

THE MIRROR

The newspaper of the international Dzog-chen Community

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In the autumn Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will be visiting Spain and Germany.

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The Dalai Lama speaks at Siena University about nonviolence

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During the summer months there are many activities, practise retreats and joyous events like the inauguration of Merigar

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Khamdogar

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Shang-Shung Editions is about to enter the U.S. market. A fine example of collaboration.

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The new Australian gar of the Community is a Hinayana centre that is now also a Dzog-chen gar. An amazing story of the new gar .

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A.S.I.A. projects proceed both in Khamdogar and Galenteng

Building schools and hospitals will start in October. Land has been bought for the Tibetan Village in India.



Photo Alex Siedlecki

Prayerflags

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche speaks on bodhicitta at the Easter retreat in Merigar

We have come here on this hill, and our motive is to get the real knowledge of the teachings and to integrate it as much as possible. To realize this you need to be very serious. And that is not to say that you are not serious. Most of you are very serious. But we live in a condition that is full of distraction. And we live with a lot of fantasy. Most of our time is spent in fantasy,

and even if you do not have a lot of fantasy, you have a lot of worries. You worry about money, getting all your work done, and many other problems. And time goes on. It never seems that there is enough time. And that is how we usually pass our time. And then we meet again, and we are that much older, and after years we start to notice it even more. The more we feel

impermanence in our lives, the more serious the teachings become. When you are following the teachings, especially the more formal traditions, the first thing you have to learn are the four mind trainings. First there is this and then that, and then there is an analysis of all the points. To know how to analyze is very important, especially if you want to become a teacher,

you have got to be able to talk about Buddhist philosophy, and show that you are prepared and a very studious professional. You must show that you can repeat a lot of words and that you are a qualified analyst. This is a very positive side in the intellectual sense. This, though, is not the principle of Dzog-chen teachings.

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Photo Laurence Mills

The Year of Tibet

The major events of the Year will be in the places where H.H. the Dalai Lama is teaching: May in Dharamsala, May and June in India, from the end of June to the beginning of July in the USSR and Mongolia, from the end of July to the beginning of September in France, Italy and Austria. Then His Holiness will go to the USA for the Kalachakra initiation in October.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche on bodhicitta

Easter retreat at Merigar, 1991

So, we are here for a few days, and after, the retreat will only become history. Everytime we meet, we really hope to accomplish something concrete.

No one will be realized or enlightened just by studying the concepts of the mind. One has to find oneself in the state of knowledge, and really make this knowledge concrete. This is what is called "Tonpa" in the teachings. Buddha said, "I have found a knowledge that is very profound and very enlightened. A very peaceful state, beyond all concepts. And when I communicate this to others they do not understand". This is knowledge, not something that is analyzed on a level of logic. I am not saying that logical terms have no use, it depends.

From the beginning, Dzog-chen teachings have been explained in many ways by the masters. There are intellectual ways and then the symbolic way which is connected with the tantric style. There is also the direct method from knowledge directly to knowledge. This is what is called the transmission of the knowledge of realized beings.

You have to understand, even if the teachings are being explained intellectually, that which is being communicated is not intellectual. And if you do not succeed in transmitting this knowledge, everything just becomes dry words.

Many people have a kind of conviction that they have some kind of knowledge. When I met my Master Chang-chub Dorje, I was really convinced that I had a lot of knowledge, especially of the Buddhist teachings. I did not think of myself as someone who was very stupid. When I met my Master for the first time, I had a lot of pride, because when my Master was teaching he was speaking to people who were not very educated. I was a bit blown up. I thought, well, I know the sutras, the tantras and Buddhist philosophy. I really believed this was the meaning of the teachings.

Many people have this kind of attitude. They think, "I really do know something". But you have to understand what knowledge means. A good example of this was when Manjusrimitra met Garab Dorje. Manjusrimitra was one of the greatest scholars of that period in India. He was the principal guide of the Yogacharya school. He was considered the supreme Pandit.

When they heard that Garab Dorje was giving a teaching that went beyond the law of cause and effect, the Buddhists became very worried. The Buddhist teachings, especially the sutras, are based on the principle of cause and effect. So, of course, it is strange when somebody talks about going beyond cause and effect.

Many scholars and pandits felt that they had to go and see Garab Dorje and find out what was going on. As a famous proverb says, "If there is a small fire, it is best to put it out right away. Otherwise it will develop and you will not be able to put it out anymore."

So, there was this young Garab Dorje, explaining this teaching that was a little different. And Manjusrimitra and other scholars went from India to Oddiyana to see him. It was a very long journey in those days, and they made a great sacrifice to undertake it.

When they arrived in Oddiyana they began a discussion with Garab Dorje. Manjusrimitra went first, convinced that

he had the most knowledge of a certain kind. After they exchanged a few words, Manjusrimitra understood immediately what Garab Dorje was communicating. And he understood that what Garab Dorje was teaching was the finality, the point of arrival of all the sutra teachings. Manjusrimitra became upset and asked to be excused. He realized that Garab Dorje was not some ordinary intellectual, but that he was an emanation. So Manjusrimitra became the first and also the most important of Garab Dorje's disciples. He did not need to study or spend many years with Garab Dorje; but all the years of philosophy and study he had done until this time had been a preparation for the moment of meeting Garab Dorje and the communication of the realized state. So, right away, he became a great master of Dzog-chen.

Thus you can see, there exists this method of communicating intellectually. Manjusrimitra said, "You are an emanation of Nirmanakaya and I had this very bad intention when I came here. How can I purify this?". Garab Dorje said, "Do not worry about this at all. You are a scholar and a Buddhist philosopher, you can communicate this knowledge in the way that you have learned until now."

So Manjusrimitra wrote a text called "Dola Shezhung". "Dola" (rdo-lags) means like a stone. Usually we have a vision that is pure or impure. When one understands the meaning of the teachings one discovers that the stone is actually gold. And this pure gold represents the dimension of every individual.

In Dzog-chen teachings we say that our state is self-perfected from the very beginning. This is real Dzog-chen. What is self-perfected is our infinite potentiality. But we do not have this understanding, this knowledge. If we do not have this knowledge, then we see the stone as the stone, and not the pure gold.

So Manjusrimitra explained Dzog-chen perfectly in the terms of Yogacharya

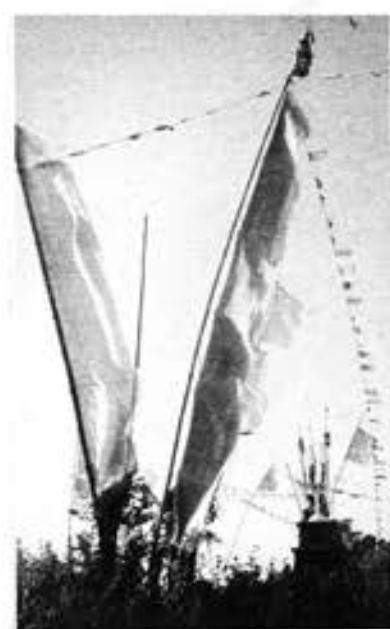


Photo Fabio Andrico

Buddhist philosophy. Many scholars say these Dzog-chen teachings sound like the Yogacharya style. This is because Manjusrimitra used the Yogacharya terms to transmit the teachings. He became one of the fundamental teachers of Dzog-chen. All the collection of Garab Dorje's teachings were made by him. When we speak of Dzog-chen semde, "sem" (sems) means mind. This is an abbreviation for what we call "Chang-chub Sems". "Chang-chub Sems" means bodhicitta in Sanskrit. Not the same bodhicitta meant by the sutra.

In the sutric bodhicitta there are two

I want to say you are very welcome here at Merigar. We are always very happy to meet each other, and we always think we will meet again. But there is no guarantee. This is the famous impermanence we talk about in the teachings. Impermanence is not a kind of analysis, but something very real.



Photo Namkhai Yeshe

aspects. Absolute and relative. Absolute bodhicitta means the knowledge or understanding of real emptiness. Relative bodhicitta is explained in two ways: the first is our intention and the second its application. So when we do a practice, we say that we cultivate bodhicitta. This is the bodhicitta which is the intention. In the Mahayana sutras, bodhicitta is considered to be fundamental. Through this intention we can govern our attitude, our behaviour. At the base of the Hinayana teachings there is the Vinaya, which is based on laws. If you receive a vow, behind this vow is law, which has to be applied. We use these vows if our capacity, our character, is very weak, and we want to control our behaviour and not commit any negativities.

In Dzog-chen, we try to become responsible for ourselves. For the majority of people it does not happen like this. Understanding the basic weakness of the human condition, Buddha clearly explained the Hinayana style, so if we cannot govern ourselves, we have a law that limits our behaviour. Therefore, you can understand why a vow exists in the sutra teaching. You should not consider a vow as something which is not valid. It is something to adopt and use. We have all kinds of teachings with different characteristics. If you are a Dzog-chen practitioner, then you have to have awareness. Awareness of yourself, and also of the circumstances and the relationship between the two. If you have an awareness of this, then you have an awareness of all the aspects of the teachings. So, practising Dzog-chen, means to practise Hinayana and Mahayana. It means to look for the essence of all teachings and to live in this essence.

Certainly, you cannot go following all different kinds of specific rules. For example, the fundamental thing in Mahayana is intention. It is much more important than a rule. If there is a good intention and something negative happens, this can have a good result. Intention is considered very important. When we speak of bodhicitta, the first thing mentioned is intention.

In life, in every circumstance, we can observe what kind of intention we have.

If we are present in our intention, then we do not have to follow rules, everything works out.

We have the intention not to create any negativities. To commit a negative action, first you must have the intention. Also, for the qualifications for producing negative karma, first you have to have a bad intention, then you enter into the action, you conclude the action, and then that becomes a negative force.

Even if you have this evil intention and you enter into the action, but you do not conclude the action, then there is something missing for a negative karma. Not only on the level of philosophy, but in law, one says that a crime is premeditated. Someone who has done something intentionally is guilty. Karma is also made in this way.

If we are walking outside and we crush an insect under our feet, that animal dies. When the animal dies, it suffers. Whether the person deliberately crushes the animal or not, it suffers just the same. Certainly, it is not positive. A negative action means we produce suffering for other beings.

If you go there with the intention to kill that being, that is different. We are not just talking about a negative action, we are talking about producing a negative karma; a potentiality of karma. The force and potentiality of this negative karma can produce a result. This is what we call cause and effect. When there is a negative cause and then a secondary cause is present for that cause, then it produces an effect.

When we produce this potentiality of negative karma, we certainly do not see anything concrete. This is connected with our condition. When the secondary cause is present this karma manifests itself.

I will give an example. Karma is like a shadow. We have a physical body and when there is the secondary cause of the sun, the shadow arises. Why? Because you have a body. But when there is no secondary cause, the shadow does not manifest, as if it never existed.

It is the same with all those negative karmas that are associated with us. Until the secondary causes manifest, they do not appear. It means that when we have all these different kinds of causes, the consequences of them manifest as

samsara. First of all, this potentiality can only be manifested if we have the intention. Intention is related to action, whether it is direct or indirect, and at the end when one is satisfied with what one has done and these three qualifications are present, a perfect karma is produced which will have some kind of result.

That is why in the Mahayana, intention is very important. We must observe our intention well. Above all, the first thing we do when we do a practice is refuge and bodhicitta. We observe our motive, and see why we are doing this practice. If one does not have a good intention, one can change it right away and it becomes a good intention. At least, in the moment of practice, we do this. It is also a good example for life. We do not need to restrict our good intentions to periods of practice.

When we are practitioners of Dzog-chen, we try not to be distracted, but to be present. When one is present, one can observe one's intention. If we have an evil intention, we become immediately aware and can change it.

We can cultivate a good intention instead. At least, we can realize that this bad intention can produce a very negative result. If one is present like that, how can negativity arise? This is a good way of regulating our attitude or behaviour in life. That is why in Mahayana, intention is more important than applying any kind of rule.

Then you may think, "Oh, I will practise Mahayana because I do not believe in rules". People are very narrow minded. They think it has to be one thing or the other. You have to live with more space and give your mind more space.

So, try and apply this principle of Mahayana and Hinayana. If a rule has some sense and it is useful, certainly, you can apply it.

The finality of Hinayana is to renounce disturbing other beings. This is the principle aim of that vow. Even if you have no vow, you have to keep this vow present.

I know that by insulting a person I create suffering for them, because when it happens to me, I suffer. So, in the sutra, we say that we can take an example from ourselves. Buddha taught this in the sutras and it is something very practical and concrete.

Also, you can teach your children by explaining that they should not kill an insect because they cause terrible suffering for the insect and that the insect could be a mother or father and the children will wonder where is my mother or father? Then the child becomes sensitive to that, and they will not want to kill insects anymore.

We have many experiences in life like that. If someone does something that is pleasing to me, and I do something pleasing for that person, then they are very happy. If we do not care about others, we are considered very much of an egoist. Above all, it is important to put ourselves in the position of others. In the Mahayana, there are many kinds of trainings in which we mentally change our position with another. If we see a person who is suffering terribly and we try to imagine ourselves in his position, then we can understand how he suffers. With this practice, a person becomes more sensitive. It often seems that many practitioners' sensitivity diminishes and we become like stones. This is very ugly. Why does this happen? Because one does not observe oneself and does not see it happening. In Dzog-chen you have to understand the essence of all

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Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche on bodhicitta

Continued from page 2

teachings and integrate this. So remember the principle of Hinayana and do not create problems for others. We should control our own existence, our body, our voice and our mind. This is a vow created by oneself and to apply this is very useful.

The principle of Mahayana is bodhicitta. The first principle of bodhicitta is intention, and then applying it. That is why we speak of application and intention in the Mahayana sutras.

We say, "I want to realize myself for the sake of others." When one creates this intention this is called cultivating bodhicitta. Basically that is a good thought. One can accumulate merit through that. But, if it is only this and nothing very concrete happens, it is because after this you have to apply it, it has to go into action. In negative karma, you enter into action and then it produces a cause. It is the same with good actions, if you cultivate bodhicitta, you have to apply it to produce a good action.

Bodhicitta is also something to recite. "I want to realize myself for the benefit of all beings, I have this intention." This is something concrete. In Mahayana, they speak of "the Gift". The greatest gift you can give is that of the teaching. There is also the material gift. If someone does not have anything to eat, you can give them a little food or a little money, and they become very happy. You create a lot of virtue by doing this good action. You have to have the intention of giving this good gift. Sometimes we give with our own interests at heart, and that does not create a good action. If you have a good intention, you do not expect anything in return. Your only intention is for the benefit of someone who has some kind of need.

A practitioner should be very present every day of his life. In general, we have many evil intentions. Automatically, this produces a lot of negative power. In the teachings of Jigmed Lingpa he says, "If the intention is good, all of life and the fruit of life will be good, and if the intention is bad just the opposite happens." So, try to cultivate good intentions. Good intention makes a lot of people happy. And if people are very happy, you can produce a lot of very positive power in them.

I give many practices. In Tibetan Astrology there is something called a Black Year. In this Black Year all the elements and the influences are very bad. If a person is not careful, all these bad conditions and all the secondary causes will produce trouble for that person. During this time the weakness in the circumstances of the person may manifest, such as sickness, and if that person does not have much protection, they can be hit pretty badly. If they are very passive, they receive all this negativity. The aim of astrology is to understand the condition of the individual and their circumstances.

