

THE MIRROR

The international newspaper of the Dzog-chen Community

Volume 1

Issue 9, June 1991

Tsegyelgar

"We bought the 165 acre parcel after extended negotiations with its owner, but it seemed well worth waiting for.

Naturally, we did not think there was a problem with access to it..."

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Tashigar

"...our primary goal must be to develop this internal connection..."

Woody Paparazzo's impressions and thoughts during a visit to Tashigar.

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Merigar

The Merigar summer program which includes special practices

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The Year of Tibet 1991

The Dalai Lama's scheduled visits in several European countries during this summer.

The Path of The Buddha. An exhibition in Helsinki with rare old photographs.

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Dzog-chen Community INTERNATIONAL VIDEO COMMITTEE

Following the International Translation Committee, there has now been nominated an international committee responsible for checking all video related material in the Community.

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A.S.I.A.

Projects in Galeniteng proceed. From A.S.I.A., Giovanni Boni, who is an engineer, Fulvio Rossi, who will document all the work on-the-spot, and Andrea Dell'Angelowill be visiting the projects later in the summer.

On the 19th of August in Chengdu, they will meet Donatella Rossi and Phuntsok Wangmo, Rinpoche's niece and an expert in medicine.

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Individual potentiality

To learn Dzog-chen means to discover our Dzog-chen

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche spoke about Dzog-chen teaching and its goal in September, 1990, at Merigar.



Mani stones in Tibet. Individual stones potentiated by a sacred syllable.

A practitioner interested in realisation must not become passive but be aware and active. Buddha Sakyamuni had infinite wisdom and omniscience, which is total realisation. He said: "I give you the way, but realisation depends on you." The practitioners who are interested must follow the path. In this world there is no Master better than Buddha Sakyamuni, and he could not make other individuals realised. This means that you have to be active; first of all you must understand what the teaching is and

know how to follow it.

In the Dzog-chen teaching knowledge is more important than meditation. Meditation is only a means to reach realisation. Meditation can have different meanings but it is always only a means.

You have to understand well what meditation really is and how it functions, otherwise you become passive. There are many ways, just as there are so many different individuals and different conditions; we have our conditions and our

capacity, and we are all different.

Once we understand what the Master is, we understand what the teaching is. The teaching is a knowledge beyond colour and form. The teaching is a knowledge that the interested people must discover. The principle is not that you go to a Master, and he tells you what to do. We are human beings and humans can reason and speak. When we receive a teaching, it is not necessarily something that we must follow blindly.

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Computer typesyles

Putting the right horse out front in Tibetan



By Reid Fossey

In the last three to four years the Western humanist has taken a leap into the twentieth century. Rather than packing the illustrious scholar's pen and infamous typewriter, the philologist of the future is already astride the "typesyle jockey", using tools of a far more sophisticated nature to create a stock of non-European fonts for languages from Bengali to Vietnamese.

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Tsegyalgar program

August 3rd to 11th: practice retreat on the land in Buckland, based on a retreat schedule prepared by Norbu Rinpoche. Fabio Andrico will be there to teach Yantra Yoga which is an integral part of this program.

We need to know how many people are coming. Community tel. 413 369 4466.

Every weekend work projects on the land: Guardians lha kang and a tool shed under construction; tree pruning; bush clearing. Call the Gekod tel. 413 625 9263.



Spain

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will visit Spain.

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Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will visit Germany.

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Individual potentiality

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche
Merigar, September 21st, 1990

What is Dzog-chen teaching? First of all it says, "Open your eyes and look at what is around you; what the concrete conditions are." In this way you can understand the teaching, the teacher and everything. We must see if the sense of the teaching corresponds to our condition or not, whether it is useful for our existence or not. If someone does not examine this clearly and says, "Ah, this is the fantastic teaching of such and such a Master with this title and name", it means he is passive. We must not be passive because if we are passive we cannot become realized and if we do not become realized we lose a lot of time and we do not have a lot of that.

It is not necessary to be old to die. Everyday there are accidents in airplanes, cars, ships and trains and all the people die. Even if there is not a precise cause, nobody knows what will happen. We live in this circumstance, so we do not have any guarantee that we will live another week or a month or a year. We only believe it, saying, "Next year we'll do this and that" and sometimes we go further and say, "We'll do this and that in two or three years". This is also useful because if I do not live other people will live and things must progress. But deep down we do not have any guarantee. Therefore time is precious, we cannot waste it.

Preparing for life

In the Tibetan temples there is a silken flag called "victorious flag" and colourful ornaments all along the columns. All these ornaments move a little continually and eventually one day they tear away, and then no longer have a purpose. In the same way we pass our lives speaking and then our lives are spent. This is a real pity because we have indeed many possibilities. Maybe we have met real teachings and masters. We have all these possibilities, but we only collect them, put them in a sack and fill it up. Then, while preparing, the end of life comes.

There is a saying of a precious Master of Shakyapa that life is consumed only in preparing. This is true also for spiritual things. If someone is minimally interested in the teaching, it seems he must write a thesis on the teaching. At the most he thinks, "One day I want to do this practice". Tomorrow he repeats this, and the day after tomorrow he continues making a collection believing that he is preparing. In this way a whole life is spent preparing. In the end the next, future life begins before the end of the preparations. And then when he dies, he still has not finished preparing. We must understand this very well, especially in the teaching we do not only have to prepare, but also to apply our own knowledge.

The Dzog-chen teaching asks you to observe yourself, your existence, your limitations and conditions. This is in your interest. If someone discovers his own existence, his own condition and limits, it is better for him. We live in much confusion and we have many problems. Finally, this way, we can discover where these problems come from. This is why we have to work on ourselves, not only looking at others, and reasoning or believing in someone. Therefore during our retreat, first of all we must understand very well what the teaching is. I have spoken of this many, many times, and probably many people



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

who follow me think, "I always hear this", but even if they have heard it, if it does not work it means that they have to listen some more. Even if we do not like to listen, this is exactly what we need to do.

Everyone needs to work a little on himself, otherwise even if we talk about many teachings, it does not mean anything. Many people get interested when they read a mysterious and very elegant title and they say, "We have a fantastic teaching!" But where is its substance? The substance is that it changes. If someone is so interested in titles, why doesn't he buy catalogues? Teaching does not work that way; it must be integrated in the individual himself, and be alive. When the teaching is alive in this way, a title is not necessary anymore.

What is integration

The master gives a direct introduction to the state. What does 'direct introduction' mean? It does not mean reading a book or making a commentary on a book by Garab Dorje or a text like a Tantra. It means touching something as if you were being burnt. This must be understood. Especially people who already know and have followed the teaching may feel, "I am an old practitioner". You really must observe a little what old means in this case.

Each of you should observe your own practice. How do you feel when you meet someone who may be unpleasant or disturbing? Do you really have the capacity to integrate this feeling? Do you feel the same when you meet a person you love very much, such as friends, and when you meet someone unpleasant? If, but with distraction, one hates or gets angry, with presence one is immediately able to liberate this feeling, this means that you are practitioners and that practice is something living in yourselves.

It is not so difficult to understand that the function of the teaching is something concrete. Many people have asked me frequently, "How can I discover if I am realized?" I have said, "You must not worry. If you become realized, you will understand it very well." Before obtaining realization you must develop clarity and you will understand very well that you are getting there even

before you become realized. For example, if we have the capacity to integrate a little or to find ourselves in the state of presence, then it also becomes manifest in our daily life, an aspect of our body, voice and mind. First of all, all our tensions and attachments diminish. There are many practitioners, who instead of reducing or integrating their tensions, do not even discover them. Day after day they accumulate tension and in the end they are ready to explode.

It is true that many practitioners do practice and then they end up with a psychoanalyst, because they cannot explode. It means they do not understand the manifestation of tension, and if they do not discover this in the practice, it means they have to work hard, and understand the teaching well. Many "old" practitioners say, "It is so difficult, I cannot integrate". Of course it is difficult to integrate if one never does it. Integration is not only an idea, or the creation of an idea. First of all one must find oneself in a very precise state of awareness.

Many people may lack a basis from the beginning and, believing they can jump very high, think, "I have understood everything. This is contemplation". And then they jump and arrive at todgal and practices like Yantig and other elevated methods without substance, and what is developing? To grow some flowers in a field you need seeds. First you must sow the field and then you must water it, and then something will grow. If you only believe, "I have sown the seed" and every day you pour water on the field, nothing grows.

Nowadays there are many fertilizers that make a plant become enormous in two days. Some people get these kinds of fertilizers and say, "Ah, this is a Chinese one, that an American one..." Then he uses so much of these fertilizers that nothing grows. A method like the todgal practice is like a fertilizer to develop contemplation, to obtain realization. But if there is no knowledge of contemplation, what can one develop? So, first of all, we need to understand the basis and work with it very well. We must not be confused between an idea and real knowledge. I have explained many times and also given

examples, but it seems many people are not able to understand very well. I do not mean everybody, because there are also many people who certainly understand. If everyone could understand, what a marvellous thing it would be. Also you must not always think that everything is so easy.

Milarepa, after having killed thirty people, felt very guilty and thought, "Oh, now I must go, and do purification to obtain realization, it is impossible to live like this. I have to find a way to become realized". Then it is said that he went to a Master, and the first Master he met taught Dzog-chen. This Master told him, "If you meditate in the morning, you will become realized in the morning; if you meditate in the afternoon, you will become realized in the afternoon." Milarepa thought, "Ah, even if I did so many evil actions, the path is that simple, so there is nothing to worry about". So he stayed for two days with this Master and concluded nothing. Finally also this Master understood and told him, "You had better go to another Master who will give you something harder." And finally Milarepa met Marpa who always tortured him. Then he felt better and finally he managed to purify himself. But you see how many sacrifices he did for so many years. It may be that Milarepa did many evil actions, but I do not think that Milarepa was stupid, and we too must not think that it is so easy. Especially when we speak of a teaching like Dzog-chen, where there is a possibility to reach a certain knowledge and to develop it, this does not mean that we reach this knowledge without doing anything. One must first understand what the Master is communicating to the student, listen to it and understand it well, bringing it into his existence, then it becomes real.

