture rather than looking from only an aesthetic point of view. The four monks accompanying His Holiness also wrote about the preciousness of Tibetan culture, its deep knowledge of the mind and its contribution to universal peace, as well as the present situation of the Tibetan people. They also introduced the precious sand mandala they were constructing.

The exhibition opened its doors on the 2nd of August and a Tibetan monk explained the meaning of the pictures to everyone in perfect Spanish. We were breathless with admiration - huge and colourful representations were hanging from the ceiling to the floor of the gothic Church and there were also miniatures, perfect in the smallest detail. There were also two rows of prayer flags. The church was full of people. All the people of the town could read the explanations of the pictures and speak to the monks preparing the mandala.

September came and the Tibetan symbol of infinity appeared all over the island. In a very direct way, without formalities, the authorities of Pollenca addressed the Dalai Lama in notices to be read in every public place: "In recognition of your extraordinary merits, you were offered the Nobel Prize for Peace. We all feel ashamed of the suffering your people have had to bear for so many years and we all admire your perfect attitude, your infinite patience, your humble demands and your suggestions for peaceful paths, your talks for developing compassion towards all beings in the universe and your simple life-style. We decided to openly show our sympathy and admiration for you and your people: we want to subscribe to your plan to build a peaceful area in Tibet. We want your voice to be heard all over the world together with ours. We wish for your return to the Potala, in a free Tibet." His Holiness arrived on the 5th of September on a normal plane, directly from the Himalayas, a 14 hour journey. The next day he met 5000 persons at Pollenca, all the children and the old people. He gave a beautiful speech on humanity and his usual invitation to communicate with the eyes, with the smile, with a real collaboration between persons and between nations. He invited everyone to work for happiness with the only guarantee we have, our genuine effort for others' happiness. On a wider level he spoke of how rich nations can give help to the poor ones. Our peace of mind, our happiness and physical health, these are the rings of our awareness.

The authorities were present and behind the Church we performed together a Buddhist-Christian ritual for peace. From one side the Gospels, and from the other Bodhicitta, Refuge and Guru Yoga. H.H. invited everyone to participate in the rituals and some little pamphlets with the mantras were distributed. Then he explained what was going to happen: the precious and beautiful mandala of coloured sand, the work of a whole month, was to be cancelled. All things come and go, the important thing is the capacity to build. Now all the arena was inside the two crystal vases: the ritual was finished. The Archbishop and the Dalai Lama poured the precious contents into the sea. The Mediterranean sea, in spite of the war ships, is now empowered by a very special protection.

Alba Papini



THE MIRROR NEWS

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
INSPIRED BY THE TEACHINGS OF AND UNDER THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF
NAMKHAJ NORBU RINPOCHE



Direct Communication

by Joan Goodman



I'm not sure if many of us on the West Coast have seen a copy of The Mirror. I read some of the first and third issues in May, but it wasn't until John Shane spoke about it at the Tsegalgar retreat in July that I became aware of its potential. The vision of its creators is not to produce a Merigar-oriented communiqué, but a monthly international bulletin board, so that information can be shared quickly among members of the global Dzogchen Community. For this reason it is an all-English publication. In addition to articles by and interviews with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, there will be (hopefully) articles etc. from Community members everywhere, plus reports on projects such as the Tibetan Village Project and the Shang-Shung Institute. Retreat and practice day schedules will be included. To date six issues have been published. But The Mirror must now have two things to survive: publishable written material, and more importantly, subscriptions. A subscription costs fifty dollars for twelve issues (one year). At the Tsegalgar retreat forty subscriptions were sold. The Mirror needs five hundred. I want to expand my statement about The Mirror's potential, because I suspect that you need (as I needed) more than the words of a plea, no matter how desperate. As I listened to John speak about the vision of The Mirror as a worldwide communication tool, I thought about our community's, and my own, tentative moves - however inarticulate or unformed - toward better communication. Since the Avery Ranch Retreat in 1989, when Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche re-empha-

sized the importance of direct communication and collaboration between practitioners, two questions in this regard have been forefront for me. What is direct communication? How do I engage in it? I wish to share with you my current answers to these questions, if you will bear with me, as I believe they help us view The Mirror's potential in an expanded light.

This past year I have tried to observe my own habits and limitations when communicating with other practitioners. As a result of this I have discovered that direct communication requires two things of me. The first is the courageous willingness to speak respectfully, but without reservation, on the basis of my own perceptions, to the person(s) (not to third parties) with whom I have a concern, or a wish to share. The second is the equally courageous openness to receiving the other's message without defensiveness. I have discovered that this is a process, and that it is not easy. I have had to confront obstacles in myself that prevent direct communication - such as lack of valuing my own perceptions, and fear of the other's anger or abandonment. But it has also been very rewarding. In doing this I have experienced that engaging in this kind of communication actually creates the space for collaboration. The opposite also seems to be true: if there is no direct communication between myself and another practitioner, collaborative space collapses.