What can you do for a remedy? In astrology there are many methods to overcome these problems. If one does nothing the condition will get worse. To reinforce the energy of the individual, you can make prayer flags. You can do Long-life practices. There are many simple ways of overcoming negativities. There is a practice called "Chi Thun" (byis-mtun). "Chi" means child and "Thun" to celebrate. You invite a lot of children, make some gifts and do a lot of things to keep them amused all day for many hours - these children will be full of joy - and the power of the joy of these children has a great potentiality to overcome all kinds of negativities.

You see how powerful the mind is when it is happy or the opposite. Also, giving gifts to poor people has the same motive. So, in life, one has to understand this. When many kinds of circumstances arise in our life like this, try not to make people unhappy, try to make them as happy as possible, and if one has the minimum of good intention and understanding, it is not very difficult to make people happy.

If you dissolve your tensions and you become friendly to people, you are certainly happier for a few hours. Basically the fundamental thing to reach in practice is relaxation, so you can see how important relaxation is. Many teachings talk about bodhicitta as a kind of propaganda, to demonstrate something very sweet in society. Society does not function like that, with something false.

Many Dzog-chen practitioners feel they do not need to practice bodhicitta. One has to arrive at applying bodhicitta, even if one wishes to be a Dzog-chen practitioner. I think our practitioners have to work hard on developing bodhicitta. With bodhicitta we have to understand our own essence, the condition of every individual.

People say many Dzog-chen practitioners do not seem to have much love. If you are lacking love, it means you become like a stone. It is not that you have to think about love, it is that you have to become a little more sensitive. Sensitivity means to be aware of time, of circumstances, and the human condition. It is very important to have respect between each other. Without respect, nothing works. Respect arises from observing and becoming sensitive to oneself. It is much better to become sensitive to oneself, than to go out and try to make others sensitive.

Many people are used to criticizing others. We have a dualistic way of seeing that is characteristic of our general way of being. We have two eyes and as soon as we open them, they point out another object. We never observe ourselves, we are always looking outside, so we have developed our technology of criticizing others. We are always looking outside, looking for the guilty one.

If we are always looking outside, making other people feel guilty, our existence never changes and we never become sensitive. It is better to observe oneself and analyze oneself. If we are more aware and sensitive, the other person who is very arrogant will come around. A person will become harder if you try and educate them. If one has no guilt, one is very calm and there is nothing to defend. We need to try and dissolve this tension in ourselves.

This is a very important aspect between husband and wife, or people who are together and participate in the teachings. A spiritual relationship is hundreds of times more important than any normal relationship. If you ruin this and create problems between one practitioner and another, this is very ugly and very sad. This becomes a very heavy obstacle for realization.

There is no realization without transmission. If all you do is talk about realization, it remains only on the intellectual level. If not, the majority of people in Samsara would have already realized themselves. We are so developed, we can reach other planets. You only need to have the minimum capacity to do something evil. So, with our condition in society we have to be very careful. We have to observe very well.

A.S.I.A. projects approved

by Andrea Dell'Angelo

In the last issue of *The Mirror*, number 7, 1991, we reported the projects of A.S.I.A., Association for International Solidarity in Asia. A major project of A.S.I.A. is also the Tibetan Village Project, to build a village for Tibetan refugees in India.

On March 29th I left Rome for Peking. When I arrived I met Donatella Rossi who is a famous Tibetologist and expert on the situation in China.

There was a half day of rest and then the long procedure of formal and informal meetings and banquets suddenly began. In Peking we met several officials from the Ministry of Nationalities and the Ministry of Agriculture to whom we spoke about the project for constructing schools and hospitals in the Autonomous Region of Tibet and east Tibet. Then we were invited to visit the Italian Ambassador who was very interested in the project and promised to do all he could to present to the Italian government in order to get it financial support.

In our moments of

free time we visited some of the old students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at the University of National Minorities and the University for Buddhist Studies founded by the Panchen Lama.

On the 3rd of April, Donatella and I together with Prof. Chen (remembered for her extremely interesting conference on Tun Huang) left for Chengdu, capital of Sichuan province on the border of east Tibet. We immediately

noticed the proximity to Tibet when, every so often, we saw the proud khampas with their long hair ornamented with red cords and their striking necklaces of coral and precious zi in the uniformed and grey crowd of Chinese.

In Chengdu we met officials of the province from the Office of National Minorities and the council for education and health. There were long discussions, ably and patiently translated by Donatella, who smilingly tried not to reveal my growing and uncontrollable nervousness. At the end of one long discussion, the Chinese representatives asked us a series of technical questions giving us a few days to prepare the answers. We communicated these questions to Norbu Rinpoche by fax and then we went on a two day pilgrimage to Mount Umei, a sacred place of Kuntuzampo.

In this area there are more than 300 temples, some of which are very old. It takes about 10 days to visit

them all. The mountain itself is very beautiful with bamboo forests and many birds. They say that when it rains there the sky is filled with rainbows. At the peak of the mountain, at about 3100 metres, there is a place where a five coloured tle always appears after it has rained. The Chinese, who are very romantic, have themselves photographed against the background of the tle.

Then we visited the town of Leishandove where there is a statue of Kuntuzampo as big as a mountain, surrounded by beautiful temples and tropical forests.

When we returned to Chengdu, Rinpoche's communication had arrived and we prepared for the last meeting. In the meantime the prefect of Ganse and the second in charge of Derge had arrived. There were about twenty people at the meeting including both Chinese and Tibetan officials. After showing the great respect and trust they had in Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, they decided to give us an official invitation to conduct a feasibility

study in August and September. They also decided to insert the project into the regional development plans and to write an official letter to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ask for financial support. The agreement was authenticated with two days of banquetting during which Donatella was obliged to sing 'O solomio' and I gave a rendition of 'funicoli funicola' much to the enjoyment of those present.

During the week we remained in Chengdu, we visited the office of national publications where we bought many books for Merigar (Rinchen Terzod, Kama di Nymapa, a collection of the famous Master Kyentse). We were fortunate to meet two famous Bonpo masters, A. Yun Rinpoche and Alak Zulqenn, who had come to Chengdu to meet Donatella and who were working on a thesis on Dzog-chen Dawa of Bon.

Finally I returned to Peking while Donatella and Prof. Chen remained

in Chengdu to receive lun and trisun from several Bonpo texts. In Peking I met those responsible for Tibetan Development Funds, a non governmental organization, who should give us an official invitation for the Khamdogar project, depending on the Autonomous Region of Tibet.

After about 15 days I returned to Italy. Donatella remained in China until April 26th to organize the last details and official permissions.

Now the projects are approved, the next step will be the feasibility study in order to define the technical details and the costs and then we need to start the projects by October without delay. While I was in China, Norbu Rinpoche received a letter from the Tibetan government in exile in Dharamsala informing him that the land for the construction of a village for refugees had been bought. Now more than ever we need the support of everyone to carry out these two projects in Tibet and India which will be of great benefit to the Tibetan culture and people.

I would like to profoundly thank

Photo Chogyal Toku Rinpoche



Khamdogar

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Donatella and all our friends around the world who have helped this mission conclude positively. For further information contact:

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COABIT Housing Cooperative

by Giovanni Boni

This article follows up the report on "Merigar 2000" published in the last issue of The Mirror, number 7. In a very short time, this idea of forming a housing cooperative has become real.

On April 20th 1991 the housing cooperative COABIT was created. Certainly this date will remain in history, not just for this event but also for the huge snow-fall which has covered all Italy. Indeed it has been a rare event to see all this white covering the flowers...

At the creation of the constitution there were both old and new members of the community present and things went as they had been programmed. The same morning we held the first official meeting of the cooperative.

The President, Prof. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, was present, and we nominated Giovanni Boni vice-president, Leopoldo Sentinelli treasurer, and Giovanni Salvati, Franco Serra and Gabriella Visioli advisors (on behalf of Antonio Morgione who will coordinate the technical aspects of the different projects), plus Riccardo Moraglia,

Gian Paolo Artioli and Roberto Montacci

During the meeting we spoke of various projects, including:

- our intention to help in the reconstruction of Merigar 2, considering also the idea of creating rooms for agri-tourism;
- our intention to look for building land where houses can be constructed for COABIT members;
- the construction of a yang-tig retreat house;
- the construction of more retreat cabins;
- the construction of the old people's home;
- the construction of the children's house, both buildings on the land of the community.

We decided to send to all Gakyils and members of the community all over the world, a questionnaire, asking for advice and collaboration about this initiative.

We could also start thinking about building houses for the cooperative members in the bigger cities, like Napoli, Milano, Roma...or the nearby centers like Santa Fiora, Montelaterone, Castel del Piano, Arcidosso, etc.

To start all these initiatives we need a stable financial support of as many people as possible. We are asking the members of the community to become members of the COABIT cooperative by giving 150,000 Lit. The secret of the fortune of these cooperatives is the possibility we have to make loans to our members, who can ask for money as if we were a bank, but with a better interest and a secure income for the cooperative. It is difficult to explain in few words all the privileges of these kinds of cooperation among us; anyway you can contact the secretary in Merigar for fuller information.

Lopon Namdak's Mission to save the Bon culture

by Leena Larjanko

Lopon Tenzin Namdak has been giving teachings in Austria and Italy during the spring. The teachings included instruction of Phowa, the preliminaries, Ngondro, of the Dzogpa Chen-po Sang-sung Nyam-gyud, the oral Dzog-chen transmission of Shang-Shung, initiations and the direct introduction to the State of the Mind.

Lopon Namdak has been in Europe several times. He has been invited to give teachings in Merigar. Lopon Namdak is considered the most prominent teacher of the Bon. He has many students in the west.

Bon is the oldest holder of the Dzog-chen teachings, the origins go to the ancient kingdom of Shang-Shung and even farther. Nobody knows exactly from where and when the teachings came. According to the legend the founder of the Bon religion is the Lord Shenrab Mibo. In the past ages there were three brothers, Dagpa, Salba and Shepa, who studied the Bon doctrines in a heaven called Stridpa Yesang. When

their studies were completed, they visited the God of Compassion Shenla Okar and asked him how they could help living beings submerged in the misery and sorrow of suffering. He advised them to act as guides to mankind in three successive ages of the world. So they did. The present teacher is the middle brother Salba who took the name Shenrab. The future teacher will be the youngest brother Shepa. During the migration from Tibet, the Bon religion had terrible hardships. Lopon Tenzin Namdak has done much to keep his people and tradition alive. At the moment, he is founding a monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal, for young boys. Later, he intends to open up a school for those who do not plan a religious life. As you can guess, his means are more than limited, in fact the monks and people who work there sometimes lack even food. If you are interested in helping Lopon Namdak in his laborious task, you can ask more information from

Dolanji or Kathmandu: Nima Wangyal Lama, Tritan Norbutse, Bonpo Monastery, GPO Box 4640, Kathmandu, Nepal.



Teachings of Lopon Namdak

Lopon Tenzin Namdak will give Dzog-chen Teachings at Merigar on May 3rd to 5th, 1991.

Lopon Tenzin Namdak is one of the most important contemporary Bonpo Masters and one of the most knowledgeable experts of the Bon tradition. He is Lopon, i.e. principal master of a Bonpo monastery. He is a Master of Shang-Shung sNyan rGyud, an uninterrupted oral tradition which goes back to an age much more ancient than the Tibetan Kingdom.



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Station Hill's Shang Shung Imprint

Shang-Shung Edizioni is happy to announce that it has reached an agreement with Station Hill Press to create a Shang-Shung Imprint. In particular we would like to thank George Quasha,

Selling books globally

In reply to the appeal which was published in the December issue of The Mirror concerning collaboration on an international level, Lize Morell from New Zealand has presented an interesting suggestion.

The idea is that we start translating, publishing and selling books and other items internationally as well as locally. She has made a very careful plan of the operation, counted pros and cons and considered all possibilities. According to her project, in a short time we could produce a lot of books at a fair price, sell them through a catalogue or in little bookstores run by the practitioners.

All this could enliven our activities and give us well needed money. The proposition is very detailed and too long to publish here. Anyone who is interested can have a copy by writing to Lize Morell at:

P.O. Little Akaloa, Banks Peninsula, South Island, New Zealand

Photo Fabio Andrico



Norbu Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal with Mr. Rikha in the Merigar library

Convention on Tibetan language

Tenzin Lobsang Rikha, Director of the Council for Tibetan Education, visited Arcidosso on the 6th and 7th of April to meet Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and decide on the time and procedure of the Tibetan Language Convention. The date was fixed for September 1992. The Convention will last six days which will include the first day when there will be the inauguration at the University of Siena.

For further information contact the Istituto Shang-Shung, Via degli Olmi 1, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy, telephone 0564-966940/1, fax 0564-966846.

Back in the USSR

by Fabio Andrico

Many people in the USSR who are interested in the teaching have invited Norbu Rinpoche to give teachings there. Since Rinpoche is unable to accept this invitation at the moment, he has asked Fabio Andrico to visit the Dzog-chen communities in the USSR.

Here I am in Rome waiting for the visa to the Soviet Union that Vladimir sent me at least ten days ago. When it arrives I will be able to go to the Soviet Embassy and get the final visa and leave for Moscow three days after that.

This is how my trip to the USSR will start. I should arrive in Moscow towards the end of April or the beginning of May and remain there until about the middle of July visiting the five places where there are already groups of people who are interested in Norbu Rinpoche's teaching. Probably these five places or cities will be Moscow, Leningrad, Vilnius, Riga, Bhuriashiga and perhaps Kiev. I met some of these people last summer at the retreat at Conway and I met Vladimir at Paula Barry's parents' house in New York where I was working with Paula's husband, Des, on the yantra yoga video. These people seemed very interested and serious and they have a great desire to learn and follow the teaching. They also want to be able to be in touch with the community.

After my return from the Soviet Union about the middle of July, I'll be in Italy for a week for a breath of air from home. Then, about the 25th of July, I'll be off for the United States. Probably I'll be visiting Conway on the east coast first, then perhaps New Mexico and finally California. We should be doing three or four courses principally organized by Gina Tuel. Perhaps Des Barry at Conway will be able to help.

On the 18th of September I'll leave the California sun for the spring of Melbourne, Australia. In Australia I'll be giving courses in Melbourne, Sydney, Braidwood and the Wat, and I'll remain for around 10 days in each place. I look forward to enjoying the beautiful land of the Australian gar. Then very probably contrary to what I think, I won't be going home but instead on October 30th I'll go to New Zealand, to Lize Morrell on the South Island. Finally in mid November I will almost certainly return to Italy.

These are my travel plans.

U.S. President Bush receives the Dalai Lama

The Office of Tibet, Zurich, April 17, 1991

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who is currently touring the United States of America, was received at the White House in Washington D.C. on April 16, 1991 by President George Bush. The two leaders discussed the situation in Tibet, including the issue of human rights, the threat to the survival of the Tibetan culture and religion, and the Dalai Lama's efforts to seek a negotiated solution with China. President Bush showed

great concern for the Tibetan people's situation. The White House announced that President Bush has received His Holiness in his capacity as "a respected spiritual leader and a Nobel Peace Prize winner".

This is the first time that a U.S. president has met with the Dalai Lama and analysts see this as an indication of a major shift in U.S. policy on Tibet.