Methods and Dzog-chen

The knowledge of the Dzog-chen teaching must become a part of our daily life. What do we do in our daily life? We breathe, we move and we think. These are three actions in our three existences and these three actions must become integrated into the practice. The practice is not only to sit down and say two or three prayers.

So what do we need to learn when we use a method? For instance if we are going to learn a method of practice and according to this method we must sit in this way and think about this, it means we are working with an experience, trying to have an experience. What is the purpose of this experience? First of all it is to discover knowledge and secondly, when a certain knowledge is obtained, to realize this knowledge. Methods are for nothing else.

So, methods are not the fundamental thing, they are relative. Many people follow the teaching and think it is like a method. That is why people become slaves of method. "A Master gave this method, I follow it, I am a slave of it". It becomes ridiculous because a method exists to help one develop or to give a certain benefit. A method is like a fork to eat, if you have one it is much easier to eat. If we have a steak to eat, we need a fork and a knife, when we have these two it is much easier to eat. But this does not mean it is a principle, this is only to make it easier. Therefore all methods are like forks and knives, or like clothes. When it is hot we wear light clothes, when it is cold we wear something warmer, when it is raining we put on a raincoat. All things are secondary and can change according to

the circumstances, and the same is true of the methods. There are many, many methods, but the most important thing is that a practitioner understands what a method is used for and in which way it must be used. A method always has its own principle, like a way of working with an experience. Many methods do not make it clear. But in the Dzog-chen Teaching you can understand the principle, because knowledge is the principle. Therefore in this way a practitioner does not become a slave of the method, he can use the method. You have learned many, many methods and you have also learnt how to apply them. You must understand their value. Many people come to me to follow the Dzog-chen Teaching. First of all they ask me, "I have followed other Teachings and I have learned other techniques, methods and ways of doing things, but when I follow the Dzog-chen Teaching can I use them or not?" This kind of person has the idea, "Now that I follow this Master, I must follow only the Dzog-chen methods." There really does not exist a label such as the 'Dzog-chen method'. Everything can be a Dzog-chen method. You must understand what Dzog-chen is, we are Dzog-chen. We are not methods, we are beings. We have our state and infinite potentialities. We are trying to discover this potentiality. Then what do we need to discover this? We have many means, and these are methods. Therefore we can use this method or that method. There is no problem. But we must not forget the principle. If we do, we only follow this method and that, jumping here and there. Nothing is concluded. In the Dzog-chen Teaching, first of all we must understand that we have to open our eyes and discover our state. Everything else is relative to discovering and realizing this. It is not necessary to limit anyone.

This is one of the biggest problems of all beings. Most people, especially intellectuals, usually think, "This is so and that is so, it must be that way." In this way they limit everything. It means they never go beyond these limits and always look outside themselves, never at themselves. Thus limited visions develop, so we never discover our real identity, our potentiality. To learn Dzog-chen means to discover our Dzog-chen, that of each individual. Dzog-chen is really this. It is very simple, but also very difficult. If someone knows how to follow a Master, understanding what he is communicating, maybe it is not so difficult to find this state, this knowledge. But it is very difficult if someone believes that he has got the knowledge or feels that he knows a lot about this or that, blocking himself and getting further and further away, instead of discovering it. This means one has to follow the Dzog-chen Teaching very well, very carefully, understanding what we are speaking about and where we want to arrive.

Collaborate!

An extremely important thing I want to say to all the people who have come to this retreat, new ones, old ones, half-old ones, everybody: collaborate! You shouldn't always think, "I only want to listen to the Master". Usually people do not often want to ask other people about the Teaching. Why? Because they think, "He is not the Master. I only listen to the Master." Do you know where this attitude comes from? From that famous Ego.

We think, "I am clever, I am the one
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who possess the knowledge". It's very rare to find someone saying, "I am stupid, I am so limited". This you do not discover. In the Dzog-chen Teaching you have to understand how to observe yourself. Therefore even if someone does not understand something like a method, he can still speak to the people who understand it. Also the "old" people must not think, "Ah, this is a new person. I cannot talk about this, because it is a secret". It is a secret when it is not the moment to speak. But if a person has come here to do a retreat, you must reason a little. What did he come here to do? He did not come here on holiday, but to follow the Teaching, to understand and apply it. Then it is clear he is interested and wants to participate. If he is interested and is participating, why must things be secret? In the Teaching there are some kinds of methods like, for example, the methods of Dzog-chen todgal or many practices of Yantra Yoga, which must be communicated only to the people who have got a very precise and deep basis in the Teaching, because if a person does not have a concrete basis and only reads and does things from the book, then instead of receiving benefit from these methods, one only plays around and blocks his possibilities to realize and develop. Therefore sometimes for these reasons there are some methods which are kept secret until it is the right moment. But to communicate knowledge is not secret. Communicating knowledge is the principle of the Teaching. If it cannot be communicated, why should it be taught? Something needs to be communicated by the Master and also by the students to the students, and so collaboration is very, very important. There are, for instance, many methods like the practice of Yantra Yoga or the sermdzin, which are specific methods to work with experience, that do not necessarily need to be given by the Master. If someone possesses knowledge of these methods, he can always collaborate with others.

Master and pupil

We need to have a precise idea about our consideration of the relationship between the Master and the student. We must not think that a Master is always

someone very exalted, like a commander, or think that whatever the Master says, must be so, closing our eyes and remaining passive. The Master is a person who collaborates. Remember when you take the Refuge, in Sutra Buddhism, you say Nammo Buddha Bhya, Nammo Dharma Bhya, Nammo Sangha Bhya. You take refuge in the Buddha, who is the one who gave this path, and refuge in the Dharma because it is the path and through the Dharma you can obtain realization. Then there is the third refuge, the Sangha. What is the Sangha in reality? Generally Sangha means those who are practising the path, those who are in the same boat to arrive beyond the ocean of Samsara. Then if we are all travelling in the same boat, we must collaborate well. If people create problems because of their egoism and spoil the boat, making a hole in it we will never arrive. This is the principle of Sangha. It means everyone, and the Sangha also includes the Master. It does not mean that the Master is left outside.

So what is a Master? He is someone who collaborates and helps people and his followers should understand this. Deep down we all have infinite potentialities that we may not understand. Perhaps one day we will understand them and obtain realization. In both Tantrism and Dzog-chen Teaching, if we really understand well, we can see all beings as realized beings. This is the real condition. We find ourselves in the relative condition, because we do not understand. We are always distracted.

For example, when you open your eyes and see an object, you immediately think, "Ah, what a beautiful thing" or "I like this, I do not like that". We do this because we are distracted, this is always a manifestation of distraction.

When our senses are in contact with objects and we are distracted, we accumulate infinite negative karma. So even if we have infinite potential, we remain ignorant of the real condition. If all of us really understand what our real condition is, it is not necessary to classify things saying, "This is more important than that." Everything is important.

Edited by Tunda Saarikoski

A.S.I.A.

Projects for Tibetan Culture

by Andrea Dell'Angelo

A few days ago we received the invitation from the Department of Education for Sichuan province to go to east Tibet to visit Galenteng, in Derge where the school and the hospital will be built.

We are still waiting for the invitation to visit Khamdagar village where the other projects will be developed because permission must come from the Autonomous Region of Tibet.

On the 19th of August in Chengdu, we will meet Donatella Rossi and Phuntsok Wangmo, Rinpoche's niece and an expert in medicine. Phuntsok is in charge of supervising the work and coordinating contacts with the local authorities.

In the last few years she has spent a lot of time in Galenteng preparing construction materials and most of all treating the local population. On several occasions Rinpoche has sent her funds for the project and to buy medicine and books. Part of the books have been sent to Galenteng monastery, part to Ralung monastery and part to Merigar.

Three of us will be going to Galenteng from Italy. Giovanni Boni, who is an engineer, Fulvio Rossi, who will document all the work on-the-spot, and myself.

When we arrive in Chengdu we will meet the Chinese representatives and travel together with them in two cars. We will go to Kanding, Derge and then

Galenteng where we will stay for about a week. Then we will continue on to Chamdo and Khamdagar where we plan to stop for a week. Then we will return to Kanding, Derge and Chengdu. On our return to Chengdu we will make a report to the local authorities and then one of us will have to go to Peking while the others come back to Italy.

With the local authorities we have undertaken to begin work on the project as soon as possible and to finish it at all costs.

The Chinese officials have said that if the project reaches its goals they will offer a plaque in honour of Rinpoche.

On our return to Italy we have to prepare the executive project which will include all the costs. This will be presented to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to receive financial help.

As far as the Tibetan Village Project goes in India, as a result of the recent terrible events, the situation has, unfortunately, become even more complicated.

Your help is needed urgently

In order to carry out the projects we need the help of all those who are interested.

On the technical level we are looking for an expert in health projects and a person who can look after filing, addresses and other secretarial jobs.

In the future we will probably need the assistance of doctors who can give short

courses in medicine in the hospitals that will be constructed, English teachers and experts who can teach different skills.

For example, Joe Zurylo at Conway spoke about giving courses in carpentry and for using carpentry machinery. This is a very good idea.

In the future we hope to be able to develop projects for reforestation in several areas in Tibet which have been deforested.