In the West Coast Community, we are moving towards being able to directly communicate with one another. Those of us who attended Gakyil meetings this year, or participated in discussions at local practices, or listened in on the California meetings at the Tsegalgar 1990 retreat have begun, I believe, to experience the collaborative space created when we relax tensions, observe ourselves, speak directly from our perceptions, and listen without defensiveness. The Mirror has the potential to be a tool to facilitate direct communication on a global basis and thus to create the space for worldwide collaboration whose dimensions we cannot see at present. It seems to me a wonderful possibility! But it will only work if Dzogchen Community members actively participate. Each of us needs to:

1. Speak up! Try to put your perceptions into writing. This does require for many of us the "courageous willingness" mentioned above. Send your articles, poems and so forth to:

Sara Renner Handley PO BOX 277, Conway Ma 01341

2. Subscribe! Support this communication process. Use The Mirror Subscription Form - \$50 will get you twelve issues air mailed monthly. I like to think of the \$50 cost as a material symbol of my willingness to listen openly.

Norbu Rinpoche said, in issue three, "A subscription to The Mirror is not going to break the bank for anybody, but the benefit it can bring is very great, if everybody participates... This newspaper is connected to the future of our Community and of the teachings."

Joan Goodman

ABOUT DIVINATION

by Fabio Andrico

Since man began his journey into existence, he has found himself surrounded by a deep intertwining of presences and energies governing his life. Many sciences were born and developed in order to know and use these energies. Among these, divination is certainly very important. Divination techniques are in fact, present in all cultures, no matter where and when. Since very ancient times, man has tried to survey the inscrutable looking for indications on what behavior to choose in specific circumstances, the reasons for some facts or the possible development of interesting things.

To reach this goal very different methodologies are used, from the very simple ones to the most complicated. The common thread of all these tendencies is the belief that we can read the future, or at least its general outline.

A very important feature of all the different kinds of divination is the conviction that man has always got the possibility to change, and even with difficulty he can always solve negative situations or improve the positive ones towards a harmonious development. That is why in the divination texts there is always an indication about the way to overcome a negative response and how to avoid unfavourable circumstances, unhappy meetings, accidents and so on.

Very often the only way to overcome these obstacles is to perform very complex rituals, but ways are also suggested to create around us positive energies that can help in the most critical moments. Generally it is advised to act with generosity, engaging in good actions towards the people who need our help, children and animals and sometimes energies that are not present on a purely material level.

In the different cultures of the world the universe is considered to be full of different kinds of visible and invisible beings, with different shapes and characteristics, and in the same way the different kinds of divination choose very different ways of performing their rituals. Bones, ropes, papers, tablets, dice, runes, rosaries, drums, stones and pieces of wood are just some of the instruments used by the practitioners of divination.

There are also a lot of signs, gestures and events that can offer clear indications to the experts about the future, explaining what cannot be clearly seen by the uninitiated. Thousands and thousands of different things can help: the flight of birds, the growing of plants and the ploughing of fields. If you are able to connect the different threads of existences there are infinite signs that can be interpreted.

There are also dreams, visions and indications seen in a trance-like state. This kind of divination does not need any external instrument, it just comes directly and spontaneously into the mind and it is possible to read it with our senses. Clairvoyance and oracles belong to this category.

One can erroneously think that divination has been forgotten in our civilization and considered to be the belief of less evolved people. Actually all cultures speak about divination and they



offer the results of a long research through the centuries, a deep knowledge that has been offered from father to son, from master to disciple without interruption up to our time. They are indeed precious treasures that we must study with great respect and love. Also in western culture divination plays an important role, for instance in the tarot, the Celtic traditions or the divination with animals' shoulder-bones popular all over the world.

Even if many techniques have been forgotten for many years and they are no longer as popular in everyday life as before among Tibetans, in recent years more and more people have begun to study this knowledge again in all of its different aspects. If we study with the right attitude, this knowledge is ready to help us in particular moments of our life, when we need to see the inscrutable.

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BUSINESS FOR SALE

The "Gardenia Tea-Room", is a 60 square-meters pub and snack-bar in a very beautiful and central place in Arcidosso: it is a XVIth century building with a 300 square meter garden with a variety of big trees, a fountain and a pool. I wish to sell this business, together with all the machines and the furniture. If you are interested, please telephone:

Lucia Sblendorio, 0564-966936, meal-times.

A Generous Donation to Arcidosso



Giorgio Busetto, Vicepresident of the Shang-Shung Institute, International Institute for Tibetan Studies, offered his personal library to the Comunal Library of Arcidosso. The Mayor welcomed his present and the 2000 volumes will be catalogued and free to be read by everyone in Arcidosso.