The medicine initiative

by Elisa Copello

Lo-Sar Gagyil meeting was held round the fire in a cozy atmosphere while outside the wind was raging and the icy temperature had turned the road to Merigar into a slippery ice-rink. The best opportunity to "warm up" our brains was with brand-new projects and plans that are not so "brand-new" perhaps, because, the idea of working together for the realization of something good, professional and beneficial both for the people involved and for the entire community, has always been encouraged by Rinpoche himself.

Among the proposals that emerged at the meeting, there was the project of setting up a "Healing Centre" where people could spend one or two weeks entirely devoted to well-being, relaxation and purification of body, speech and mind.

This is the initial idea, but it is very flexible and open to changes and variations, depending on secondary circumstances and suggestions from people interested in the project.

Why a "Healing Centre" and not something else?

Because it is surprising to notice how many practitioners in Italy and all over the world have skills and qualifications in this area. Consequently, this initiative could be an excellent opportunity to learn how to work together in order to define a serious professional therapeutic programme to propose to the patient-to-be. The Center could, moreover, provide stable working opportunities for people involved in the project and, in the long-run, if the initiative is successful, it could also represent a source of income for Merigar because part of the profit could be devoted to the Community.

In order to start off "The Medicine Initiative", as we decided to call the project soon after Rinpoche had addressed one of the two coordinators inquiring how "The Medicine" was proceeding, two meetings were organized during the Easter retreat with the presence of doctors and nurses. The outcome of the meeting was the proposal to set up a training group where people are willing to join the project and can have the opportunity of knowing one another from both a personal and

professional point of view, understanding how we can work together and at the same time operate individually on the patient. The final aim of the Training Group should be to establish common goals and to work out the therapeutic programme and the professional message we want to propose to the public.

At the very beginning, as a first attempt, the idea is to rent a place fully-equipped with all the facilities suitable to our needs for 6-8 weeks. Even such a short period of time can enable us to realize how successful the initiative can be and, in case of positive results, we could elaborate a more ambitious programme and set up a more permanent centre. The first meeting of the Training Group will take place on the 21st of June in Merigar and meanwhile we request all the practitioners with qualifications enabling them to work on the project and willing to join the initiative, to send us a letter including the following information and proposals: anagraphic details, skills, qualifications, study curriculum, working experience, ideas on how the Training Group should be led, suggestions on the therapeutic programme itself, any kind of information on places suitable to our needs in Italy and on centres already operating in this field.

Unfortunately, at present we haven't yet found a doctor or doctors willing to take on the responsibility of "The Medicine Initiative" from a legal point of view, but as soon as the aims of the project are clearer and the proposals better-defined and more concrete, doctors will "manifest" themselves. "Slowly slowly" said Rinpoche one day waving his hand to me from the window of his car. So, slowly slowly, but with determination "The Medicine Initiative" is going on.

Anyone interested in receiving more information or willing to be put on the mailing-list of the "Initiative" newsletter, can get in touch with one of the two coordinators: Elisa Copello, Via Moscati 18, 20154 Milano, Italy, tel: 02-33607505 and Spartaco Vitiello, Via Querini 65, 35135 Padova, Italy, tel: 049-9075009.

The little nunnery at Khamdogar

by Yuchen Namkhai

Khamdogar, in the province of Chamdo in east Tibet, was originated by Namkhai Norbu's main master, Changchub Dorje, who lived there for many years. As you will have read, A.S.I.A., the Association for Solidarity in Asia, have projects to save Tibetan culture by improving education and health facilities.

By the beginning of 1993 it is hoped that one of their projects, the building of a school, hospital and guest house in Khamdogar, will be completed, as

well as a little nunnery. The rebuilding of the nunnery has begun thanks to a donation of 3,750,000 lire which was collected during the 1989 Easter retreat in Merigar.

With the help of this money and the free and willing help of the local population, these determined nuns have already rebuilt the ground floor of their nunnery.

Since representatives of A.S.I.A. went to Khamdogar in the spring of this year, Rinpoche used this

occasion to send \$1000 directly, part of which was collected during retreats last year. With this contribution it is hoped to complete the building of the nunnery by this summer, 1991. From these results we can see how useful our contributions are for the revitalisation of the ancient culture of Tibet. Personally, I would like to express my sincere admiration and recognition of those who constantly support Tibet, India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Photo Mario Maglietta



Building the cabin

Cabin adventure

Jim Smith's account

The story began late last summer when Sara, the secretary of Tsegylgar returned from Merigar with Rinpoche's idea that maybe two people from Tsegylgar could travel to Italy and help construct a wooden cabin. The purpose was to help the Italian members of the Community to learn how to construct a wooden structure as most of the building materials usually employed in Italy are masonry.

Amongst the members of the Tsegylgar Community there are a number of capable carpenters but at this time only Joe Zurylo and myself could afford to leave responsibilities behind to undertake the journey.

Arrangements were made with Merigar and we arrived in the second half of February.

When I reached Italy, Joe had already arrived three days prior and in rainy weather he and Libero Carniel had begun the construction of the cabin within the walls of the Gampa. With Colin Ellar we visited the adventurous sites where the foundation was already in place. We established a plan to finish the cabin in sections inside the Gampa and with favorable weather we would lower them into their permanent place. We worked on completing the platform upon which the cabin was to rest and then with the help of many hands we lowered the wall sections into place.

The work itself was difficult and strenuous, yet it seemed to evolve in a very smooth way. People came to assist and collaborate; there appeared to be very few problems or issues in spite of

the terrain not being easy or favorable. Throughout the third week we finished the shell and the roof of the cabin. Joe returned to the States and I remained another week to finish the exterior siding and the stairs. After I left, Colin, Paolo, Frank and Libero took over the responsibility for finishing the interior of the cabin. Throughout the experience of this project everyone felt very positive in supporting this task - from supplying the necessary materials to helping Joe and I with our accommodations and food. The spirit of support and friendship was very enjoyable. The very adventure of travelling to another Gar and to discover close collaboration with practitioners attempting to manifest something of the teachings was a very exciting, inspiring experience.

Azamgar

by Colin Ellar

Azamgar is in an abandoned village at 1600 metres above sea level, in the mountains that stretch from Italy towards the French border. It is about 2 hours drive from Genova and about the same from Nice. Libero Carniel, myself and our two companions went there the week-end of 12/13 April to assist and advise the Gakyil members on the completion of a retreat house that has been projected for many years but until now only consists of the roof and three walls.

We passed by local supplies to see available building materials and wood, before hiking up the tiny dirt track that takes about an hour to go from the nearest village with a road. We found the track damaged in two places where snow and rain had thrown all the rocks down the hill.

On Saturday we went to take all the measurements and begin projecting the structures that would divide this ex-hay barn into two floors and eventually into four separate retreat rooms. The problem that everything has to be carried in by helicopter, makes the usual use of concrete very expensive. In collaboration with Walter, Moreno, etc, we projected a front wall of wood



Azamgar

panelling and two wooden-floors insulated and partially sound proofed. In the end we realised the cost of this work would arrive at Lit. 15-20 million, about 15-20,000 US dollars, much more than the sum at present with the Gakyil. The discussion then led to the fact that one of the ex-inhabitants of the village, a man of about 70 years that still comes every month or two to visit, might be willing to sell his property. As he was in the village at that moment, two of the Gakyil who know him quite well, went

to see him. It seemed that he would sell his property (three houses and a lot of land) for not much more than the cost of completing the other house.

Buying this property would also free us from the worry that other than community people might buy the land. Probably in the next ten days after conferring with Rinpoche and discussing with the Merigar gakyil a decision will be taken; for now, however, we remain in suspense.

Photo Yvonne Zeuker

A yang-tig retreat house at Merigar

by Enzo Terzano

A yang-tig retreat house will be constructed at Merigar according to the wishes of Norbu Rinpoche. Funds were already collected during the Easter retreat. If you make a membership contribution of minimum Lit. 100.000, you will have paid for your first yang-tig retreat and also helped the project on its way to realization. Since, in the future, a fee should be paid in order to do a special retreat, it is worthwhile giving it in advance so that construction of the house can go ahead.

You can send your contribution to account number 3120.29 at the Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Arcidosso, specifying "Subscription for the yang-tig retreat house." If you send a contribution through the bank, please send a letter to Enzo Terzano, Merigar, Arcidosso 58031 (GR), Italy, specifying the date of the bank transfer, your full name and address.

Retreat house in Valvestino, Italy

by Fulvio Ferrari

Valvestino is a valley in the province of Brescia which one reaches either from Gargnano on Lake Garda or from Idra, Valle Sabbia, BS. For several years now it has been a point of reference for those of us from Brescia both because it is a peaceful place and because it is off the tourist routes of the area, but also and above all because of the energy which emanates from its morphological structure. The amphitheatre at the top forms a series of green terraces perching on imposing rocks among fearful precipices.

Why this travel information? Because finally we have got ourselves a place! A large meadow, surrounded by precipices, a small house and a barn and a bit of wood on a steep slope. The floor needs paving and the windows need glazing; the stables have to be cleaned out and organised but the house is already able to put up about 2 or 3 people. We have running water and an outside lavatory with a stunning view! This summer we want to pave the barn and put in a wood-burning stove to make it hospitable in the winter. We also intend, on the advice of Rinpoche, to make a room ready for yang-tig retreats. Anyway it's a beginning.



To develop love

The Dalai Lama speaks on nonviolence

"I think that if a person really wishes to be happy and has the intelligence to recognize what must be done, he will realize how much his happiness completely depends on others." Dalai Lama.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama visiting Italy wishes upon humanity a path of nonviolence. "I am very happy to be speaking to students, who are, in my view, the future," the Dalai Lama began in his talk to the academic audience at Siena University. "That is why this meeting is so important. We are the creators of our future and it can be created now by young people and thus I am happy to be at Siena University. I feel there are different ways to manifest violence, there are actions that may seem violent but actually are not. The opposite exists as well, where acts that do not appear violent, actually are. Generally speaking violence is any kind of action that is damaging in some way to someone else's physical body, inner being or mind. I think that if a person really wishes to be happy and has the intelligence to recognize what must be done, he will realize how much his happiness completely depends on others. How will this person ever have a detrimental attitude towards others when his happiness depends precisely on them. If you are among ten people of whom only one is a friend it will be difficult to feel serene. It would thus be much better if all or at least a majority of them were friends. In general we are concerned only about ourselves, we are distracted and we do not care if what we are doing is hurting others. On the basis of an attitude of this kind to hope to have friends and to wish to have no enemies is complete nonsense, because it means we want something without creating the causes for it to come about. In our life if we smile at people they will answer with smiles, if we look badly on others, they will look upon us with suspicion. Therefore when we are speaking of non-violence, we do not encourage it only to be well behaved but precisely to get something very important from other beings. Human beings, by their very nature, are social animals, we need other people to survive. That is why I believe that in human relationships, the main factor leading to happiness, serenity and reciprocal love, is benevolence. Violence appears when our reason vanishes, and when it cannot go further anger arises. This is clear evidence of violence being a sign of weakness.

On the other hand, tolerance and patience are based upon reason, and are even its products. Reason itself is the origin of violence.

The history of centuries teaches us that many violent deeds occurred because men believed them to be a solution; but history clearly teaches us that these acts were not a solution at all.

Very often when we use violent means we cannot reach our aims. We only become confused and cheat ourselves when in spite of our reason we use violent means. Many people say that human nature is violent but I often jokingly say that observing our bodies, our finger nails and our teeth etc. we can categorize men as docile animals. Also if we closely observe men's nature and the very existence of human communities, I think they arise from the need for human contact and love. Even scientists say that the first couple of weeks are extremely important for babies with regards to their relationship with their mother. This shows how even biologically man needs affection. I think that affection, love and



Photo Liane Graf

benevolence are fundamentally important.

Once speaking about non-violence could seem like an interview, but now especially in the last year we have seen many changes, for example, in Chile, in Eastern Europe and even in Peking, and the strength of non-violence has been proved.

So if we really want to do something for our future we must propagate these ideals of non-violence, because this is the only solution. I think it is extremely important to do this.

To provoke a change, to perform a transformation, the individual is important, each one of us is important. Looking at the future, the young are important, the students of this university are very important, because they must on the one hand acquire knowledge, and also on the other hand, be careful to develop something inside themselves, this special attitude, this goodness. Otherwise, only caring about knowledge without developing this inner aspect, their own contribution to society cannot be considered with certainty as either positive or negative.

Therefore, if this knowledge grows on the basis of a developing altruism, of this feeling of universal responsibility, then it will really be effective: it will be useful for the society.

When I speak about altruism I am not speaking from a religious point of view, whether or not someone wants to practise any religion is up to them. I am speaking from a human point of view, because our condition of happiness and suffering really depends on this altruism.

We all take care of our physical body, of our health, and in the same way we must take care of our mind: in this way when body and mind are healthy we are happy. If our mind is not healthy, even if our body is well and strong, we all know one does not feel well.

To conclude, this good heart is essentially the well spring of happiness, of strength and success.

As I said earlier, all the events we have recently seen in the world arose, I believe, not only from cultural factors but thanks

to the strength of the reality of truth, therefore if we study the problem of non-violence, freeing ourselves of all our emotions created by pride and preconceptions, we realize that this method is really effective and really has concrete possibilities of success.

We said that our world must face different problems and find solutions for them and I think that the most efficacious and rational method to solve these problems is really non-violence. At this point someone might say there are so many situations, what can be done? Sometimes it can seem very difficult, but in reality it is true, it is not possible to obtain what we are looking for using violence. So, as we must face these problems and violence cannot eliminate them, we are left, since we must coexist with them, with no other alternatives but non-violence.

I do not believe that all the problems of humanity can be solved with religion. Sometimes religion creates problems, I believe in the strength of analysis, of awareness, of reflection, that can all contribute to the development of tolerance and love.

So when I repeat we have to develop love and understanding this is not simply so that we are well behaved but because it is the way to be happy. I always say that if someone wants to be an egoist at least may he be so in the best, most complete way, which springs from love and compassion.

I think all the religious traditions have the great responsibility to educate and raise the spiritual values of human beings.

The meeting with the representatives of all religions in the world in Assisi in 1986 was a very meaningful occasion. I told the Holy Father, John Paul II that I considered that meeting only as the beginning, because we must go on organizing such meetings. Moreover it was a memorable meeting also because it was so very cold and we were completely frozen."

The International Year of Tibet Denmark

The Danish Society for Tibetan Culture and the Tibet Support Committee are organizing events for the International Year of Tibet in Copenhagen from August 10th to 17th with the participation of artists, actors and politicians. There will also be an exhibition of Tibetan art, photos and a festival of films and video projections on Tibet.

Astrology Congress in Copenhagen

An international astrology congress is being held in Denmark from October 4th to 6th. Astrologers from Europe, the Soviet Union and the USA will be participating, as well as the personal astrologer of H.H. the Dalai Lama, Prof. Drakton.

For information write to CAC, c/o I.C. Institute, Nr. Farimagsgade 63, Denmark 1364 Copenhagen.