But things will have to be done gradually confirming the trust that the Chinese government is giving us.

Funding

On the financial level we have an urgent need for funds to organize this mission which will cost around 30 million Italian lire and which will include buying books, sending them, etc.

We would also like to take about 10 to 15 million lire to leave with those people who are responsible for the project so that they can buy the materials needed for construction and to resolve various problems.

Donations can be sent to bank account number 3893.50 in the name of ASIA, Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

Further details can be obtained from:

Andrea Dell'Angelo

Via della Nocetta, 65

Rome, Italy

Tel. 06-6261749, 6223329, 5139229.

Shang-Shung Institute



The Shang-Shung Institute in collaboration with the University of Siena is preparing a meeting to organize a series of courses on culture which will be held both at the University and at the Institute in Arcidosso.

The Mirror: now

This present issue is more or less the third of a new phase. We have solved some problems, we have not solved them all. What has changed is the paper, which is now recycled and unbleached. Also The Mirror is carrying news of the Community from all parts of the world. That has only been possible because of the active response from Communities worldwide. Some big problems remain to be solved, hopefully new suggestions will also come about how to solve them.

The first, at least in a practical sense, is the mailing. Since The Mirror is made in Italy, which is Norbu Rinpoche's wish, it is also printed in Italy, and thus mailed from Italy. The Italian post is unfortunately not known for its efficiency and we have been told that sometimes it takes more than a month for the newspaper to reach the reader. There are possibilities, so far not thoroughly studied as the world is rather vast: could the newspaper be done in Italy but printed in some other country, where distributing would be faster and maybe also the

The courses should begin in January 1992 and are intended to provide a fitting cultural and scientific tool to approach western material in order to guarantee increasing basic and specialized knowledge of the base and specialties thus widening the field of reference for those in attendance.

The courses will be the following:

- 1) Tibetan Medicine;
- 2) Tibetan Language;
- 3) Iconography and History of Tibetan Art;

4) Tibetan Philosophy and Literature;

5) Esthetic theory of East Asia;

6) Comparative Arts and Poetry.

The course in medicine will be given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and will include a residential period (full immersion) which will last for a month. Adequate parts of the course will be dedicated to the study of Tibetan language knowledge which is considered indispensable for in depth study.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Spain

September 27th to October 6th, 1991

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will give Dzog-chen teachings in the south of Spain next autumn. There will also be sessions of Yantra Yoga, video projections and may be also the Vajra Dance. Barry Simmons will give a talk on Dzog-chen and Therapy. The location is a secluded complex in the mountains close to the town of Turre only 10 kilometers from the sea, about 1 hour drive from Almeria in the north and about 3 hours drive from Alicante in the south.

The complex offers 40 to 50 rooms each with 3-5 beds. Each room has a bathroom and shower. There is also a dormitory and the possibility to camp in tents or caravans.

The complex also has a refreshing Olympic swimming pool.

Prices per day are:

3.000 Spanish pesetas for a room sleeping 3-5 people (full board)

2.500 pesetas for a place in the dormitory (full board)

2.000 pesetas for a tent (full board).

To cover organizational costs of the retreat a participation fee of 2.000 pesetas a day is requested. Members of the Community can pay a participation fee of 1.500 pesetas per day.

In order to be able to organize the retreat, it is very important to make an advanced booking of 50 American dollars or the equivalent. This amount can be sent by international money order or by cheque (in the currency of the country of origin) to the Comunità Dzog-chen, Merigar, Arcidosso 58031 GR, Italy. A note should be attached specifying that the amount is for the retreat in Spain.

For further information contact Anna Eid at Merigar.

mailing cost lower?

If this makes an idea rise in your mind, here are the facts: we use an Apple Macintosh Page Maker program; we have a modem; every page is completely ready for the printer.

Another problem, maybe bigger than the mailing, is the financial one. There will be a time, only short we hope, when finances may risk the continuity of the newspaper. The Merigar gakyil has supported The Mirror, but another system should be found, for although the publisher is formally the Dzog-chen Community of Merigar, that is only nominal: the newspaper is in English, not in Italian, its circulation is mostly outside Italy etc. Could gakyils or gars internationally divide the burden? Firstly it would not be heavy for one single gakyil and secondly, might not a temporary responsibility like that make Community members feel even more strongly that the newspaper is their own?

The editorial staff in the "Capannone" at Merigar are now heading towards a stable schedule:

to get the news to you regularly every month. The fax is busy, the computers sing, but where are the photos? Do you have a good photo of a retreat, of Norbu Rinpoche, of the Vajra Dance, something that interests us all?

We in the Capannone feel good and optimistic. We have had much support, too, the most important from Norbu Rinpoche, who always stresses the importance of The Mirror as a means of communication; and Hamid Assem, who had the energy to create something out of nothing and who is now acting as editorial adviser, with Giovanni Arca and Anna Eid, the three coordinators between The Mirror and the Community in general; welcome support has come from Kathy McGrane in California, in the form of faxed suggestions for the lay-out; news comes, articles are received. We have a strong feeling that the most important prerequisites are there to make The Mirror live and develop also for the next generation of the Dzog-chen Community, and the next. In all the world.

Azamgar development plans

by the Azamgar Gakyil

This is going to be a decisive year for the future of Azamgar.

At the moment we are developing plans to complete the house which will be used for personal retreats. When it is finished it will consist of four rooms, each with a separate entry. Work on the roof has nearly been completed but there is still a lot of work to do such as fixing the walls, dividing the rooms, putting in windows and doors, paving the floor etc. And there is a lot of material to be transported. For this we will have to rent a helicopter.

The estimated total cost will be about 15 million lire, keeping the costs to the minimum.

We have got about 7 million in funds. At the same time, the last inhabitant of Battura, Mr. Pierino, who owns three houses in good condition, woods which can be used for their firewood, and some land, has decided to sell the lot for 34 million lire.

Obviously we are going to negotiate to buy this property since it is better not to miss the chance which will allow us to have the whole area of Battura (Azamgar) as a secluded place, ideal for retreats for numerous practitioners.

Even though the funds we have at the moment are not enough to undertake both projects, we have decided to buy Mr. Pierino's property.

For this, we really need some money.

We are considering the possibility of loans or other forms of income or financing.

But in particular we want to ask those people who promised to give their quota of a million lire to Azamgar to keep their promise and give their quota. Those who have given it could, if they wish, give another quota or part of one.

Payment can be sent by bank transfer to Istituto Bancario San Paolo di Torino Filiale di Canelli, account no. 5158 in the name of Giuseppe Calasso, Regione Montaldo 43, 12050 Carmo CN, Italy.

We are relying on the sense of responsibility of practitioners and hope that everyone will do their best.

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal goes to USA

A year at Rice University, Houston, Texas

The Mirror

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal has recently been informed that he has been granted one year's research scholarship by the Rockefeller Foundation in the USA. Last year Geshe Tenzin visited the USA twice, and on his first journey there he was invited by Professor Anne Klein of Rice University to visit and lecture in Houston. Now Geshe Tenzin Wangyal will go and to do his research there.

"Mainly I shall be working on my own research, on the topic of my Ph.D. thesis that I'm doing for Oslo University in Norway. Ancient Tantric Deities of Bon is the topic and also the title of the work I am doing," Geshe Tenzin Wangyal says. "With Anne Klein we also have a plan to work on texts concerning the logical aspects of Dzog-chen, that is Dzog-chen logics. This is a separate project on behalf of Rice University."

"The third thing I want to do is to teach people interested in the Dzog-chen teachings. There are a few people around Houston, also some professors of the university itself, and some practitioners from different parts of the USA who have already been in contact with me in order to organise retreats. I have seen some very beautiful places, for instance in Arizona, where I'd like to do retreats, but it is too soon to say anything as the plans are still quite open."

Before going to the USA, in the

second week of August, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal will continue working at ISMEO, in Rome, to get his cataloguing work to a good point. For two years he has been sorting out complicated Tibetan texts that nobody has yet put in order; they consist of loose folios or texts without titles, also of Bon origin. He has already finished this work, and the texts will be listed in the general main catalogue of Tibetan texts of ISMEO. He has recently started cataloguing the most important tantric texts of the Nyingma school, the Nyingma Yungbum. This work he wants to continue after a year in the USA.

"Before I knew that I should get the scholarship I had planned to go to Australia, New Zealand and Singapore. Unfortunately there is now not enough time before going to America," Geshe Tenzin Wangyal says.

"In May I was able to finish the teaching that I had begun of the Zhang Zhung Nying Tig in Bari and Venice, in Italy. This summer I shall still do a couple of retreats in other European countries. There will be a retreat in Austria, in July, from the 13th to 20th. After that in Finland, from the 21st until the 27th, and from Finland I shall go to Yugoslavia for six days to teach outside Belgrad."

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal's future plans at the moment are to come back to Italy after one year in America, to continue his work at

ISMEO, Rome, and to become more involved in the development of the Shang-Shung Institute, too.

"Norbu Rinpoche wants me to work continuously at the Shang-Shung Institute, and that is what I shall do. So, at the moment I plan to live in Italy and maybe spend some periods of the year at Rice University to continue the work with Anne Klein," Geshe Tenzin says.

"The Lithuanian Institute of Buddhist Studies and the Polish Dzog-chen Community wanted me to come to Lithuania and Poland, which was impossible for the moment because to get the visa would have taken too much time. In the future I would like to go there and also to other Soviet countries, for I have seen that people there have a real need and want for the teaching. I was in Bulgaria some time ago, and more than 500 people came on a normal Monday to listen to me. In the end someone shouted, 'Please come back, we need you!' For more information about Geshe Tenzin Wangyal's retreats in July in Europe: Austria, contact the Dzog-chen Community in Austria; Finland, contact the Dzog-chen Community in Finland; Yugoslavia, end of July, contact the Community in Belgrad, Yugoslavia. You will find the addresses on page 16.