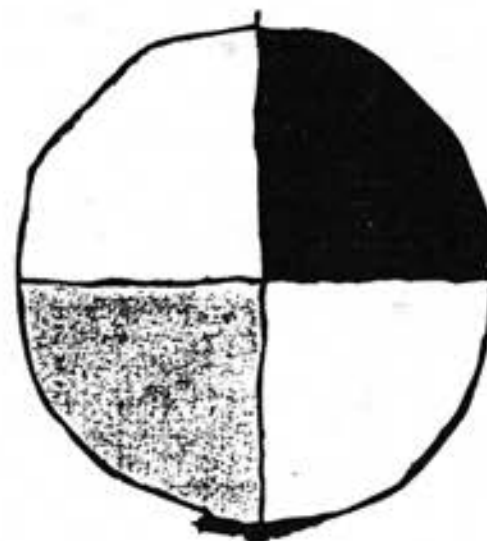
"The planet is preparing to go through a massive change. Right now the stars are all lined up. This vibration hitting the earth means earth changes. This vibration requires, requests and lures immediacy of change in the earth and humankind. We must move from consumerism to conservation. Please listen to our Earth Mother now."

Mary Thunder, Native American Medicine Woman

Explaining Ecology

International Herald Tribune, April 5, 1991

The Natural History Museum on Cromwell Road in London recently opened what it describes as the first permanent exhibition on global ecology in the world. It is designed to appeal to non-specialist visitors who wish to know more about the scientific background of environmental matters. The exhibition looks at the earth in space - the atmosphere, the solid earth, water and sun's energy. The exhibition is housed in a towering greenhouse structure entered through a simulated moonlit rain forest buzzing with sounds of life that leads to a glass chasm around which the display is built. A video wall, a quadroscope that uses mirrors to create a globe about 65 feet (20 metres) in diameter, traces the water cycle from ocean to mountain top and back. The complex web of life unfolds through interactive videos, models and displays.



The Power of Visions

A festival of healing man and nature

On Whitsuntide, May 17 - 20, 1991, a great festival of Pathways of Holistic Healing will take place in Berlin and 10 km south of Berlin, in the Palace of Sanssouci, in Potsdam. The Power of Vision Festival will have Richard Baker-Roshi, Sun Bear, Gerda Boyesen, J.E. Berendt, Kaye Hoffman, Van Morrison, Lama Sogyal Rinpoche, Dr. Trogawa Rinpoche and Andreas Vollenweider among the vast number of interesting presenters, teachers and artists.

The underlying thought around which this festival has been structured is that the earth is a living organism we are closely allied with in a relationship of mutual interdependence. Thus the healing of an individual is only possible within a naturally balanced ecological cycle.

The idea of this festival originates from a vision of the Native American Medicine Man Sun Bear. It is the first East-West Happening of this kind. "In concerts, meditations, workshops and ceremonies we will experience the power of a holistic, earth-connected way of life and the possibility of healing man and nature," say the organizers of the festival: Netzwerk der Kulturen e.V., the Cultural Network.

Further information from: Cultural Network, Akazienstr. 27, 1000 Berlin 62. Tel. Germany - 030-782 6924 and 030-782 4610, from Tuesday till Friday 10 am to 5 pm. Fax number 030-782 6308.



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's schedule in autumn

Spain

September 27 - October 4

A retreat in Almaria, on the mountains in the south of Spain.

Participation by prenotation only.

To make reservations contact: Anna Eid, c/o Merigar.

Germany

September 13, Public lecture on Tibetan Culture, Cologne.

September 14, morning, Dzog-chen Teachings at Kamalashila Institute, Schloss Wachendorf, 5353 Mechernich, tel. 02256-850. 3.30pm "Early History of Tibet", Bonn, Gustav-Heinemann Haus, Waldenburger Ring 44.

September 15, 10am Lecture "The Great Perfection - Dzog-chen in the Nyingma School and Bon religion". Bonn.

Afternoon, Dzog-chen Teachings. Kamalashila Institute.

For further information contact: Tsewang Norbu, Deutsch-Tibetische Kulturgesellschaft e.V. (Konigswinter), Fritz-Pullig-Str. 28, D5205 St. Augustin 2. Tel.02241-203610.

Merigar gakyil meeting April 3rd, 1991

by Nina Robinson

The main purpose of this gakyil meeting was to form a new gakyil. It was held at the end of the Easter retreat, so that the maximum number of people could be present.

First, Norbu Rinpoche reminded us that those who work for Merigar should do so as perfectly as possible. Although we should not think of Merigar as the centre of the Mandala of the International Community, since we do not have that kind of bureaucracy, we must remember that Merigar is seen as a model for other gars. This is because Rinpoche lives in Italy and so the community started here and he has put all of his care and energy into guiding its development. Therefore we should be careful not to make mistakes in Merigar. We must always remember that the principle of the community is based on the teaching and the teaching is linked to the teacher. Therefore our kind of organisation is not like any kind of system. Rinpoche said the "old" practitioners should refresh their practice. It is useless for

them to claim to be "old" practitioners if they are only stagnant. Instead they should manifest something lively and concrete.

"Who would like to bring Merigar to perfection?"

There were more than enough volunteers. There were four volunteers for the position of gekos. We drew lots and a new gakyil was formed complete with advisors and helpers. Rinpoche said that the old gakyil should not desert the new one until old members no longer have anything to do with the gakyil. They must continue to collaborate as much as possible. His advice to the new members and the gekos was not to be closed and limited, not to take up personal positions but to listen to the ideas and opinions of others and to create harmony. They should treat people who come to Merigar well, and not speak badly of people or gossip. Gossip only creates interpersonal problems and is very damaging. He said, "Let's choose a strong gekos but not just strong, it must someone who knows how to create harmony between people, someone who

has a lot of patience and who doesn't gossip."

He said the gekos, secretary and gakyil should coordinate the other people in the area to help run Merigar. It is too big to be maintained by just a few people. We want more coordination.

Then, Riccardo Moraglia spoke about the monthly contributions to the running costs of Merigar. It was unanimously agreed when Merigar was acquired that each member of the community in Italy would make a small offering for its maintenance.

Now Merigar has grown, its expenses and inflation has made the old contribution ridiculously inadequate. Riccardo suggested that a letter should be sent to all those who have a steady income to ask them to donate a more "dignified" contribution. They would then be sent a balance sheet showing how the money is spent. If this works, we need no longer rely on asking people for retreat fees. In fact they could be done away with altogether. Everyone agreed that this was an excellent idea.

Impressions of a long awaited return

by Des Barry

Five years seems to be a very short time. Coming back to this unique place, Merigar, where one has had so many significant experiences in one's life, it can feel as if one has never left. Certainly, there have been many changes, but the strangest sensation to me was one of familiarity despite this, and how the current manifestation of Merigar seemed so natural to me. Having seen so many photographs of the gomba, having heard Rinpoche speak of it so much, having seen the video of the gomba and its inauguration by the Dalai Lama, it took some time to go beyond this familiarity, to appreciate fully the incredible effort in time, work, donations, and sacrifice that Rinpoche and so many people of the Community have dedicated to realize this dream in such a short time. This feeling of familiarity is also perhaps a reflection of how well the Dzog-chen Community at Merigar has succeeded in communicating with other gars throughout the world, by word of mouth, and through "The Mirror" and other Community publications.

After this first impression it then took some days to see all the different buildings that have been constructed to house the various activities of the Community that are now flowering.

The main house at Merigar is far less of a focus for activity than in the past. The whole of Merigar's land is used for the great variety of projects that the Community here has taken on. It was very impressive to see how many people



Merigar 1982

are so involved, and working in a way that is efficient and professional. The "capannone" is a hive of activity; computer produced brochures to announce courses; the offices of Shang Shung Edizioni; all the activities connected with the publication of "The Mirror", and the journal "Merigar"; the extensive library; the mandala and practice of the Vajra Dance, and the well equipped carpentry workshop. All these concrete manifestations of the Community were only ideas a short time ago. Perhaps the strongest impression that I felt came from the Gakyil meeting that I attended. Listening to Norbu Rinpoche's opening comments, I see how far Merigar is along the road to being the model for the development of other gars. Because Rinpoche has been present at Merigar for long periods of time, a vast amount of catalytic energy for projects has been provided, and a focus for this energy has

been maintained far more easily, I feel, than in other gars that have not had the benefit of his direct, on the spot, advice. Certainly, we are all still learning how to act in harmony with the spirit of the teachings. The explosive nature of the emotions, and the power of distraction is certainly not far away, as we see, every day at Merigar, and elsewhere, that this is the nature of being human; but what cannot be ignored here is that an enormous amount of work and effort has gone into making a very real mark on the world, that has, and will have, reverberations throughout the Community, whether directly, through personal experience, or indirectly, through publications, videos, and reports by word of mouth.

As more people come into contact with the Teachings, and participate in the Community, there will certainly be changes in the environment and the 'flavour' of Merigar. This provides a challenge for us all whether old or new. Then again perhaps the most appropriate way to finish these reflections is that in trying to maintain awareness, and relate to the direct experience of the teachings, we could say, "plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose". Merigar in its change and diversity provides the perfect ground for developing the 'one taste' of real awareness, as well as being a concrete model for maintaining the transmission and preserving the teachings for the future.



Photo Mario Maglietti

Merigar program SUMMER 1991

April 29		Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche starts personal retreat.
May 3-4-5		Teaching with Lobpon Tenzin Namdak.
May 11	9 - 12.30	Karma Yoga practice (Karma Yoga practice is always at the same time). Naggong.
May 12	15 - 18	Long Life practice dedicated to the good health of Yeshe Namkhai.
May 18	10 & 16	Karma Yoga.
May 19	9 - 12.30	Karma Yoga.
	15 - 18	Tun.
	19	Karma Yoga for the vitality of Merigar.
May 25-26		
June 1-2	10 & 16	Practice and explanation of how to renew, finish and authenticate the Namka.
June 7	10 & 16	Dakini day. Norbu Rinpoche will give the complete transmission of Simhamukha.
June 8	10 & 16	Simhamukha practice.
June 9		Karma Yoga.
June 12	19	Guru Yoga with the White A.
June 15-16		Karma Yoga.
June 21	10 & 16	Norbu Rinpoche will give the complete transmission of Mandarava.
June 22	7 - 10 & 16	Intense practice of Mandarava.
June 23		Karma Yoga.
June 26	8	Long Life practice of Mandarava.
June 29-30		Karma Yoga to revitalize Merigar.
July 4	19	Long Tun with intensive practice of Ekajati.
July 6-7		General purification of Merigar.
July 11	8	Six Lokas Purification.
July 13-14		Karma Yoga.
July 15	19	Ganapuja. Anniversary of Dharmachakra.
July 20	18	Practice retreat starts.
July 21	3.30	The anniversary of Padmasambhava. Long Tun with Guruyoga of Padmasambhava (see Universal Timetable in Practice Calendar).
	19	Ganapuja with intensive practice of Long Life dedicated to all Masters.
July 22-25		Practice retreat.
July 26	10 & 16	Norbu Rinpoche will give teaching on Juden.
July 27-28		Juden practice.
August 3-4-5	10 & 16	A course of the Dance of the Vajra.
August 5	19	Ganapuja.
August 10-11		Karma Yoga.
August 16		10th Anniversary and inauguration of Merigar.
August 17		Party for all the children at Merigar.
August 18		Karma Yoga.
August 19	19	Ganapuja.
August 24	18	Start of practice retreat.
August 31		End of practice retreat.
September 1		Karma Yoga to revitalise Merigar.



It is important to communicate with all practitioners linked to the same transmission, through entering together into the state of contemplation. In this way we all develop the potentiality of the transmission we have received, and through that we also develop our understanding and ability to integrate practice into daily life.

Universal timetable

July.20th

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

July 21st

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



PRACTICES FOR

From the full moon of April to the end

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:

3rd Month, 15th day

Western date:

Sunday April 28th

This is one of the best days for Long-life practices, and in particular for the practice of the "Union of Primordial Essences". The best time to do it is early in the morning. This full moon day is also the anniversary of the day when Buddha first gave the teaching of Kalachakra, therefore it is good to do a long Tun in the evening.

Tibetan date:

3rd Month, 25th day

Western date:

Thursday May 9th

This is a Dakini day as well as the anniversary of the fifth Dalai Lama, a great Terton and practitioner of Dzog-chen. Try to do a long Tun with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or if you are alone, you can do a medium Tun. In either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:

3rd Month, 30th day

Western date:

Tuesday May 14th

This is a particularly good day for practising the Purification of the Six Lokas. As it is also the anniversary of the great Terton and Dzog-chen Master Sangyas Lingpa, try to do the "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor".

Tibetan date:

4th Month, 10th day

Western date:

Thursday May 23rd

This is a day of Guru Padmasambhava, and it is good to do the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava. Otherwise do the Long-life practice "Union of Primordial Essences".

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:

4th Month, 15th day

Western date:

Tuesday May 28th

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

Tibetan date:

4th Month, 25th day

Western date:

Friday June 7th

This is the anniversary of Ngor Chen (a great Master of the Shakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the Guruyoga "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor", either collectively or alone.

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:

4th Month, 30th day

Western date:

Wednesday June 12th

This day is the anniversary of Nyagla Padma Duddul (1816-1872). He was one of the Masters of Changchub Dorje, the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma "Tsedrub Gongdus" which two of his disciples, Ayu Khadro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Norbu Rinpoche. Therefore you should try to do this

Long-life practice, "Tsedrub Gongdus", "Union of Primordial Essences". The time to do it is the early morning. Later in the day or in the evening you can do the Guruyoga of the White A, "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor".

Tibetan date:

5th Month, 10th day

Western date:

Friday June 21st

This is Guru Rinpoche day, a good day to do a Ganapuja with the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava. If you are unable to do this, try to do the Long-life practice connected with Guru Rinpoche called "Universal Wisdom Union".

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:

5th Month, 15th day

Western date:

Wednesday June 26th

This is a special day for the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava, so you can do "The Cycle of Life's Vajra" early in the morning. If you cannot do it at that time, it is still good to do it later in the day.

Tibetan date:

5th Month, 25th day

Western date:

Sunday July 7th

This is a Dakini day and an important day for the practice of Ekajati. Therefore, according to your circumstances, try to do the long Tun collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or the medium Tun if you are practising on your own. In either case, repeat the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as you can.

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:

5th Month, 30th day

Western date:

Thursday July 11th

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

Tibetan date:

6th Month, 4th day

Western date:

Monday July 15th

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

Tibetan date:

6th Month, 10th day

Western date:

Sunday July 21st

This day is considered by many great Masters to be the birthday of Guru Rinpoche. This year, on the 21st of July, when it is eight o'clock in the morning in Oddiyana (see the universal timetable) practitioners all over the world will do a Guruyoga with the medium or short Tun, according to their possibilities. Those who have the possibility can also add a Ganapuja. Thus we will practise together, and communicate all transmissions in the same instant in the state of contemplation.

Tibetan date:

6th Month, 14th day

Western date:

Thursday July 25th

This is the anniversary of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje. On this day it is good to do "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor", Guruyoga with the White A.

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:

6th Month, 15th day

Western date:

Friday July 26th

This day is the anniversary of Gampopa, the disciple of Milarepa. Therefore it is a day to do "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor", Guruyoga with the White A. It is also a day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences".

Tibetan date:

6th Month, 25th day

Western date:

Monday August 5th

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

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:

6th Month, 30th day

Western date:

Saturday August 10th

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

Tibetan date:

7th Month, 10th day

Western date:

Monday August 19th

This is the anniversary of Jomo Menmo (1248-1283), a very famous woman Terton, reincarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal. She was the consort of the great Terton Guru Chowang. It is also a very special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Therefore it is an ideal day to do a Ganapuja and Long-life practice associated with Padmasambhava, "Universal Wisdom Union". If you have the opportunity it is beneficial to do a Ganapuja.