Rice University, c/o Prof. Anne Klein, Dept of Religious Studies, Box 1892, Houston Tx 77251, USA

Impressions of Russia



by Fabio Andrico

Here I am in the famous Baltic city of Riga.

When I arrived in Leningrad, the people here told me that they had decided to start the Yantra Yoga courses here in Riga because at present the political situation was fairly calm.

In Leningrad I met about 15 people of the Community and after a night's rest I left for Riga by train. I was accompanied by Vladimir, who inspired and started the Community here in the Soviet Union. Before leaving, however, I visited the Hermitage and the Leningrad Museum. Vladimir and I took a sleeper on the night train, a trip of twelve hours.

There were several things that immediately struck me during our trip. There was little illumination in the dark night, the stations were dimly lit with yellow lights and fires. The almost total absence of music which we are so used to hearing from houses, shops and cars. Here there is almost no music. There are no shop windows. The shops do not display their goods. They keep them on the shelves inside. Outside the shops, a sign indicates the type of goods a shop has.

The weather isn't very cold, but it's raining. People say that the cities are very polluted and it's probably true. From time to time I can smell smoke and coal in the air.

The people of the Community here have been very kind to me and given me a lot of attention. Life for them is not very easy and they just manage to get enough to eat, and that's not much. In comparison Argentina seems like another Switzerland!

Their spiritual history hasn't been very easy either. Their Master Dandaron was in prison for many years, and during his last imprisonment, he died. The people of the Community here feel a very strong link with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and the Dzog-chen teaching. They see Norbu Rinpoche as a pure continuation of the teaching of their Master and they have a real and sincere interest. They are very serious and have a profound respect for the teaching.

Anyway, I am here in the fog and the rain trying to do my best to honor the commitment I have assumed, with respect for the sense of the Teaching.

Interreligious Studies in Florence

by Pia Barilli

On the 15th of May, "A Meeting for Peace", an interreligious celebration, took place in Florence, Italy, to commemorate the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama there exactly a year earlier. The meeting was held at the Abbey of San Miniato al Monte and presented by Don Cristoforo, who is one of the monks.

Besides the Benedictine monks of the Abbey and many lay people, there were also Tibetan monks from the Florence Mahayana Centre, the Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa at Pomaia and the Centro Kunpen Lama Gancen in Milan, as well as people from many other centres present for the meeting.

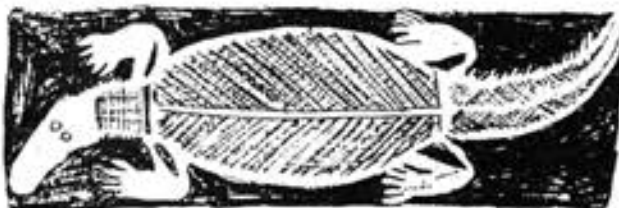
As fruit of the Dalai Lama's visit the year before and the appeal by the Holy Father during the Gulf War, the idea to found a Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies for a New Humanism at San Miniato has now become concrete. The new Centre will be a point of encounter where various faiths and cultures can debate and listen to dialogue and a section will be dedicated to interfaith studies for world peace.

The Centre will offer a programme of high quality lectures and encounters within limited study groups.

In the future, the Centre intends to develop two projects: urban planning in a holistic sense and a 3 day healing service at the end of September (as yet unconfirmed).

His Holiness the Dalai Lama sent a telegram for the occasion expressing his happiness about a meeting for peace. "The human mind is so varied that different religious evolutions have been created according to different necessities. We are all searching for happiness and peace of mind and the main obstacles are egocentricity and attachment. In this way each religion has its system to struggle against these problems."

The Melbourne Gakyil



The Melbourne Gakyil in Australia has informed us of up and coming activities there.

Fabio Andrico's visit will take place from the 20th of September to the 3rd of October. The proposed program is:

1st weekend, September 20th to 22nd: public session

Friday evening: introductory talk

2 days of Yantra Yoga teaching for beginners

Tuesday 24th to Thursday 26th, evenings: the Vajra Dance (for the Community)

2nd weekend, September 28th and 29th: Community rural retreat

Next stage of Yantra Yoga

October 1st and 2nd, evenings: the Vajra Dance

Australia

The Australian Community, with the inspiration of Sue Fielding, has raised 380,000 lire for the Khandogor Nunnery Project.

There is a house for sale at the Wat Buddha Dhamma.

The Sydney and Melbourne Gakyils are looking into the possible purchase.

The purchasing of this house would provide a space at the Wat dedicated to the Community and its particular character since the Wat now provides a base for retreats.

Tashigar and other thoughts

by Woody Paparazzo

In December, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave a retreat at Tashigar in Argentina. Jim Smith and I went as representatives of Tseggyalgar.

There were about 200 people in attendance. Perhaps 50 were members of the Argentina Dzog-chen Communities of Buenos Aires and Cordoba. (There are communities each with its own Gakyil in these two cities.) The rest were truly from around the world - Italy, Norway, Poland, England, Germany, India, Chile, Venezuela, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, USA, etc.

Emerging from the wealth of impressions presented to me during this visit, which was particularly meaningful since it was my first experience of foreign travel, is a thread of thoughts relating to the interrelationship of the Teacher, the Teachings and oneself.

During the retreat, Rinpoche spoke often about the role of the Dzog-chen Community relative to the preservation of the Teachings for the future and the responsibility we share as practitioners.

He spoke about the portion of his book, "Santi Maha Sangha", which he wrote some years ago, but which was only recently translated. It explains Rinpoche's ideas about how communities should function, the principles upon which a Gakyil is founded, and how preparations can be made to carry the Teachings to future generations. As he explained, this is not merely an abstract thought. Consider, for example what the

future will hold for our own children. Rinpoche urged everyone to become familiar with these ideas in order to collaborate better.

I also became very much aware of the fact that the form of Rinpoche's interactions with his students has gradually changed over the years. Happily, Rinpoche can now conserve his energy by teaching during short sessions and resting privately much of the time. Those students who remember times past when Rinpoche spent endless hours with his students talking, playing and teaching informally, naturally long for those days of unlimited contact with the Master, but certainly we all recognize the benefit of the new format to Rinpoche's health and well-being.

Now we understand that Rinpoche may be away on personal retreat for sometime, and there are indications that the form of interaction with students may be different than in the past. Altogether these impressions have brought me to ponder the role of Teacher, the relationship of the student and the Teachings, and to contemplate impermanence in this regard.

I and several others in the Conway community know well the experience of separation from the Teacher. I dedicated myself for over 12 years to the teachings of the Andersons. My mind was indelibly marked by this experience and when the time came that our group broke apart and our Teacher became infirm, I was left with precious little which I could truly call my own. I



The main building of Tashigar

came to realize that much of what I took to be dedication to the Teachings was nothing more than ideas, attitudes and lofty conditioning. I had learned useful skills to help increase awareness and, in general, had restructured my thinking in ways that conformed to a more reasonable view of life.

Still, I realized that if the moment of death were upon me, my level of being remained essentially unchanged. Perhaps we could all benefit by observing carefully our condition in order to ascertain with some degree of impartiality where we truly stand. Of course, there is nothing better than enjoying contact with the Master and the feeling of contentment which comes with

sharing his energy and vision. But I believe we make a mistake if we do not recognize that our relationship to the Teachings is not defined by our outward relationship with the Teacher. In fact, it seems to me that passive reliance upon the Teacher only impairs our growth.

As Rinpoche has often said, for us the Master is more important than even the Buddha. This is because the Teacher is our living connection with the Teachings. The Teacher transmits knowledge to the student and the student develops this transmission through his or her practice.

But unless the student can become self-sufficient, realization remains only an idea. The Master lights a

flame within us and we must protect and nurture it ourselves.

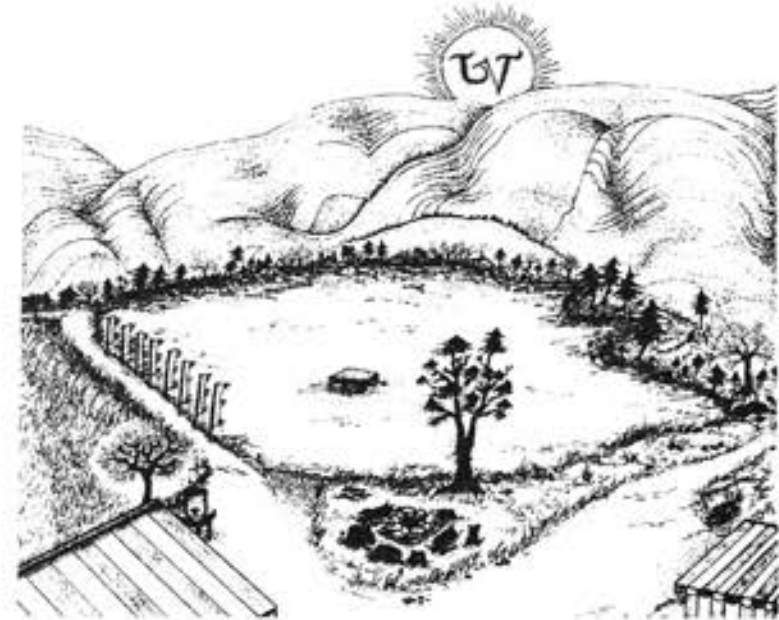
I have recently come to understand, with greater clarity, that the potential of the Teachings lies in our own inner understanding. This is the point of contact through which our real knowledge grows. What matters most is our ability to maintain this connection through the course of our daily living.