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:

7th Month, 15th day

Western date:

Sunday August 25th

This is the anniversary of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso and Padma Karpo, a famous 17th century Drugpa Kargyupa Master. Therefore it is ideal to do the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava, "Cycle of Life's Vajra". It is better to do it early in the morning if you can manage it, otherwise it is perfectly alright to do it later in the day. It is also an excellent day to practice "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor", the Guruyoga with the White A.

Tibetan date:

7th Month, 25th day

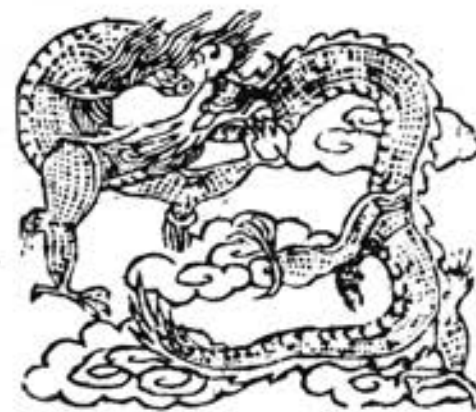
Western date:

Tuesday September 3rd

This is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of Pagmo Drugpa (1110-1170), the chief disciple of Gampopa. Try to do a Ganapuja together with your Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby, you can do a medium Tun on

SPECIAL DAYS

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your own. In either case, when you transform yourself into the Dakini Simhamuka, recite her heart mantra as much as possible and then do an intensive practice of Ekajati.

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:
7th Month, 30th day
Western date:
Sunday September 8th

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

Tibetan date:
8th Month, 10th day
Western date:
Wednesday September 18th

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

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:
8th Month, 15th day
Western date:
Monday September 23rd

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

Tibetan date:
8th Month, 25th day
Western date:
Thursday October 3rd

This is a Dakini day, and also the anniversary of two great Dzog-chen masters, Rigzin Kumaraja, who transmitted the Dzog-chen teachings to Longchenpa and to the third Karmapa, and of Rigzin Tsewang Norbu, a great Dzog-chen master of the Nyingmapa school. It is therefore an excellent day to do "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor", the Guruyoga with the White A. If you can do it in the morning, that is best. Then, if you have the time, you can do a medium or long Tun later in the day, with an intense practice of Simhamuka.

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:
8th Month, 30th day
Western date:
Monday October 7th

This day is excellent for practising the "Purification of the Six Lokas". Otherwise you can do the medium or long Tun.

Tibetan date:
9th Month, 3rd day
Western date:
Thursday October 10th

This is the anniversary of Rigzin Jigmed Lingpa (1729-1798), a great Dzogchen master who was the author of many books, among which is the Longchen Nyingthig, which he wrote after having contact with Longchenpa through visions. Therefore, on this important day, you should try to do "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor", the Guruyoga with the White A.

Tibetan date:
9th Month, 10th day
Western date:
Friday October 18th

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

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:
9th Month, 15th day
Western date:
Wednesday October 23rd

This is a good day to do the Long-life practice of Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences", either collectively or personally according to your possibilities, early in the morning or in the evening.

Tibetan date:
9th Month, 22nd day
Western date:
Tuesday October 29th

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

Tibetan date:
9th Month, 25th day
Western date:
Friday November 1st

This is a Dakini day and the anniversary of the very important Dzogchen master Adzom Drugpa (1842-1924). He was a disciple of Jamyang Kyentse Wangpo and a master of some of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's masters, including Changchub Dorje and Ayu Kadro. He was also a previous incarnation of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. It is therefore a very important day to practise "A Kar Lamai Nalgyor", the Guruyoga with the White A, according to your possibilities.

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:
9th Month, 30th day
Western date:
Wednesday November 6th

This is a good day to do "Namchos Shitroi Nalgyor", the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible. The best time for this practice is around eight o'clock in the evening.

Tibetan date:
10th Month, 10th day
Western date:
Saturday November 16th

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

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:
10th Month, 15th day
Western date:
Thursday November 21st

It is an important day to do the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava. The best time for this is

in the early morning.

Tibetan date:
10th Month, 25th day
Western date:
Sunday December 1st

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

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:
10th Month, 30th day
Western date:
Friday December 6th

This is an important day to practice Namchos Shitroi Nalgyor, the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations. It is best as always to practice it collectively, but you can also do it personally.

Tibetan date:
11th Month, 10th day
Western date:
Monday December 16th

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. If you have the time and possibility it is good to do a Ganapuja collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, otherwise you can do the short or medium Tun personally.

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:
11th Month, 15th day
Western date:
Saturday December 21st

This is an important day to do the Long-life practice of the Dakini Mandarava, Life's Cycle of Vajra, (L.C.V.).

Tibetan date:
11th Month, 25th day
Western date:
Monday December 30th

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

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:
11th Month, 30th day
Western date:
Saturday January 4th

This day is the anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava's coronation as Prince of Orgyen at the invitation of King Idradholi. We can perform a Ganapuja collectively, or do the Long-life practice, Universal Wisdom Union (U.N.U.), either collectively or personally, according to circumstances.

Tibetan date:
12th Month, 10th day
Western date:
Wednesday January 15th
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.)

FULL MOON

12th Month, 15th day
Western date:
Sunday January 19th

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

Tibetan date:
12th Month, 25th day
Western date:
Wednesday January 29th

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

NEW MOON

Tibetan date:
12th Month, 30th day
Western date:
Monday February 3rd
This is a good day for purification practices. Therefore try to do Purification of the Six Lokas.

Tibetan date:
12th Double Month, 10th day
Western date:
Thursday February 13th

This is Guru Padmasambhava day. If possible do a Ganapuja with a Guruyoga and the Long-life practice of Padmasambhava (U.W.U.) together with your Vajra brothers and sisters, otherwise you can do a medium Tun alone.

FULL MOON

Tibetan date:
12th Double Month, 15th day
Western date:
Tuesday February 18th
This is a good day for the Long-life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra" (C.L.V.). The best time for this is early in the morning. In the evening you can do a Ganapuja collectively.

Tibetan date:
12th Double Month, 25th day
Western date:
Thursday February 27th

This is a Dakini day so you can do a Ganapuja collectively, transforming yourself into the Dakini Simhamukha and reciting her heart mantra as many times as possible. If this is not possible you can do a long or medium Tun either collectively or alone.





Design Bruno Irmichi



Nine purification breathings

by Sergio Quaranta

The practitioner derives a great advantage: the body becomes more relaxed, breathing becomes slower and profound, and the mind calmer and less disturbed by thoughts.

Yantra Yoga is in itself a complete path capable of leading one to total realization.

One of the principal aims of Yantra Yoga is to co-ordinate the functioning of prana (rlung), the subtle energy that flows through the subtle channels (rtsa) of our physical body.

Our 'modern life' is generally full of stress which certainly doesn't help the natural flow of this energy. Its malfunctioning can be the cause of disturbances that range from nervousness to various kinds of illness, to the extreme case of madness. So, you can understand just how important it is to balance the energy by means of practices like Yantra Yoga.

In Yantra, we use all three fundamental components of our being: body, voice and mind. These, working together, cause the prana to function in a natural way. The practitioner, therefore, derives a great advantage: the body becomes more relaxed, breathing becomes slower and profound, and the mind calmer and less disturbed by thoughts.

Yantra Yoga is in itself a complete path capable of leading one to total realization, and as in the text of Vairocana, transmitted and explained by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, we first find 108 movements relative to the physical body. The body is in fact what we can usually relate to most easily as it is tangible and concrete. These movements, or Yantra, are always linked to specific types of breathing, while the mind, as a rule, is kept present and aware of what's being done or, in more cases, is concentrated on internal visualizations of channels and cakras.

We won't classify here the varied groups of exercises and asanas of which Yantra consists. Instead, we can speak about preparation for a practice session.

First of all, it's necessary to find a tranquil and quiet place, outside if possible, with fresh air and the pleasant surroundings of plants and flowers. This isn't always easy to find in our everyday situations but we can try to reach this ideal as closely as possible.

According to traditions, the practitioner should wear an ang rag, a kind of loincloth with the colour red on the inside, blue on the outside, and with a green fringe, colours which symbolise and favour the energy of the elements. However, this shouldn't condition us. What is essential is to wear light and comfortable clothing that doesn't restrict movement or the circulation of the blood.

When beginning, we work on loosening-up the body and warming-up the muscles. This can be done with some specific Yantra exercises or equally with whatever others one knows from various disciplines. Having done the 'warm-up' exercise we can now do the purification breathing. This is very important because, even by itself, it's sufficient to bring about a calmer and profound state that helps practice. It's worthwhile then to describe it accurately.

To start off, it's necessary to sit in the position of Vairocana with its principal qualifications: legs in lotus or semi-lotus position, or simply crossed. If this is too difficult, other positions are possible, even sitting on a chair. What's necessary, however, is to keep our back straight. The spine represents the central channel of energy and it would be a great help, in whatever situation of daily life, to keep it straight. The nose should be in line with the navel. The tongue rests on the palate and this represents the union of solar and lunar elements. The hands rest on the knees with the thumb and ring finger slightly pressing the knees' indentations. This controls the flowing of energy waves. Sensory perception is present in a relaxed state. This position, if done perfectly, allows for an excellent flow of energy and one can remain in it a long time with no body aches. As Westerners, though, we're

unaccustomed to this position which may be uncomfortable and even impossible to perform. In this case we can try very slowly to train ourselves and, in the meantime, do our best, remembering the key factor which is to keep the back straight. Breathe profoundly several times to begin with, then start to breathe in while raising the right hand until the middle finger closes the right nostril. We have to understand that this movement has the sole aim of increasing to the maximum capacity the right part of the thorax. So it's important to remember to breathe in as deeply as we can and try to co-ordinate the movement's beginning and end with the breath.

Without holding the breath, keep the nostril closed as previously explained and breathe out. Both inhalation and exhalation are 'direct', air flows freely without blocking it in anyway. Likewise, we breathe in and out on the left side and then alternate for a total of three times, each for both of the sides.

Lastly, breathe in without raising the arms, and fill the lungs completely opening the shoulders well. Breathe out nearly all the air through both nostrils and then bend forward, keeping the back straight as we breathe out completely. Here also, the aim isn't to bend forward to the point of touching the forehead to the ground rather it is to push all the air out, so we'll bend as far as is comfortable but keeping the spine straight. This movement is repeated three times and in this way we've done the nine purification breaths. The duration of breathing in and out isn't fixed. Differences exist from one individual to another as well as from one situation to another. As we know, breathing is in fact linked to thoughts, passions, emotions, etc. However, as we progress, respiration will automatically become deeper and slower. Trying to keep this relaxed but present state we'll approach the other exercises of Yantra Yoga.

Translated by Constance Soehnen. Originally published in the Merigar magazine, 1987.

The origins of yantra yoga

by Laura Evangelisti

Yantra Yoga is a method of loosening tensions and co-ordinating the psycho-physical energy of the individual, and belongs to the Tantric Buddhist tradition. The practice of Tantra is based on the transformation of the three aspects that relate to the relative condition of men, respectively body, voice and mind, into the pure dimension of enlightenment, especially working through the element of the Voice, synonym of energy. All the manifestations of the divinities and mandala used in the Tantric tradition represent the pure aspect of energy in the primordial state of the individual.

Yantra Yoga was originally developed by the ancient Mahasiddhas of India and Oddiyana, who used it as an additional method of practices as the 'internal heat' - gtum mo - which aims at developing, through the control of the respiration and the visualisation of the nadi and chakra, the sensation of pleasure, for the realisation of the indissoluble union of bliss and emptiness.

In Tibet, there have been different types of Yantra Yoga, related to various Tantric traditions, such as The path and the fruit (Lam'bras) of the Sakyapa school, The six yogas of Naropa (Na ro chos drug) of the bKa 'brgyud pa, and The essence of the Universe (klong chen snying thig) of the rNying ma pa school. We find also different systems of Yantra Yoga in the Dzog-chen (rdzogs-chen) tradition of the Bon, such as the oral transmission of the Shang Shung (Zhang zhung snyan brgyud), The method of the letter A (A khrid), etc.

The Yantra Yoga that is taught by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche comes from the teachings of the oral transmission of Vairocana (Bai ro snyan brgyud). Vairocana was a great Tibetan translator, who lived at the time of the King Khri strong lde'u btsan (790-844) and who introduced the first texts of the Dzog-chen from Oddiyana into Tibet. This system of Yantra is called The union of the sun and the moon (Nyi zla kha shyor) which was originally tied to the Tantric cycle of heruka mNgon rdzogs rgyal po and transmitted by the Mahasiddha Humkara to Padmasambhava and from him to Vairocana, who in his turn transmitted the form that we know to his principal disciple g.Yu sgra snying po. From that time on it has been passed on without interruption right up to our teacher, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who received it from his paternal uncle rTogs lDan O rgyan bstan 'dzin, who was a disciple of A 'dzam 'brug pa (1842-1924). Many explanations were given by Gyur med rdo rje, the son of A 'dzam 'brug pa, from Byang chub rdo rje and from his son Gyur med rdo rje. In Tibetan Yantra Yoga is called Phrul 'khor which means movement. This emphasizes the fundamental characteristic. It is, in fact, composed of a series of movements, each of which, is tied to a specific respiration. This serves to co-ordinate the vital energy Prana, which finds its own natural state. Because energy and the mind are inter-dependent, by creating a harmonious condition of energy, the mind also finds itself in an optimum relaxed state. Therefore Yantra Yoga is not only an auxiliary method used in the transformation practices of the Tantra, but is, in the Dzog-chen tradition, a very important means of finding the natural and totally relaxed state of body, voice and mind. This experience for the practitioner, is an indispensable condition for achieving the state of contemplation. Originally published in the Merigar Magazine, 1987

Videos on Yantra Yoga

The original text translated from Tibetan by Norbu Rinpoche and his students, outlines one hundred and eight exercises. These include preliminary exercises for purifying the breath, promoting flexibility of the joints, natural breathing and the correct circulation of energy along internal channels. These exercises as well as ten asanas or postures are included in the video-tape distributed by Snow Lion Press. Shang-Shung Edizioni in Merigar, has produced a video with Yantra exercises by Fabio Andrico, with English, Italian and mute versions.

The book as well as the videos will be useful to someone who has already been introduced to the yoga system, as it would be extremely difficult to learn even the preliminary practices without instruction.

Yogi in New York City

by Michael Katz

My first exposure to the subject of yantra yoga came through the master teachers Dudjom Rinpoche, who left his body in 1987, and Lama Gampo Tsenden, who at the age of eighty-four currently lives and teaches in Tibet. Initially they did not give methods for practising a yantra yoga system but rather told stories about the masters of Tsar Lung. Tsar Lung, which translates as channels and winds respectively, refers to the skillful methods of yoga which lead to the mastery of energy, body and ultimately mind. Later I received instruction on aspects of Tsar Lung from several teachers.

The most comprehensive instructions came from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche concerning the system of yoga called the Unification of the Sun and the Moon (Trulkor Nyida Khajor).