Sometimes we have the attitude that the Teachings are something outside of ourselves which we need to immerse ourselves in until we are somehow transformed. This inwardly passive act of immersing ourselves is sometimes taken as "practice".

But, I believe our primary goal must be to develop this internal connection to the best of our ability. Every moment in which we maintain the immediate presence of the Teaching through our awareness helps purify our condition and diminish our distraction.

Here in Tseggyalgar, we have begun to meet together on a regular basis and exchange our experience of practice and our relationship to the Teachings. This has been invaluable. I believe that in this way we can actually be of benefit to one another. By communicating on this level, we develop and maintain the transmission of the Teachings in a concrete way. We become more than just an association of people who follow the same Teacher. The Teachings become something living between us which we share and develop.

The road to Tseggyalgar



Tseggyalgar

by Laurie Marder

When our community sought land a few years ago, we were looking for a quiet, out-of-the-way place to hold our retreats, having outgrown our house in Conway. We needed a place with a private, natural setting. We bought the 165 acre parcel after extended negotiations with its owner, but it seemed well worth waiting for. Naturally, we did not think there was a problem with access to it, as the public had gotten to it and the Mary Lyon's Birthplace (the old homestead site of the founder of Mount Holyoke College) by car for many years. It had been used, with the owner's permission, for swimming, camping, skiing,

horse-back riding, hiking and snowmobiling. We were aware that it would be a loss to the people of the area, if we no longer let them use the land. So we told people that they were still welcome to use it, as they always had, as long as we were not there.

We attempted to get to know our new neighbors before the first retreat on the land in 1989 by having a "pot luck" picnic with them. Only a few people came, and though they were friendly, they later felt that we had been trying to mislead them about how big our retreats were likely to be, and what our intentions are in general. To put their concerns in perspective, this area has a lot of spiritual

communities, tucked away in the woods, and occasionally one of them will go public in a big way, and build a Shupa (the Peace Pagoda, in Leverett), start buying buildings and businesses (the Renaissance Community, in Gill) and attract a lot of attention and strangers to the area, which the local populace finds disturbing.

To be concrete, the main problems of the retreat ended up being the traffic and the condition of the road. The neighbors said they felt the quality of their lives had been drastically altered by our presence, and they felt helpless and angry, because they chose to live in this isolated spot for the same reason we chose it - because it was quiet. Obviously, it is no longer as quiet with our preparations for retreats, construction and practice weekends.

We have made several attempts to set things right. After asking to join the Mary Lyons Road Association, the neighborhood group which maintains and makes decisions about the road, and receiving no response, we assumed as much responsibility as we could, repairing potholes and ruts.

The question remained, what could we do to lessen traffic near these homes during our two week 1990 retreat? Our solution was to get permission to park most of the cars at Mohawk Trail Regional H.S., and hire buses to take people to a drop off point nowhere near our neighbors' homes.

We then got permission from a landowner to cut across his land on foot, thereby bypassing entirely the end of the road where most people live. The

only vehicles we allowed to use the road were cars or trucks carrying several people, supplies, children, or the infirm. There were a few exceptions. We also posted signs asking people to drive slowly, as well as periodically making announcements to that effect. These measures worked well.

As we do not have a campground permit, however, it was necessary for everyone to leave at night, and return in the morning. This meant that there was always, for those two weeks, traffic at certain times of the day.

I don't think that any of our gestures of goodwill were acknowledged or noted. As those of you who attended surely recall, we had to cross a picket-line to get to the land each morning, and on a few occasions had to call the police to get barricades removed from the road. Tensions have not lessened. Our neighbors have continued to complain about our presence on the land, as well as expressing concern over environmental issues.

At the annual town meeting in Ashfield (the town which controls access to our land because the road passes through it on its way in), they requested the town to discontinue or abandon the road. This would have made the road private, and would have been up to those abutters to decide who could use it.

On the advice of our lawyer, we told the town of Ashfield that we would hold the town liable for the full price of the land, \$165,000, if this came to pass and we were thereby denied access to our land. This tough stance did make an impression, and though we regretted the

necessity of it, it made the vote swing heavily against discontinuance (92 to 15).

The town may consider discontinuing maintenance of the road, which it basically already had many years ago, or discontinuing the road in such a way that it is still open as a right-of-way, to eliminate the town's liability in case of an accident. It is now official that we are legally entitled to use the road, unless there is some further action.

Now that we find ourselves in this situation, we have no choice but to continue to work with it and with our neighbors.

We are looking for ways to find a common ground. It is not a question at this point of whether or not they have a valid grievance, or whether or not we are disturbing them.

There is nothing we can do to change anything, short of putting in a new road, an immense project that would require a lot of money. We have a very good lawyer, in case we need one to protect our rights further. And we will be on the lookout for new road possibilities, but that is not a very likely resolution.

We are glad to be able to host retreats in Buckland, so we hope that in the long run, as our neighbors come to know us better as a community, these tensions will ease. We would of course be happy to answer questions about the situation, and take suggestions. So, don't hesitate to write if you have ideas!

Laurie Marder c/o Tseggyalgar PO Box 277, Conway, Mass. 01341 USA.

Thayer Street Associates

A Construction Company with a Difference

by Des Barry

In 1985 three people of the Conway Dzog-chen Community had the idea of forming a construction company in a partnership. The company was not formed as an official part, or off-shoot, of the Dzog-chen Community, but was a private enterprise on behalf of the individuals concerned. The ideas behind the company, however, were very much the product of the practice and lifestyle of the partners, who had known each other since the early days of the Anderson Gurdjieff group.

The founder members of the company were John Foster, Vern Harrington and Joe Zurylo. The first jobs that the company undertook were in the Amherst area, and gradually the company's reputation grew for quality work at a good price. Among the many concerns of TSA, apart from making money in a competitive market, was to use the company as a means to contribute to the Tsegylgar Dzog-chen Community. This was accomplished in a variety of ways.

For one thing, a great deal of building material was donated to the Community when there were work projects going on to repair and restore the old house in Conway. Tools were loaned to those who came to help who were not carpenters, in collaboration with the other construction workers of the Community, notably Ernie Renner, Jim Smith and Woody Paparazzo. Shelves were built, bathrooms improved, and various repairs and improvements made to the Yangtig cabin. The building of Rinpoche's cabin on the new land was also a result of the collaboration of all the construction workers of the Community, not only Thayer Street Associates.

As the company became established and started to grow, it became a source of employment for many in the Dzog-chen Community. Ernie Renner joined the company in 1987, as a partner and remained with TSA for about a year before setting off on his own again. The company logo - a triangle with the letters TSA, and a very discrete gakyil - was designed by Kathy Smith, who also works as a laborer for the company from time to time. Gaby Harrington worked with the company, suffering the eternal itch of installing fibreglass insulation, in the hot and stuffy attics of Amherst. On arriving from Italy in 1986, your reporter found himself employed as a



laborer by the company within three days of arriving in Conway - a phenomenal shock both physically and culturally. Paolo Simonato, likewise, was drawn into the fold, to be unleashed on massive demolition projects, hair raising roofing stints, and hammer flailing framing jobs, when he landed on Columbia's shores and decided to stay to sample the American style of life.

Another way that the company decided to make a positive input to the Dzog-chen Community was to give your reporter the opportunity to work as a paid translator, one day a week. In this way I was able to translate the English version of Norbu Rinpoche's root text of Santi Maha Sangha, and Rinpoche's work on the Bardo Thodrol. Santi Maha Sangha has been published by Shang Shung Editions, and the Bardo Thodrol, we are trying to make available through Station Hill Press, in the near future.

In 1989, Jim Valby joined the company as an accountant. Such was his expertise that he took years of amorphous paperwork, and sorted and galvanised it into a real set of account books, acceptable to even the most meticulous of mathematical wizards.

This dazzling heirloom of accountancy he has passed on to me, so that I may wade through the miasmic wonderland of computer spreadsheets, ledgers and job cost accounts - mazes and labyrinths worthy of that great imagist writer of Argentina, Jorge Luis Borges.

Jim worked at TSA on a part time basis while he continued with his "hobby" of translating texts from Tibetan to English. Because of the availability of office equipment such as the computer and the fax machine, the office of TSA has become an important hive of international and intercoastal communication for the Dzog-chen Community.

The vision of the current owners and

partners of the company, Vern Harrington and Joe Zurylo, and the previous partners John Foster and Ernie Renner, has made Thayer Street Associates into an enormously beneficial organ for Tsegylgar, and many people of the Dzog-chen Community.

Vern and Joe are two very different kinds of people, but make a combination of energies that keeps the company moving in the right direction.

Jim Valby's expertise - brought with him from a multi million dollar construction company - ironed out many aspects of job costing, taxes and overheads. Vern takes care of finding the jobs, liaison with sub contractors, and generally making sure that the customer is happy. From time to time, he does strap on a tool belt and hammer nails along with the carpentry crew, who are employed as sub contractors, and are generally not part of the Dzog-chen Community.

As a counterpoint to Vern's public relations and marketing, Joe takes care of on-site supervision, and a large share of the physical work of all major construction projects, including excavating, concrete work, framing, siding, and anything else of the hundred and one problems that arise every day in the world of construction, that give ample illustration of the first noble truth.

Because of the partners' commitment to the teachings, those who work for Thayer Street Associates can be sure that when there is a major retreat at Tsegylgar, there are no problems of having time to go; and also there is plenty of flexibility for finding time to do personal retreats. There are very few companies in the world with a similar vision.

The company has certainly gone through many changes.