The word yantra in Tibetan is Trulkor. Its literal meaning is machine or instrument, and one of its implied meanings is movement of the body and energy. Physical Yantra Yoga systems are used for balancing and gaining mastery over body, energy, and mind. The Unification of the Sun and the Moon Yoga was one of the earliest of the many

systems of physical yoga which exist today, largely in secret. The text that poetically records this system of yoga was composed by the eighth-century mahasiddha Vairocana. He in turn was instructed by the Indian meditation master Humkara and Padmasambhava. Trulkor Nyida Khajor is considered to be one of the oldest forms of yoga preserved within the Tibetan Buddhist religion, having been transmitted in an unbroken lineage for well over one thousand years.

Students familiar with both hatha yoga and this Trulkor system will note many similarities, due in part to their common Indian origins. Some yantra yoga teachers when asked to differentiate between these Trulkors and hatha yoga have noted the distinctive continuous movements that characterize some sequences of yantra yoga. Held breath and visualizations are also characteristic of certain exercises within the yantra yoga systems.

The Trulkor Nyida Khajor was one of the earliest forms of yoga practised within the Tibetan Buddhist tantric religion, but since its introduction

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All about the Wat

by Phra Khantipalo (Laurence Mills)

WAT?

The what...? Wat is right, meaning in Thai a Buddhist temple-monastery. This one, though, is in rural Australia and very different from any other Wat wherever found in this world. If you have not been here, then please let me take you on a tour, a poor one perhaps since it will rely on my words and a few black-and-white photographs - you will have to supply from imagination and visualisation the particular pinky-brown colour of the Sidney red gums' bark and the piercingly sharp notes of the Eastern Spinebills.

From this window of a small aluminium-clad house tucked away at the top of a secluded valley, I look down on smooth and twisted red gums, pale yellow wattle in bloom and the gnarled trees of banksia with their green cones of flowers. The trees go down into the valley and then ascend the hills of the National Park in unbroken array. We are completely surrounded by two National Parks, the native forests which stretch ten miles or more in every direction. In the middle, this Wat occupies a tiny 222 acres and 3 roods (even in Australia, only some old people can remember what a rood is - a quarter of an acre.)

The outside world intrudes only occasionally, with the muffled roar of a jet heading for Sydney, five minutes away at that speed but two and a half hours to drive. Our local wombats and wallabies and our eighty or so species of birds take no notice. Even the snake population has become friendly to Buddhists.

When we arrived here about 13 years ago, there was this house (which now holds our library) and a shack which we used for a few years before pulling it down with our tractor. There were no other buildings on the land. About ten acres had been planted with pine trees, now of mature size, while another thirty, mostly flat land, had been cleared and grassed down for horses. This is now a camping area.

Who were we? The donor of the land was Ilse Ledermann, a lady born in Germany of Jewish descent, lucky enough to escape Hitler's persecution,

but compelled to live in numerous countries across the world. On coming to Australia with her husband, they established an organic farm in Queensland, and later came to my meditation courses in Northern New South Wales (this was in the early seventies). Ilse became a Buddhist, and having learned various meditation methods, started to help other people. She suggested to me, while we were staying in the very noisy Thai city temple in Sydney, that we find a suitable place for practice. After looking at various properties, we decided that this one was the best bargain, since for all this land and two houses, she had only to pay \$A32,500.00 (approximately \$US24,375.00 at current exchange rates), an amazing price. Though the place has been on the market for five years, no one wanted to buy it as there was no mains electricity and needless to say no water or gas, coupled with the fact that it was approached by a ten-mile dirt track with two locked gates through Dharug National Park. By contrast, we thought it very nearly perfect and suspected that the local guardians may have been keeping it for us!

The other individual in this first person plural was myself, Khantipalo, who had then been a Buddhist monk for about twenty years, eleven of them in Thailand and three in India. I was born Laurence Mills in Britain in 1932 of nominally Church of England parents, and really took no interest in what was called religion until I read a book on Buddhism while a British soldier in the Suez Canal Zone - an uncommon place in which to be converted to Buddhism! To me, though, it was like coming home, like returning to something very familiar. After joining the Buddhist Society in



Laurence Mills

London, then the only Dharma centre in Britain, and mulling over the Teachings for three years, I decided to become a Buddhist novice, with the Ven. Dr. H. Saddhatissa Mahathera as my teacher. My teacher in Thailand, who is now the Head of the monastic Sangha there, requested me to accompany a senior Thai monk to establish Sydney's first Buddhist temple in 1973.

We arrived here after Ilse had paid for the property, with two or three other people to start a place for practising Dharma. At that time, we thought that what came to be known as 'Wat Buddha Dhamma' would be a meditation centre for holding retreats, and perhaps a monastery for monks and nuns. A third thing happened of itself, as a community gradually grew up. In order to make our activities known and let more Australians hear the Dharma, we published a newsletter, *Bodhi Leaf*, at first handwritten and then typed, appearing twice yearly; and now a well-produced quarterly.

The meditation was at first, like everything else, in this 'top house'. Soon we had a twenty-by-fifty foot hall constructed with our labours. It was a nice building for three seasons of the year, but very impractical for the freezing winters. Its walls were pine trees cut down the middle with a chain-saw, leaving plenty of chinks for the fresh air to circulate. A year or two ago, its walls



were lined and it was divided into four rooms sleeping 32 visitors or meditators. Meditation courses, taught by both of us, attracted between twenty and fifty people, many of them new to Buddhist teachings. Emphasis was placed on sitting and walking meditation, both calm (shamatha, Tib. gzhi gnas) and insight (vipassana, Tib. lhag mthong), with Dharma talks on aspects of mindfulness to encourage practitioners. A good deal was said on loving-kindness and compassion, and special meditation sessions were devoted to its practice. Looking back on this last topic, though there is much need of loving-kindness in Australia, I am not sure that the methods we used were very effective. In these early years, only Theravada teachers were invited - indeed, few other Buddhist traditions were established in

Australia. But in the last year or so, Tibetan lamas from Sydney, Canberra and New Zealand have been invited to teach here.

The community started with a number of devoted people living in ex-army tents and caravans, and grew slowly to the present village of five and a half houses (the half is a cabin). Also in that area down by the road is a bookshop/office and a shower block. Our only casualty among buildings was the kitchen-dining room, built log-cabin style, which burned down one rainy October evening. This needs to be replaced by larger facilities before a really big retreat is held here. We are now looking round for an architect and builders. When they have been found and council approval has been granted, we hope to raise funds through an appeal to the Wat's supporters.

Numbers of people in the community have varied a good deal, with a maximum of about fifteen residents. They always have plenty to do: office, treasury, kitchen, manager, cooking, building, vehicle maintenance (tractor, one 3-ton truck, one station-wagon and one 4-wheel drive) and the job euphemistically described as 'basics' (emptying toilets and lighting the showers fire). One natural convenience which has not so far been mentioned is our swimming hole, about twenty-five feet across on Ten Mile Hollow Creek. It used to be five to six feet deep, but has now silted

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Photo Laurence Mills

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numerous other Trulkors have been developed. The varied Trulkor exercises and Tsa Lung practices including Tummo, a practice for generating inner heat, are considered to be part of the Anu yogas which together with Ati Yoga, or Dzog-chen practices, form the innermost aspects of Tibetan Buddhism. These yoga systems are generally held secret, as was true of the Trulkor Nyida Khajor. Recently, due to concern that this tradition might be lost, some teachers such as Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche have introduced them to the public.

I received these instructions personally from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche during winter retreats held in Conway, Massachusetts, in 1983 and 1984. Later Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche awarded me a teaching certificate, and I have accompanied him on portions of several world tours, teaching yantra yoga. It has been a wonderful experience to travel with Norbu Rinpoche, however, I can recall teaching on many occasions with my heart in my throat as he watched me and made "suggestions". I am not a great practitioner of Trulkor; I have merely done my homework.

The Tibetans have an expression that if there is no wood to burn for fuel you stay warm by burning dung. I am happy to be of help while I can still do the more

strenuous asanas and movements. Even now various aches remind me that Trulkor are most ideally suited for the young, and were often introduced to teenagers in Tibet. It is critical that they be introduced to a new generation soon, as most of the other Yantra Yoga teachers like myself are children of the 60's. Traditionally the masters of yoga prepare their students by recounting tales of other Tsa Lung practitioners. I remember one such story told by Lama Gampo. Two yogis who had already begun to achieve siddhis, or powers, by virtue of their intensive practice were having a contest to see who would leap the highest. Lama Gampo, who at the time was inside the high wall of a monastery, recalled seeing them leaping higher than the walls themselves.

These allegedly true stories with fantastic outcomes have the effect of conveying the power of the yoga practices. When I first heard them they sparked my desire to learn these profound exercises. It was, however, not so easy. Lama Gampo, a master of a tradition called the Longchen Nyinzhik, emphasized that they were secret and never given casually. He himself had only instructed a few heart students, and then only after they had demonstrated their motivation and worthiness by completing preliminary practices, which

included one hundred thousand physical prostrations, one hundred thousand recitations for purification, and other mental and physical exercises which together are called ngondro. In addition, the aspirant would need to receive an initiation on a particular deity which itself was rarely given. If the student succeeded in obtaining the initiation there were subsequent commitments for reciting mantras, as well as pledges to do various other mental and physical training. This was one traditional route for beginning study of the Trulkors. There was also another traditional path towards receiving comprehensive instructions on Tsa Lung. During the three-year retreat, which actually lasts three years, three months and three days, the teaching on Trulkor occurs during the second year.

At the request of the teachers the details of these instructions are secret even today. I have included these brief descriptions of the traditional methods for obtaining Tsa Lung practices so as to emphasize the respect with which they are held within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The decision of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to teach a system of Trulkor was not taken lightly or suddenly. He spent many years in the west without teaching them at all; eventually he introduced Yantra Yoga

exercises to a few students and gauged their effect. Finally, in the interest of preserving the tradition, he held seminars to communicate the instructions in a precise manner.

Shortly before attending one of Norbu Rinpoche's winter retreats in Conway I had the following dream: I was on a vast and beautiful beach. The light and colors were especially vivid. As I walked along the sand I passed different animals - a panther and a lion - who while normally fierce were on this occasion completely lethargic. Beyond the animals there was a gazebo-like pavilion on the sand. I could see through the beautiful blue silken cloth into the pavilion where half-naked yogis were practising yogi-postures. Later when Norbu presented the Yantra Yoga system I recalled this dream, and felt that it had foreshadowed his instructions. The retreat in which this occurred was itself magical. Snowbound in New England, we practised each day in the funky shrine room of the old Dzog-chen Community house. The weather did its best to recreate a Himalayan landscape of brilliant blues and crystal reflections.

Although I have done occasional short retreats and practised the yoga movements and breathing exercises intensively, I have primarily practised while holding a job. On numerous

occasions after completing a long day of work I found that a routine of yoga would be completely revitalizing. I have also noticed that the vividness and clarity of my dreams increases when I practise yoga regularly.

There are many other positive results of doing yantra yoga but by the same token there are some aspects of the yantra system which are seemingly best left for retreat. Intensive practice of yantra yoga makes the mind unusually sensitive, and magnifies both positive and negative emotions.

A friend of mine who is also a lama once remarked that Tsa Lung is a "sharp path", meaning that it can be dangerous when abused. Long-term practitioners frequently know someone who, due to over-zealousness, has suffered "lung" or afflictions resulting from disordering the internal winds.

These warnings as well as my own experience have made me conservative. I see my role as creating a foundation for further study with a master, as well as promoting the benefits of increased energy and flexibility.

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practitioners would also perform treatments or just observe. Large rooms were set up with ten or so tables where patients would partially uncover ailing body parts and get ready for the acupuncturist to come around and insert the needles as prescribed.

On the first day of consultation the doctor performs pulse diagnosis and tongue diagnosis and the number and location of the acupuncture points are decided to be treated during the following "course of treatment" of ten sessions. Depending on the severity of the condition a patient goes through one or more courses.

I had been assigned a particular translator. She would wander with me from table to table following the senior practitioner to observe the treatments, facilitating questions and answers. After a little time of being checked out by everyone, I was requested to perform treatments.

The difference was very fascinating. In the US we engage in an initial consultation that lasts at least an hour and thirty minutes, we may then carefully design a treatment plan. Every time the patient returns we engage in further tongue and pulse diagnosis to elaborate or consolidate the approach.

If someone seeks acupuncture for a shoulder problem we still investigate the person's health profile and there is an urge to offer in-depth treatments rather than a localized approach.

Not so in China: to some extent in a Chinese person's life, going to the hospital is a kind of break in the daily

routine - one gets to meet people and chat, it is a diversion and relief from the rut of a six day working week and very little vacation.

The work unit pays for treatment, so everyone seems to take it in their stride. First one treats the shoulder for a while; ten treatments, one every other day and then maybe more.

When the shoulder is "cured" one may move on to another body part. Some patients would arrive at eight and their treatment would happen at ten. Nobody seemed to mind.

I admired the wonderful needling technique of some of the doctors with 20 or 30 years of experience - very centered and graceful. So that's what I attempted to absorb.

I practised remaining very focussed and still inside while the clutter of life was all around me.

A couple of weeks later I moved on to the Herbal Medicine Department, subdivided into internal medicine, gynecology and pediatrics.

The doctor I worked with there was highly skilled, with 25 years of experience. In one morning from 8 till 12 he would consult with and prescribe for approximately 40 patients. He would do pulse and tongue diagnosis, ask questions about symptoms, do palpation, use the stethoscope and then dictate his herbal prescription to the scribe. Traditionally the scribe would either be a student of herbology or else a young doctor following the senior doctor over a long period of time as his apprentice. Cardiology was the specialty

of this doctor, and within the hospital he would often make use of Western allopathic medical equipment to confirm his diagnosis or success of treatment with Chinese herbal medicine.

After the consultation the patient would move on to the hospital's pharmacy with its seven hundred different herbs. There, one of the many white coated pharmacists would fill the packages from hundreds of drawers, a prescription for a few days at a time.

The patient would have to prepare the medicine anew every day and drink half a cup, twice a day. The flavor is beyond description but whatever one's likes or dislikes, it resembles in intensity (and that alone) the power of the taste of coffee. Patients have called the taste anything from "interesting" to "vile" according to personality.

The prescriptions are based on medical findings that are thousand of years old. In the gynecology department I was invited to do examinations to establish state of infections, size of cysts, stage of pregnancy. It seemed to me a very healthy combination of Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine; each was there to complement, support and facilitate the other. My Chinese language was too poor to discover rivalry between the two aspects of medicine but I was told of competition and antagonism. Human qualities, I suppose.

I took Chinese lessons on a daily basis while I was there.

My teacher was a free-spirited, somewhat unusual young doctor.

Ninety - nine percent of them are very eager to find a way to be sponsored into America. He had completed eight years of training in acupuncture, herbal medicine, Qi-Gong and Tuina (a form of medical remedial massage which is part of traditional Chinese medicine) and very much wanted to broaden his horizons.

I visited several Buddhist temples - small sanctuaries in a busy, buzzing world. Hangzhou features a large, famous Buddhist temple; yet, as beautiful and enchanting as the lay-out and the architecture are, it is essentially inactive. Later I went to a temple in Shanghai, the Long Hua temple, which I visited for the first time, and one could certainly feel the difference.

I visited the 30ft. statue of Guan Yin, the Chinese female deity and burned incense to honour her. I stayed with her for a while side by side with many women praying together.

The temple was very active, and there were many monks practising very familiar rituals and the whole place resonated from the presence of practice. It is hard to live in a country that is so over-populated, with barely any space for individual freedom or creativity. I admired the qualities of generosity and patience I saw in people.

I met really good people and made many friends amongst them.

By the medical profile of the country one can also tell the deep difference between Chinese people and Americans or Europeans.

There are many pain treatments. Skeletal

機

The symbol 机, pronounced gee, represents in the Chinese language both "crisis" and "opportunity". The Chinese understand these situations as one and the same.

muscular problems arise from overwork. Shoulders, knees and back pain develop from heavy labour, day after day, year after year.

Forms of cancer come from very overt pollution. Too many women's diseases develop, from too many abortions. Now I am learning Chinese and my next journey will be into the subtleties. There are so many more things to be absorbed from under the surface!

WAT

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up and needs to be excavated. With only five community members left, due partly perhaps to the change of direction at the Wat, we have barely time for maintenance, not to speak of extra work. Two years ago, we built a new meditation hall, the end of which I can see looking down the track from this house. It took six or seven people working six days a week about seven months to finish. We had extra helpers on some weekends, but without the Buddhist builder who stayed here for the entire winter and spring and gave his services free, we could never have brought the building to a successful conclusion. Everyone agrees that it is very beautiful, a graceful and rather feminine building (Sala is feminine in Pali, as the related la salle is in French). Hundreds of Buddhists of many nationalities contributed to its \$A80,000.00 cost (approximately \$US60,000.00), with almost all of it raised in Australia. About 150 could sit in it on a big course, but on the opening day perhaps 200 crowded in. Dry gardens of raked red gravel surround it as a fire-break. The Australian bush is full of oil-producing trees and shrubs, so that wooden buildings are in danger from fire. To combat this, we have installed a diesel pump and fire hoses around the sala. The wood it is constructed from, cypress-pine, is very resistant to termite attack, a great problem in Australia. Both building and garden grew out of my ideas, which are not derived from any particular Asian tradition. We needed no architect, as our good builder just supervised the whole construction; and as we employed no outside labour, the building costs were kept very low. Now that the various aspects of this Wat have been described, we come to the visitors, many of whom are traditional Buddhists, although some Australians too just come here for the day. Asian Buddhists visit us occasionally, though not every month, in larger or smaller groups. Some are Theravadinis, such as the Thais we see about twice a year, or

Photo Laurence Mills



the very generous Cambodians who sometimes visit us in busloads. Some traditional Buddhists have a Mahayana background (which accounts for the small Kuan Yin on the shrine), coming from Vietnam, Korea or various parts of the Chinese world. The Wat is well supported by all these people, who enjoy their day's outing from Sydney to see 'Buddhism in the Bush'. Australian visitors usually stay for a few days, sometimes weeks, and a few become members of the community for months or years. We have had much help from people like this, who have supplied many skills. Whether these visitors are Buddhists or not, most have an interest in meditation and join in the weekend courses here. A few like to do private retreats, and for them six out of the eight huts are available. The seventh is occupied by myself, while on the other side of the valley Susanya has one. Susanya should be remembered as the one who brought Dzog-chen to the Wat. Having attended Rinpoche's Blackheath retreat in 1987, she came back very enthused. After spending some time away from the Wat, she returned here to manage the retreat huts, the bookshop and Bodhi Leaf. Often I could hear the sounds of her chanting and I wondered what it was all about. Then I started to practise Yantra Yoga with her help; and shortly after this, much to my surprise, went with other Australian Dzogchen practitioners to Conway, the best thing even to happen in my life!

Maybe it was not so surprising. Almost

thirty years ago, I had received initiations from Dudjom Rinpoche in Kalimpong, India. I did very little with these practices and shortly after receiving them left India for my long stay in Thailand. Still, some sort of seed had been sown and was nourished by rather unorthodox (from a strict Thai Theravadin point of view) contact with a Chinese Mahayana master in Bangkok and such activities as translating H.H. the Dalai Lama's Opening of the Wisdom Eye.

During the Conway retreat, which I enjoyed although there was such a flood of new material that mental digestion was sometimes difficult, it came to my mind that now I was a disciple of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche I ought to offer something precious for these very profound Teachings - and knowing that the Dzog-chen Community in Australia was looking for land, why not offer the Wat for this purpose? Of all the places I have experienced in this life, the environment here, both natural and the harmonious one we have created, is most precious to me. When I approached Norbu Rinpoche with this proposal, illustrating it with a few colour photographs, he commented that it could work and that he would be prepared to spend a longer time here in the future. Speaking to the Australian Gakyil, or such members of it as could be mustered so far from home, Norbu Rinpoche recommended doing some retreats here and gradually integrating with the existing structure of the Wat. Since that time, we have held an

introductory three-day retreat restricted to Dzog-chen practitioners and Wat residents, which showed us how compatible the two lines of practice were. A work-and-practice weekend was also a success. By far the best Dzog-chen activity has been the recent (January '91) seven-day retreat, attended by about forty people (though not all were present the whole time), well structured and generally enjoyed by everyone. Some of my old Theravada pupils attended and not only stayed through the whole thing but left very happy to have had this Dzogchen contact. The swimming hole, though not at its best, was much enjoyed during the hot weather, while on the last night, after the Ganapuja, there was a marvellously funny and financially very successful auction raising funds for the Dzog-chen Community's further activities.

During the retreat, the repeated practice first in the afternoon and again the next morning helped acquaint newcomers with Thun and some of the collective practices. Yantra Yoga twice a day in the big shed, morning and evening, was popular and loosened more than a few stiff joints. Chod, which we practised at night after dinner in the Sala, gradually came to sound alive and very moving. When these practices are looked at by someone who has a Theravada background, Chod, for cutting off the ego, sounds very familiar, although the means for doing it must seem rather novel. Instant presence, too, strikes a very familiar note, since Theravada meditation teachers are always explaining mindfulness and full awareness, though the methods to bring it about may be somewhat different in Dzog-chen. Deities, mantras and mudras on the surface of it appear to be more difficult to understand, though in fact a limited range of mantras are used in Theravadin countries. The Ganapuja would also be a puzzle to Theravada practitioners brought up on a diet of strict adherence to the precepts. As a Buddhist monk, a Theravadin when

Asian Buddhists come here and a Dzogchen practitioner at other times, this act takes a good balance to maintain, not altogether easy.

Still, the Dzog-chen Community and the Wat are gradually growing together, not only with the retreats and weekends here but also through involvement of Wat residents with Dzog-chen. Susanya shares her knowledge of Yantra Yoga with people here and all of us meet to do a collective practice on some evenings each week. Two of us, Susanya and I, are on the Blue Gakyil in Sydney and try to attend most meetings.

Norbu Rinpoche has wisely proposed that the existing Theravada tradition should be continued here, and to this end we have traditional chanting in Pali on Saturday evenings and during meditation courses. A few other evenings are devoted to calm sitting, so perhaps with this and the Dzog-chen practices everybody will find something to their taste.

At this moment, our greatest concern is for a few more fairly vigorous people to join the community here as we really do not have enough to run the place well. When those people (where are you...?) arrive then we can start to think about rebuilding the kitchen and dining hall (which could double for other activities such as Yantra Yoga), as well as constructing a workable system of compost toilets. We have plenty of secluded places in which to build the Yang-tig cabin maybe due to our high summer temperatures, it would have to be partly subterranean. Sites for more retreat houses or huts are not lacking, though the person-power is lacking at present. Though this place is not yet formally Dzog-chen land - to be accomplished in future through additional trustees or through incorporation - please consider the Wat as your own. Please come here, see us and help us! As you all know, Rinpoche envisages a Mandala of Gars around the world: with the Wat as the Australian place of practice, it will be complete.

CONNECTIONS

Open a discussion with other members of the Community, express your argument, send a message, ask for advice or share an experience.
Write to: The Mirror, Connections, Casella Postale 47, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy or telephone the office 564-966608 or fax 564-966039.

Happy winner

A few months ago, I received a phonecall from a very excited Patti Chandler, who lives in Melbourne. She rang to congratulate me on winning the lottery, a trip to Kailash with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, the lottery through which Rinpoche raised money for the inauguration of the Gonba and the opening of Shang-Shung Institute. I had forgotten all about this lottery. How could it possibly be me?

It really seemed like I was dreaming over the next few days, as I remembered Rinpoche talking about the lottery at the retreat here in Australia in September 1989. With some effort, as I did not have any income, I managed to buy a ticket for the lottery, on the morning that Rinpoche left Australia. At the time, I was happy to make even a small contribution to the Dzog-chen Community's activities.

Kailash! I hadn't realized that a pilgrimage to Kailash was happening next time Rinpoche returned to Tibet. As the Gaurda flies, Kailash is very close to where I lived in the western Himalayas for three and a quarter years, conducting my fieldwork, early in the 1980s: Karzha Khandroling, Land of the Dakini, also known as Lahul in Himachal Pradesh, India. There I studied within the Drukpa Kargyu lineage. Nearly a year after I returned to Australia, early in 1985, I met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, whose understanding of early Tibetan cultural history helped me enormously with the unsolved questions in my field data. The opportunity to make a pilgrimage to Mt. Kailash and Lake Manasarovar is a great blessing. The opportunity to learn more about the ancient capital of Shang-Shung is also of great interest to me, as I have studied the cultural history of the western Himalayas in some depth.

The possibility of travelling to Tibet with Rinpoche will surely benefit my practice. This possibility has also given me a clear indication of what my future direction should be. Completing the research project on Tibetan culture and society is now to be the beginning of another research project. I intend, in this way, to do something that many people in the community will find interesting, and that furthermore will increase understanding of Tibetan culture and social structure.

I have applied for a Post-Doctoral Fellowship to enable me to continue with academic pursuits at Newcastle University. Such Fellowships are very difficult to obtain, but this would allow me to develop my plan to do some research into Changchub Dorje and Khamdogar, which is the point of this communication.

The lottery win has been the impetus to several things, all still possibilities for the future. One scenario is that I am able to do this anthropological research and also to write a publishable book on my findings. In this way I will be able to use my skills and also share with everyone in the community. This is my idea, and also a way to thanking everyone in the community.

This is what happens when you put your trust in the Guru...but at present, I must finish this thesis!

New South Wales, Australia
March 16th

Lisse Stutchbury

Who has this thank

Who has a good Mandarava thank?

The Merigar Community would like to find a beautiful Mandarava thank.

A baby is born

All best wishes to Nene and Helmut Reile of Todtmoos, Germany, on the birth of their daughter Josephine Sunny Reile,

Who has information?

Is there anyone who has extensive knowledge of the T-shirt business, especially of different printing methods, and is willing to share this information with me.

Contact Prima Mai, c/o Merigar

40 children and more

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe

Who had so many children she didn't know what to do.

She gave them some broth without any bread

Then whipped them all soundly and sent them to bed.

This could be one solution to the problem of what to do with a group of about 40 children aged six months to 14 years for a week or ten days during a retreat. Alternatively you could put them in front of a non-stop video cartoon show, find a white haired granny to read them fairy stories or simply give up and let them run wild.

The question of looking after an ever increasing number of children during retreats is one of the organizational points at Merigar to which we really have not yet found a suitable solution. Up until now one of the biggest problems of child care during retreats has been space - not enough and not suitable. During retreats when the weather is not warm enough to stay outside (Easter and Christmas) we have only the possibility of using the 'old gonba' at the house which is not very big, about 10m by 5m. It is a squash for such a large number of children and a danger for the small ones who risk being run over by the bigger ones. There is no other available space since it is all used for various activities. When the weather is good the children can use the outside space, a gravel parking lot surrounded by cars or the lawn behind the house. This is certainly a better solution to the space problem but entails unnumbered countryside risks without an extremely active and ample supervision. Dangers include falling off rocks, rooves, down the hill, into the pond, unearthing vipers, wandering off on exploratory trips and getting lost and other childhood pleasures.

We expect in the future, finances permitting, to be able to construct an area exclusively for the children, but this plan will take some time to realize. At the moment, the number of children increases proportionately as their need for space.

During the retreats we employ the

services of 'outside' babysitters which is quite costly and we find that three of them is not enough to really take charge of 40 or so dynamic little individuals. Four or five child minders would be better, but again the cost gets even higher. We have similar difficulties on a daily level. When we meet together to practice, either we do our best to integrate with the noise and playfulness of the children, or we stay home with them. Some people who do not have children feel that this question is not important and that since these children are not theirs, neither is concern for them. But the children are an essential and growing part of the community, the practitioners of the future and the means for continuation of the transmission. On a practical level we must move towards a better solution for child care during retreats and during practice sessions. Some of the older children do the practices with us but the little ones just want to play and can be a disturbance to people.

What do you do with your children under similar circumstances?

A Merigar Mum

Photo Prima Mai



Amusement for children

Is anyone interested in coming to Merigar for the summer to run a workshop for children on dance, art, music, or other ideas?

Contact: Cicci d'Arista, c/o Merigar

Ciao bambini

I am writing on behalf of some of the children and parents who live around Merigar in order to present an idea, an invitation to other children and parents in Italy, Europe and around the world. First of all, our situation here in the Merigar area.

The children of the community range in age from a few months up to 14 years. Many of them are from bi-national families and have knowledge of different languages and cultures. Besides this they are fortunate to be in contact with many different types of people through diverse activities at Merigar.

Some of the older children would like to have the possibility to spend part of their summer holidays in different countries or areas of Italy with families of other community people and this little invitation is intended to create some feedback from other parents to see how the idea goes down.

At the moment, we cannot present a precise programme of what we would like to organize until we hear from interested people, but the possibilities are quite vast. We could simply have an exchange programme where one of our children visits a family in England, for example, and in turn the child of the family in England spends some time in Italy. Expenses are minimised this way since the only major expense would be travelling. Some of the families here have not got sufficient space at home to take in a visiting child and would like their child to be able to spend some time abroad without a visiting child in return.

If it is possible to put some form of this idea into practice, we feel it will give the children an excellent opportunity to experience other languages and cultures and to have a greater feeling of independence as well as having a holiday and making friends.

Any interested parents can send their ideas and suggestions to: Liz Granger, c/o The Mirror, P.O. Box 47, Arcidosso 58031, GR, Italy.

Greetings from Japan

Thank you very much for sending us The Mirror. We are especially happy to read the interviews and teaching by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche because they help us in a very practical way.

We are trying to continue the collective practice once a month. Also some of the members of the Dzog-chen Community are attending the weekly teaching on Dzog-chen view (Ita ba) given by Nyi-Icang Rinpoche who lives in Japan and who teaches on a text by a disciple of Mipham Rinpoche. We feel that the Boddhicitta, which is the mother of all the Boddhisattvas and all the Tathagatas, is implanted or awakened in ourselves very gradually.

Nyi-Icang Rinpoche has developed a word-processing soft program of the Tibetan language with the help of Mr. Kelsang (a Tibetan) and Mr. Nirsaku (a Japanese priest). The wordprocessor corresponds with more than 20 languages including Tibetan, English, Mongolian, Italian and Japanese.