Financially, it has grown and shrunk and grown again, along with the tides of the economic times, and the fortunes and misfortunes of particular projects. As in any human endeavour, there have been moments of stress and tension, but everyone of the Dzog-chen Community, who has been associated with the company has had a work experience that is unique.

TSA has been a place where many of the community have been able to put the teachings into practice in everyday life, combining professional and competitive construction projects, in the tough market of America, while maintaining awareness of the real situation.

Merigar program SUMMER 1991

June 21	10 & 16	Guru Rinpoche day. Namkhai 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	Full moon. 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 7	19	Dakini day. Long Tun with an intensive practice of Ekajati.
July 11	8	Full moon. Six Lokas Purification.
July 13-14		Karma Yoga.
July 15	19	Anniversary of Dharmachakra. Ganapuja.
July 20	18	Practice retreat starts.
July 21	3.30	The anniversary of Padmasambhava. Long Tun with Guruyoga of Padmasambhava.
	19	Ganapuja with intensive practice of Long Life dedicated to all Masters. Continuation of the practice retreat.
July 22-25		Practice retreat.
July 26	10 & 16	Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche will give teaching on Judlen.
July 27-28		Judlen practice.
August 3-4-5	10 & 16	A course of the Dance of the Vajra.
August 5	19	Dakini day. Ganapuja.
August 10-11		Karma Yoga.
August 10	7	Full moon. Purification of the Six Lokas.
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 25	8	Full moon and Anniversary of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso and Pema Karpo. Long Life Practice.
August 31		End of practice retreat.
September 1		Karma Yoga to revitalise Merigar.

California Community News

Land update

The California Community is in the process of selling their land. Many people have responded to an ad placed in the newspaper.



Practice weekend

The California DzogChen Community will have a Practice Weekend at the Jikoj Zen Center in the Santa Cruz Mountains, Friday, June 14th at 6:00 pm to Sunday, June 16th at 5 pm.

The cost is \$50 including food for overnight. \$15 per day for day use including food. Please call in advance: Kathy McGrane at 415-548-2024 for information and registration.

Upcoming practice dates

June 24. Monday. Gakyil meeting at Margret Bradford's.

70 Flora Court Pleasant Hill, 415 798-8748. Potluck 6:30, meeting 7:30pm.

July 13. ALL DAY practice at the Illgen's in Sonoma. 19100 Old Winery Rd. Sonoma. Call Marsha at 707-996-8955.

Aug. 8. Thursday. Gakyil meeting at Carol Field's, 755 Euclid Ave., Berkeley.

During the period of August 27-September 10, Fabio Andrico from Italy will be visiting us to teach Yantra Yoga and the Song of the Vajra Dance. Special teaching of the latter for Norbu Rinpoche's students and general public Yantra Yoga classes as well.

Yantra Yoga Classes: Taught by Eugenio Amico ongoing in San Francisco. Call Eugenio at 415 586-2703 for information.

Computer Tibetan

Steve Goodman (415-653-3872) is selling a Tibetan-English Dictionary for computer (PC) which has 35,000 words. Call him for information.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Germany

September 13th to 15th, 1991

September 13

Public lecture on Tibetan Culture, Cologne.

September 14

Morning: Dzog-chen Teachings at Kamalashila Institute, Schloss Wachendorf, 5353 Mechernich, tel. 02256-850.

3.30 pm: "Early History of Tibet", Gustav-Heinemann Haus, Waldenburger Ring 44, Bonn.

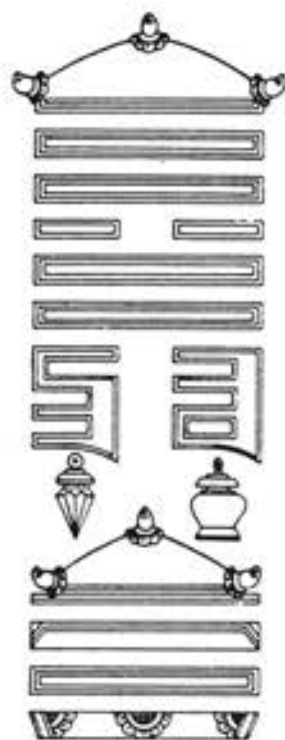
September 15

10 am 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, Germany.
Tel. 02241-203610.



by Rita Leti

Western astrology, Chinese astrology and now Tibetan astrology: whoever enters this path wishes to know what the differences, peculiarities and similarities are. The heavenly bodies have been observed from all latitudes for millennia by very different cultures. This has obviously led to different points of departure, directions and interpretations on the part of the observer interested in understanding the interaction between the cosmos and man.

The Tibetan tradition of astrology is vast, eclectic and extraordinarily rich. Its roots lie in the ancient Kingdom of Shang-Shung and in the Bon tradition, and it subsequently received and integrated influences and contributions from the Chinese and Indian astrological traditions. In fact there are various kinds of astrology in Tibet. A brief analysis of their names provides a good introduction to their substance: 'karts' (skar rtsis), 'tujur' (dus sbyor) and 'nagtsi' (nag rtsis) are all astrological systems which derive from different Tantras because like Tibetan medicine, astrology is considered a sacred science, that is to say a science which can harmonize man with the universe.

Karts: 'kar' (skar) means astronomy, 'tsi' (rtsis) means astrology. This is the astrology of astronomy: astrology based on the positions of the constellations. So Karts is principally astronomy, the study of the stars. Much Indian

astrology is present in this system, as introduced into Tibetan astrology. Garzi derives from the famous Kalachakra Tantra (the Wheel of Time). Kalachakra is not simply astrology, but is rather an explanation through astrology of the condition of the individual, the external universe and the elements. Tujur: 'tu' (dus) means time, 'jor' (sbyor) combination. So tujur means the combination of time, that is the Zodiac. Tujur is a 'zodiacal' kind of astrology which studies the movement of the sun through the twelve houses.

Nagtsi: 'nag' (nag) means black, 'tsi' (rtsis) means astrology, black astrology or 'astrology of elements'. This kind of astrology mostly came from China.

The reason why the Chinese kind of astrology is called 'black astrology' is really very simple. India is by definition the white country. In Tibetan, 'India' is called Gyagar ('gya' country, 'gar' white). Moreover, Indians have always worn white clothes, and the Brahmins ate 'white' food (without meat) etc. So in contrast, China has always been the black country. In fact, in Tibetan, 'China' is called Gyanag ('gya' country, 'nag' black). In contrast to India, in China all types of meat have always been eaten and at the time of the Emperors, all the ministers wore long black false-beards etc.

So this is why the Chinese kind of astrology is called Nagtsi 'black' astrology as opposed to Karts 'white' or Indian astrology. ('Gar' means white (dkar) as well as constellation (skar)-the calligraphy is slightly different, but the pronunciation is the same).

Nagtsi astrology is based on the combination of five Elements and twelve animals (Mouse, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Sheep, Monkey, Bird, Dog and Boar), which must not be confused with the twelve signs of the Zodiac. This kind of astrology allows one to understand the prana, that is the energy of a person in both its internal and external contexts.

Although the black and white system (based on the position of the Elements and the constellations respectively) both form an integral

part of Tibetan astrology, the latter must not be considered as a simple derivation of Chinese and Indian astrology. On the contrary, it has an independent origin, a complete astrological system being already in existence in the ancient Kingdom of Shang-Shung, situated in Western Tibet near Mount Kailash. The system's basic components are the twelve animal signs (non zodiacal, analogous to the twelve Chinese astrological animal signs), combined with five Elements and nine numbers, from nine to one called mewa, (sme ba).

This autonomous Bon tradition derives from the famous sage Tonba Sherab (Ston pa gshen rab) who lived 500 years before Buddha Shakyamuni. Later from the reign of the Tibetan King (Srong btsan sgam po) in the seventh century onwards, Tibet had direct contacts both with China and India. In this period much Chinese astrology was introduced (one of Songtsengambo's wives was Chinese and expert in astrology). The Kalachakra was introduced from India in more recent times.

This brief historical introduction is intended to make clear from the start certain areas of confusion which are likely to arise, when talking about Tibetan astrology in general, and in particular the rich and fascinating collection of astrological data which go to make up the 'Tibetan calendar', the fulcrum of indispensable tool for every astrological interpretation. But this subject requires an article to itself.

The description below refers to Nagtsi astrology, that is black astrology, or astrology of the Elements, Tibetan Jungtsi (byung rtsis).

The Five Elements

Jungtsi astrology involves five Elements: Wood, Fire, Earth, Iron and Water. Each of these is symbolically represented by a specific colour or geometrical shape. The rectangle represents Wood and corresponds to the colour green and the Element of Air. Whenever Wood is talked of in Tibetan astrology, we refer to what in the West is known as the Element Air. To understand this, it is necessary to think of Wood not as an inert material, but as a living tree. A tree grows and develops day by day, forever changing and moving. This incessant growth and mobility, this energy and capacity for development are the internal characteristic or hallmark of the Element Air. This is why the tree, Wood, by analogy is presented as its symbol. The colour green and the rectangle also remind one of the tree.

The triangle and the colour red represent Fire, with its attributes of heat and force of expansion. The

Astrology of



Earth and its stability are represented by the square. Its colour is yellow, a symbol of richness (yellow is the colour of gold) and abundance.

The semicircle and its colour white indicate the element Iron. Iron or Metal (another name for the same element) belongs to the Earth and is born in the Earth.

When one talks about Earth, one is referring to something large and heavy. When one talks about Metal, one is referring to something hard, concentrated and compact, which however is to be found within the element Earth. This is why, when considering the Elements in general, Iron sometimes disappears as a distinct Element, and becomes part of the Earth. The Karts system of astrology for example only recognizes four elements: Air, Fire, Earth and Water.