If any of the Dzog-chen communities are interested, please write to me, at 7-17-14 Higashi oizumi, Nerima-ku, Tokyo, Japan or directly to the Linguistic Information Research Institute at 4-9-15 Koyama, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

Love to you all

Tetsu Nagasawa

One big family

For several months we have been involved with projects for the children here at Merigar. At the moment we have concentrated our efforts on dedicating Sunday to the children so that we can pass some time together like a big family. The appointment is for every Sunday and starts at 11 o'clock when Alex Siedlecki and the children paint together. Elena, a friend from Castel del Piano plays with the smaller ones while Patrice Bricaire prepares lunch for everyone. I work with the older children putting together a newsletter called Il Vento (the Wind). After lunch Jorg Kollnberger takes the children for a walk in the fields and woods of Merigar. The programme will be diversified in the future and the parents will take turns in developing different activities with the children.

In the future we expect to have a puppet workshop, ceramics and dance. The aims of this initiative are to gradually create a space adapted to the children and encourage the parents to spend time with the children when they are at Merigar. In the last two months since this activity has begun, I have noticed that it has created a great interest in the children who have very rapidly assimilated this habit of being together and playing with the adults. It has also been useful for the parents to spend time together in order to discuss various projects. Patrice Bricaire has been nominated secretary and we have set up a telephone chain of parents which has greatly helped with communication. We intend to develop this project during the retreats so that the child care service can be helped by the creative efforts of the parents. In this way we hope that the children will be able to pass their time more pleasantly at Merigar.

Sicilia D'Arista

FACES IN THE MIRROR

Wilvin Pedersen

I would like to tell the story about me being Wilvin. I was born in Norway, December 1948. I spent my first 7 years in an orphanage, since I came into this world as a so-called accident. Those days, my mother could not take care of me because she had to work, and the only work she got was on big ships going all over the world.

During that time, I used to day-dream sometimes about Tibetan and Mongolian like people on horses who would come and take me away from the present situation. Then I stayed with my uncle and aunt for a year or more before I could live with my mother.

Then, when I was 15, I started to live in my own way, doing whatever I wanted and nobody could tell me what to do anymore. I followed my own voice and started to look in different directions to find my path, but nothing appeared to share my view of being. I started to paint, but that was not enough either. Then, at the age of 22, I moved up into the mountains of Norway with some friends living in the wilderness far away from civilisation. When I was 24 my son Marius was born on the 8th of December 1972. When Marius was nearly one year old, I met Ole and Hanna Nydahl from Denmark who introduced me to Tibetan Buddhism and it was like coming home. All my thoughts of existence in the human condition were similar. Since Marius' father didn't care about this, I went to Copenhagen where I met Tibetan lamas for the first time. I remember I wanted so much to become a nun, and Sister Palmo who was a western nun told me to integrate practice in daily life and if I still wanted to become a nun later, that could be done when Marius was big. I first met Kalu Rinpoche, Tenga Rinpoche and then H.H. Karmapa and Situ Rinpoche. Then coming back to Norway, I got a cabin in the forest of Oslo and started the Ngondro practice, counting prostrations, purification mantras of Dorje Sempa, Mandala offerings, etc., doing it all very fast so I could receive the next initiation. What a game. In autumn 1974 before finishing Guruyoga Ngondro, I decided to join a lot of Dharma people from Scandinavia on a bus to India and Marius was left behind with his aunt. After nearly 3 weeks we ended up in Leh-Ladak which is north of Kashmir, close to the Tibetan border. This was the first year the tourists could enter Ladak, and it was incredible to meet these simple people. We travelled around visiting Hamis gumpa and met Tuxse Rinpoche, who was the tutor of Drugchen Rinpoche, who at that time was very young. I was told that this little Tulku was the head of the Drugpa Kagyupa lineage. This was all just incredible, but coming down from Ladak with the group, I decided to travel alone. The group wanted to go to Dharamsala to meet H.H. the Dalai Lama and I wanted to go and find Khamtrul Rinpoche who I knew was a great thangka painter living in Tashi Jong. But instead of going to Tashi Jong in Kangra Valley, I got on the train to Delhi and was indeed delighted seeing H.H. the Dalai Lama on the same train. Then I went to Darjeeling, feeling this was the right thing to do. Arriving there was like another

beautiful dream. Being a tall Norwegian without too many forms in the right places, Tibetans often thought I was a man, some even thought I was a Lama and this amused me. One day in Darjeeling I wanted to buy a mala and got to know some Tibetans, who told me that their master had passed away recently and that they wanted to give me his mala. Coming to their house I met a princess of Bhutan and she invited me to her house in Bhutan. Not knowing what a great chance this was, I thanked her saying no because I wanted to go back to Norway for my son's second birthday. A little later I got to know that Khamtrul Rinpoche was in Bhutan in the house I was supposed to visit.

Coming home to Norway, we founded the Norwegian Dharma centre Karma Tashi Ling in the forest of Oslo. Working hard to get this place together mixed with Ngondro practice, time passed. During this time Kalu Rinpoche, H.H. Karmapa and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche came. It was great, but I still felt very conditioned. I wanted to go beyond all form, be in the essence, but got caught in formal behavior, a bit like suffocating, not letting go. Then in 1976 I came to Rome to invite Khamtrul Rinpoche, Dorzong Rinpoche and Chogyal Tulku to visit Norway after their visit in Italy.

Coming to Rome with my son was great. We met Norbu Rinpoche for the first time. It was so simple, loving and direct but I was still very conditioned so I did not see all his qualities. After being in Italy for two months I went back to Norway to prepare for the great visit. In Karma Tashi Ling people were busy preparing for Kalu Rinpoche's visit in the winter 1977. Mario Maglietti came with the Rinpoches on a freezing day of January '77. At that time many people were very sectarian so they did not see what a great opportunity it was having the Rinpoches there. The lamas were Drugpa Kargyu and not Karma Kagyud. I remember Dorzong Rinpoche told me to go and practise with the people of Tashi Ling since I also was part of the sectarian way of thinking. He told me to go beyond to see the essence of all teachings. The Rinpoches stayed three weeks in Karma Tashi Ling waiting for the visa to England. During that time Khamtrul Rinpoche and Chogyal Tulku painted the Gomba and the shrine. As I said before the people of Karma Tashi Ling were waiting for Kalu Rinpoche and they did not have money to pay for the Drugpa Kargyu Rinpoches' stay. So I got a job as a nude model in an art

school which paid very well to cover the expenses.

Then again time passed with daily routine and many visitors at Karma Tashi Ling. In the autumn I decided to bring Marius to India to go to Clement Town in Darjeeling. Ven. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche was giving wangs for two months in a Nyingmapa monastery.

Very many Rinpoches, lamas, lay people and some western people came to receive this, a few hundred all together. Both Marius and myself had very good contact with some of the Rinpoches and again later we found out that they were Drugpa Kargyupa.

Then we went to Tashi Jong. Since I had been working for the lamas in Tashi Jong for some time selling paintings, etc., in the west, they insisted on feeding us while we were there. Having tsampa and butter tea and tupa was very nice and also momo which is the best food I know. It was not easy to leave these beautiful people.

Coming back to Norway in May '79, I found that some people of the Norwegian Community had invited Norbu Rinpoche. This was really a great change somehow. His way of teaching, his great compassion and his way of explaining, so people really got to understand the nature of mind and way of being, existence itself, entering into the state, was a new dimension for many practitioners.

Norbu Rinpoche has the great capacity to help living beings, to let them see their unobstructed pure nature of origin, beyond concepts of mind.

Since this is a story I must also tell you that we had a fantastic trip crossing the mountains after the retreat in Oslo. We ended up on the west coast of Norway visiting Marit and Gordon's nice place in one of the fiords. To go there we had to cross the fiord. We were about 15 people, Americans, Italians and Norwegians crossing in this little boat. There was a storm and big waves but with the help of Norbu Rinpoche we all crossed safely. But time means that everything has an end, also this retreat. Then I met Pia and Lama Tobgyal and their son Chang Chub Nyima: Chang Chub Nyima has been recognised by Shakyia Rinpoche to be the reincarnation of Kuntu Lama. So in '81 I was asked by Lama Tobgyal to bring the sealed documents confirming that the reincarnation had been found in Denmark. The lamas in Tashi Jong invited me and paid for my ticket and for one month I travelled around in different places to give this happy news. Then coming back to Norway in the spring we invited Norbu Rinpoche for another retreat. That retreat was held in my home in the forest of Oslo, a very simple little place with no modern facilities. Many Italian people came with Norbu Rinpoche, I am sure many of these beautiful people could tell more about this retreat than I can, since I remember myself as being quite wrathful, cutting through my own ignorance. Anyway this retreat made me see the necessity of moving to Italy, which Norbu Rinpoche approved. So at Christmas '81 my son Marius and me came to the retreat in Sardegna and afterwards we stayed in Italy for some years.

During this time we lived in Formia, in Merigat, Arcidosso and Rome. When Marius was twelve we decided to go back to Norway to make money and go to America. During these six years we went twice to America, doing retreats, and a couple of times to Italy. In Norway, Marius has been studying, and I have been working in theatre and travelling all over the country. Fortunately we are now returning to Italy, and we really look forward to coming back.

Thank you.



Photo Pia Mai

Guru Devotion

Guru devotion can be said to be the art of appreciating the qualities of the enlightened mind. Our root Guru, who embodies such qualities and is a living example, awakens us to its possibility and inspires us in the pursuit. However, we must be aware that it is the enlightened qualities and not the person, that are the focus of our devotion. The image of the Guru is but a catalyst. If it is the man himself that is the focus of devotion then it is limited. It can easily become a form of hero worship and will evolve into a personality cult. Also sectarianism could easily set in and we would then have different fan clubs for different Gurus. The art of appreciating the enlightened spirit is a different cup of tea. Once familiar with it, we become the connoisseur of the enlightened qualities latent in all of us. And being a connoisseur we will be able to recognize and appreciate it in any person, any time, anywhere. It is strictly nonsectarian. The egoistic tendency of asserting the superiority of ones Guru over others would also not exist.

Guru devotion is non-contrived. If we tell ourselves that we must have devotion to so and so, then it is fabricated and is but a form of auto-suggestion. And if we take our devotion too seriously then we will also become tense and gloomy. Our relationship with our Guru will also become heavy and filled with anxiety. One's Guru will also be looked upon as real and truly existing and that will, in turn, reinforce our general misconception of a self.

True devotion only arises after having glimpses of our true nature through the instruction of the Guru and through his blessing. If we do not yet have the glimpse into reality, then there is nothing to shout about, nothing to rejoice about and nothing to be thankful about. True devotion is nothing but our deeply felt appreciation for what someone has done. Such appreciation and inspiration cannot be easily expressed in words so they are simply classified as devotion.

Devotion opens our heart. Or should we say, when one's heart opens devotion dawns. When devotion dawns it will obliterate the stronghold of the ego. When selflessness is experienced directly then the subject and object of devotion also loses its solidity. When we are not so sure of who we are devoted to, who is the devoted one; and when devotion itself become all embracing, it will transcend all our dualistic fixations. Then our naked primordial nature will shine forth effortlessly. When they say, "Mahamudra has no cause but devotion to the Guru is the cause", I think that is what they are talking about.

Opinions of Kunga Legpa

From the Singapore Dzog-chen Community

Photo Peter Silverman



The Plouray retreat

by Michele Lauteri

When Rinpoche announced in January that to inaugurate the Plouray Yang-tig Cabin he would do a retreat there preceded by three days of teachings, everybody prepared to organize a gathering of about a hundred people. In fact, about three hundred people from 17 different countries came, many having heard about it by word of mouth. Not everybody came for the special teachings, some had simply come to meet this Master who is beginning to be talked about on all the paths of Dharma.

The organizers responded to this massive flow of disciples with efficiency. In addition to the dormitory of the Tibetan Center of the Bel Avenir, Druck Toupten Tcheukor Ling, all the boarding houses and other low cost vacation locations in the region were recruited. And since the temple was too small for such a crowd, Plouray's Mayor's Office graciously provided its big meeting hall. All of this did not come about without pain or trouble, with an enthusiasm that generated the best of energies. The participants were unanimous in their praise of the warm atmosphere, as well as of the freedom and responsibility left to each and every participant.

Friday 22nd March at 4 pm., everybody was housed, everybody had had lunch, the shop was open and everyone, whether sitting on a chair or on a cushion, was ready to receive the teachings. Before beginning though, Rinpoche insisted on warning "magical technique" amateurs and other adepts of the supernatural who might have come to find recipes for mirages and illusions. Techniques are nothing if they do not serve the basic aim, progression in the Dharma. Practice in the dark serves to develop contemplation, but lock yourself in the dark with no basis to develop and you are only imitating moles!

In the same way, Rinpoche later made a point for those who lent their ears to rumours. Just because he recognizes that a form of Dzog-chen existed within the Bon tradition even before the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet, does not make him "a Bonpo", those who would like to see him as a shaman are knocking at the wrong door!

Then the teaching was all simplicity. Essential. Power. Autonomy. Presence. Attention. Availability. Communication.

Because of the pressing request of so many students, Rinpoche taught an extra day, Monday the 24th of March to about one hundred and fifty people.

Only eighteen people were able to stay to the end of the week, for twenty-four hours of yang-tig retreat in the company of Norbu Rinpoche. The eighteen had been selected by lottery, made necessary by the high number of requests, and the cabin having only seven rooms.

Then all of us left with the recurring feeling that practice is not the house at Plouray, it is not a temple, not the retreats, not even the daily Tuns. Practice is each day, each hour, each minute, each second, paying attention, integrating presence.



The mandala of Khorwa Tongtruk which places a cause for final liberation for those who see it or where it.

The Easter retreat at Merigar

by Marit Cramner

This retreat in the wonderful new Gomba started out as a practice retreat following the instructions that were given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for the Easter retreat the previous year.

Sessions were based on the regular Tun, practice on the syllable AOM and specific Yantra-yoga exercises.

The practices were led by different people each session, and Cristiana De Falco did an excellent job as a Yoga instructor.

Meanwhile the new people gathered in the Capannone and received instruction from Lama Tenzin Wangyal and Gino Vitiello. After four days we all met together and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

gave teachings for three days.

The more than 400 people who were there had the good fortune to receive two very precious initiations of both Avalokiteshvara and Xitro in the mornings, and the respective explanations in the afternoons.

On the last day we all performed an extensive Ganapuja and as usual Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave a conclusive talk.

Here he reminded everybody to be aware of the aspect of time and apply our understanding of the Dzog-chen teaching as best we could. And especially not to be limited to the concept of practice such as doing a Tun, but with awareness to try to turn every moment of our

daily life, both day and night, into a continuous practice.

In connection with the Avalokiteshvara initiation, he also gave an interesting talk about the importance of collaboration between the Master and students and also between students and students.

Rinpoche talked about how natural it is to have attachments and dislikes, which are often the cause for disagreements and tension. He stressed the importance of being aware of this, and to remember that this can be a great obstacle for our development and that the most common cause of this is pride which is the most outstanding characteristic of the human dimension.

New gakyils

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New library in Buenos Aires

We have a respectable quantity of books in our library.

The library is open every Monday and Thursday in Alejandro Chaoul's house after the practices.

For the moment there are some books in Italian and English. We hope to start translating very soon into Spanish. We will do this together with the community of Venezuela.

There are some books and transcriptions from retreats and talks that have already been translated. We hope to have them available in our library very soon.

Deadlines for editorial material

Articles, interviews, letters, artwork, etc., the 8th of each month.

News, the 15th of each month.

In the last issue, in the article 'Merigar the year 2000', due to wishful misreading, "un prestito", a loan, was translated as "a gift". Merigar 2 still has to be paid for.

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