Water, with its constant fluidity and its capacity to take any shape, is represented by a figure without corners, the circle, and by the colour blue.

Mother and Child

These five Elements form a harmonious system, and are the material foundation of all existence. Their order is not accidental: a specific relationship in fact exists between all the individual Elements. This relationship is first and foremost one of 'generation' or, as the Tibetans say, the five Elements move 'from Mother to Child'. Wood is the Mother of Fire, Fire is the

Xin	Me	Sa	Jag	Qu
wood	fire	earth	iron	water
green	red	yellow	white	blue

and nine numbers. It is considered a science which can harmonize man with the universe.

the Elements



Mother of Earth, Earth is the Mother of Iron, Iron is the Mother of Water and finally Water is the Mother of Wood - thus the circle closes and the cycle starts again. To understand what all this means (and at the same time to remember the correct succession) all you need to do is to consider the physical characteristics of each Element. The fact that Wood generates Fire is obvious; Fire generates Earth - and what is our own Earth, like other planets, if not the result of the cooling of a flaming sphere? And the Earth we tread on each day is none other than the outer crust of a nucleus of incandescent

magma capable of transforming itself into a solid black rock as soon as it emerges from the mouth of a volcano!

Earth generates Metal - deep down in the bowels of the Earth, this hard and shining Element which is both malleable and compact is born.

To say that Metal generates Water is to refer to a characteristic which was well known to alchemy: the property that metals have of melting, becoming a liquid, thereby giving rise to the fluid Element, of which Water is the symbol par excellence. Water generates Wood: here the tree returns, whose sap and vital essence draws indispensable nourishment from water - and without water no form of vegetable life can exist.

This cycle of continual generation can also be traced in the opposite direction. In this case we say that

Wood is the Child of Water, Water the Child of Metal, Metal the Child of Earth, Earth the Child of Fire, and Fire the Child of Wood, which in turn is the Child of Water, and so on. This is what is meant when one says that two elements have a Mother-Child relation. This relation is generally considered to be positive (particularly when the Mother Element is seen with respect to the Child, a little less the other way round), that is to say a harmonious relationship of agreement between two Elements.

The four relations

Altogether, four different sorts of relation exist between Elements: 1) Mother, 2) Child, 3) Friend, 4) Enemy. Every Element has a Mother Element (from which it was generated), a Child Element (which it generates), a Friend Element (which helps its manifestation, and is the Son of the Son), and lastly an Enemy Element (which tends to destroy it, and is the Mother of its own Mother Element).

Taking as an example the Element Fire, we can say that the Mother of Fire is Wood, the Child of Fire is Earth, its Friend is Iron and its Enemy is Water.

Friend and Enemy

The relation between any two non-adjointing Elements in the generative cycle taken together is considered to be a negative, unharmonious, conflictual relationship between two Elements. It is to be noted how a Friend-Enemy relation is never reciprocally advantageous or reciprocally disadvantageous. For example Water is an Enemy of Fire (in fact it puts it out), but Fire is a Friend of Water (it sets it in motion, expands it, as in the boiling process).

This way of relating the Elements amongst themselves is not the only one possible. For instance in Kartsi astrology, completely different considerations are made when analysing the Elements of the constellations or the Elements that govern any particular day.

But in any case, the relations between the Elements form the basis of all astrology. Analysing their relationships one can often intuitively understand the result of their meeting. What happens, for instance, when Fire and Water are put together? Or Fire and Air? (The Air helps the Fire to grow etc.)

The relations between the Elements govern all existence. Their agreement or disagreement within individual components determines the areas of life and the types of situation in which a given individual will tend to find most difficulty and danger, or conversely will find the going easy.

By relating the Elements of two people it is possible to understand whether or not they can easily live a

positive life together - whether things exist between their Elements which favour union, or which create conflict.

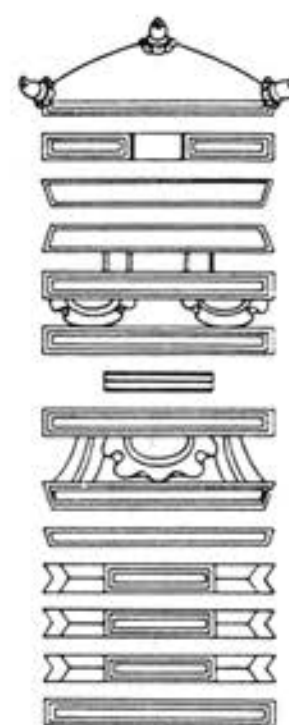
From an external point of view, relating the individual's Elements to the Elements which govern a particular moment - be it a certain year, month, or day - it is possible to understand the degree of ease or difficulty to be expected. Very precise calculations can be made for any day, so as to decide which day is the best for a particular activity.

Furthermore, astrology in general is especially used by doctors. A doctor must know astrology, otherwise he cannot understand the condition of an individual and certain diseases cannot be cured. The Elements taken into consideration in the Jungtsi astrological system are not the same as those used in other astrological systems and in Buddhist philosophy. This set of Elements, however, is adopted in Tibetan medical theory. In fact, each Element has its own function and a precise correspondence within the physical body. According to the Tibetans, disease arises when there is an unharmonious situation within the individual - discord between the Elements.

The predominance of a particular Element gives a person specific characteristics, tendencies in attitude and energy, both within and without.

Knowing all this allows one to operate in an appropriate and precise way in one's own existence. In Tibet, astrology is not an end in itself. It is a rigorous operational science. Nothing is left to chance. There are precise techniques for intervening and restoring the equilibrium. Together with the knowledge of each discord, exists the method to harmonise it.

This is true not only as regards the material circumstances we live in - although the opportunity of choosing the most favourable moment for our actions so as to live in harmony with time should not be ignored. But even more valuable is the knowledge of our personal Elemental situation through which we can understand and correct



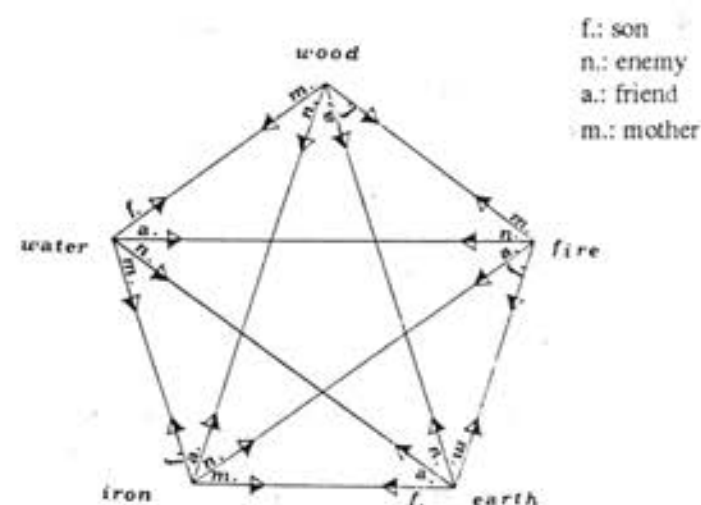
physical and mental tendencies determined by an imbalance in our Elements, thus allowing us to progress spiritually.

All reality, both material and subtle, is composed of five Elements. These Elements govern both our inner and outer worlds. They relate both to the concrete physical world and to inner characteristics. They determine the quality of energy and tendencies of the mind. And finally they are a subtle essence, light and colour. A true understanding of this concept means entering into the heart of reality. Many ways of using this knowledge exist on many levels. Like a stone thrown into the water, which produces ever larger circles, the knowledge of the five Elements is an essential nucleus which expands well beyond visible limits. *A Short Introduction to Tibetan Astrology of the Elements*, by Rita Leti, translated from Italian by Robin Cooke, reprinted from *Merigar-magazine*, November 1987.

Maria Rita Leti has a degree in Philosophy from Florence University and has studied oriental languages and civilization at the University of Oriental Studies in Naples.

She has been interested in Tibetan astrology for many years and has deepened her knowledge under the guidance of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche of whom she is a long time student.

At present she lives and studies in Arcidosso, Grosseto.



The Tibetan Ritual Orchestra

by Daniel Scheidegger

Tibetan ritual music forms an essential part of the Tibetan Buddhist rite, which, simply expressed, is concerned with the conscious control of positive and negative energies by means of ritualised hand movements, magic sounds and graphic representations of divine power. I will try to give you an overall view of Tibetan ritual music as I experienced it while learning its instruments. Several years' stay in the valleys of the Himalayas enabled me to gain an appreciation of this primeval sound world. The Tibetan lamas' natural helpfulness allowed me to acquire a feeling and appreciation for the meaning of these sounds.

It is certainly difficult to form a picture of Tibetan ritual music with only recordings to go on (several records are available). One also has to imagine the large monastery buildings with their bizarre brightly coloured murals, the air filled with incense and the solemnity of the officiating lamas.

An encounter with Tibetan culture can give us some ideas of the elemental power contained within a sound.

The Tibetan ritual orchestra consists of wind instruments, cymbals, bells and drums. Stringed instruments are used only in folk music.

From the musical point of view all the rituals can be divided into two groups: 'nga chog', drum rituals, and 'tri chog', handbell rituals. In a drum ritual the drum accompanies the ritual singing and the handbell is played by the abbot. In a handbell ritual all the monks use a handbell to accompany the recitations and no drum is used.

Bell rituals favour the activation of peaceful cosmic energies or the growth of positive qualities.

The drum rituals on the other hand concentrate on the acquisition of magical powers or the destruction of negative energies.

The Dung Dzen

The first wind instrument I learned during my stay in the Tibetan monasteries of Nepal was the 'dung', a kind of metal alpenhorn up to three metres long. Blowing these long horns requires great strength. I learned to play this 'metal alpenhorn' during the winter months, the best time to play this giant; playing it during the hot summer is not to be recommended. First I was taught the 'dor' the lowest note, as good intonation on the 'dor' makes production of the other two notes substantially easier.

I was also advised not to eat any yoghurt or pepper during my 'apprenticeship' as these foods slacken the lips and hinder good tone production. A further problem which almost every 'dung' player experiences is that of cracked lips, as playing the 'dor', the lowest note, makes the lips vibrate violently and strike against the metal mouthpiece. When my lips cracked I was told to keep playing; gradually this made them strong and resistant.

Basically a 'dung' player needs only three pitches: 'dor' the lowest note, 'gyang' the middle note, 'ti' the high note. The pitch of these three notes is not absolutely fixed.

Like all the wind instruments in the Tibetan ritual orchestra, the Tibetan 'metal alpenhorn' 'dung' is always played in pairs. It is important that the two instruments are in tune. A composition for the 'dung' consists of various combinations of these three notes.

The Gya Ling

Learning the 'gya ling', the Tibetan oboe starts with practising circular breathing. For this purpose I was given



For a long time Tibet was a forbidden land which favoured the preservation of a unique form of music.

a tube made of bamboo and told to blow into a glass of water in such a way as to make the exhaled air form bubbles that were always the same size. The slightest irregularity of breathing was immediately reflected in the size of the bubbles. The principle of circular breathing is simple: while you breathe in through the nose, air previously stored in the cheeks is blown out through the small aperture of the mouth. This enables the player to hold a note for a very long time.

It took me about two weeks to overcome the reflex that prevents breathing in and out simultaneously. By that time I could produce bubbles of a constant size in the glass. To perfect this technique they then fill the glass with Tibetan butter tea or yoghurt: trying to form a bubble under these new, more difficult conditions makes the cheek muscles strong and capable of storing enough air.

The next step was to learn the fingering of the 'gya ling' compositions.

Traditionally a kind of bamboo recorder is used for this but a simple wooden stick will suffice as the 'gya ling' pupil only has to follow the teachers' finger movements and to try to imitate them as exactly as possible. It is interesting that learning the 'gya ling' is done by visual, not auditory imitation, a remarkable fact for a musician. After learning a few 'gya ling' pieces on the bamboo flute, I had to practise playing the lowest note on the 'gya ling' using circular breathing. I was told a 'gya ling' player should be able to hold the lowest note on this instrument for up to fifteen minutes without a break.

Playing the high notes requires a great deal of air, so it is scarcely possible to hold them for very long. In fact the high notes are used only at the musical climaxes of the pieces.

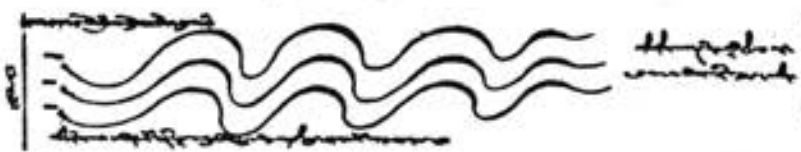
Most 'gya ling' players favour a regular vibrato. Great attention is lavished on the many ornamentations of the main notes: indeed a skillful player is

recognised by his lively execution of these fine points. A sure command of circular breathing is also necessary as no breaths may be taken throughout the piece.

It is not necessary for the two 'gya ling' players - they always play in twos - to play in exact unison. On the contrary, slight deviations are prized: they enliven the melody.

The Dung Kar

'Dung kar' is the Tibetan name for a conch horn made from a natural conch shell in which a small hole has been bored for blowing. This instrument, which, like all the wind instruments in Tibetan ritual music, is played in pairs and produces only one note. It is not only used during the rites, but also has an important signalling function in calling the monks to the ceremonial buildings. When the young novices have been particularly well behaved - when they have not got up to too much nonsense,



Tibetan traditional musical notation for the conch horn player.

that is - they are allowed to blow these conch horns and so signal to all the monks and laymen that an important rite is beginning.

The Kang Ling

In addition to the 'metal alpenhorn', the oboe and the conch horn the orchestra also calls for a bone horn. The 'kang ling', as it is called in Tibetan, is made from a human thighbone, the mouthpiece being of metal and the lower end of the bone often being bound with leather.

Tibetan writings on this instrument state the qualities a usable thighbone should and should not have: the bone from a

The article is reprinted from Brass Bulletin, the international magazine for brass players, issues 62 & 63/1988, with the permission of the author.

leprosy victim is unsuitable - black dots in the bone indicate this disease, the thighbone from someone who died of hunger is not usable either - such bones are very light, with a low fat content. A suitable bone, on the other hand, is white, heavy, shiny and not bent. Striking one hand on the mouthpiece should produce a hollow sound which resonates briefly.

The bone horn 'kang ling' is held diagonally outwards from the left corner of the mouth. At first I was shown how to shake my left hand to produce the vibrato so characteristic of this instrument but after a while I had to stop this and try to produce the vibrato using the breath alone.

A bone-horn player never plays more than four notes in an orchestral piece. Sometimes only three, or even only one is needed.

The Drums

In addition to these wind instruments the Tibetan ritual orchestra also has two different kinds of drums: first the 'damaru', a double-headed rattle drum with little beads which strike the hand-held drum as it is moved back and forwards; and second a double-headed drum called 'nga' played with a wooden beater.

'Nga' is the Tibetan name for the big double-headed ritual drum. The size of this drum varies enormously, the diameter of the largest being as great as the height of a grown man. It is played with a sickle-shaped wooden beater.

During the rite the drummer follows the rhythm of the cymbals. The drum is almost always played in a regular rhythm, speeding up briefly only at the end of certain sections of the rite.

It therefore did not take me long to learn to play this instrument. All the same, in the Tibetan monasteries it is considered barbaric just to 'thump the drum'; a subdued sound is considered desirable. Novices as young as eight years old learn this instrument in order to become familiar with the rhythm of the many recitations.

In addition to wind instruments, drums and bells the Tibetan ritual orchestra also has cymbals, called 'rolmo'. These are double cymbals, tuned to approximately the same pitch: the slight pitch difference produces a buzzing sound. The many overtones this instrument can generate are fascinating. Its sound fills the whole building with long resonating vibrations. Unfortunately recordings do not reproduce this effect well.

The 'rolmo' is normally played by 'om tse', the leader of the ceremony and the

integral part of the Tibetan monk's life. Very young novices can be heard practising the conch horn. Eight-year old novices are allowed to beat the large drum during the rite. The oboe and the long 'metal alpenhorn' are not studied before the age of thirteen, however, because of the great physical effort these wind instruments require. The double cymbals are generally studied at the same age. If a monk plans to become a leader of the ceremony, he must be very familiar with the double cymbals as this instrument usually leads the orchestra. All in all, it can be said, these instruments are not hard to play. Monks are not professional musicians: music is only a part of their rite. They do not aim to produce musical virtuosos since every monk, even those who are not very gifted musically, should be able to communicate with the Buddhas through sound. A harmonious feeling of fellowship is the basis. The phenomenon of a 'star' would be alien in such a setting. Gifted oboists or experienced cymbals players are certainly prized but not revered.

According to the Tibetan tantric tradition there are peaceful and fear-arousing aspects of the Buddhas. While the peaceful Buddha aspects represent the state of existence of the Buddhas themselves, the fear-arousing Buddha aspects relate to the method of removing obstacles, to the dynamic process of attaining enlightenment. All the Tibetan ritual instruments can be related to these two aspects of the 'Buddha energies', the peaceful or the fear-arousing. When the monks play, they are naturally aware of the symbolic significance of their musical instruments. The sound is perfectly integrated into their magical-mystical thinking: it is the audible part of their complex tantric rites.

The following instruments are generally assigned to the peaceful 'Buddha energies':

- the 'dung kar', the conch horn
- the oboe-like 'gya ling'
- and the 'silmen', double cymbals.

The fear-arousing 'Buddha energies' are symbolised by the following instruments:

- the 'nga', the big drum
- the 'kang ling', the bone horn
- the 'rolmo', double cymbals
- the 'dung dzen', the long metal horn
- and the little 'damaru', rattle drum.

When we hear music, we immediately try to classify it - rock, jazz, folk, classical, etc. We scarcely ever hear the direct sound, but rather a 'rock sound' or a 'classical sound'. It seems to be hard for us to hear music without labelling it. Clearly, unprejudiced listening has to be learned so that when you suddenly really hear this strange music, you make a surprising discovery: the apparent strangeness disappears and gives way to a striking familiarity. You begin to understand that this so-called exotic music is not strange in itself and that it is an expression of unactivated levels of consciousness within ourselves. It has become clear to me after many years of research that a simple accumulation of facts about a so-called exotic type of music cannot bring about a deeper understanding of it. Undoubtedly the happiest result of my encounter with Tibetan ritual music is a newly developed awareness within me that strives to hear what the music is and not what we assume it to be.

Daniel Scheidegger was born in 1956 and has a Master of Music teaching diploma. He has worked in Tibetan monasteries in India and Nepal for three and a half years under the aegis of the Creative Music Foundation, New York.

Sister Goddess

by Clara Pagnozzi

A *Ce Lha Mo*, the traditional name of Tibetan Theatre, means Sister Goddess and refers to the feminine protagonists of the dramas. The protector saint and father of the Tibetan tradition is Grub Chen Thangstong rGyal Po (Thangtong Gyalpo), born in the region of Tsang, Olbarse, in 1385. He is the protector of all actors, *Lha ba*, and his statue is usually surrounded by many offerings of barley and incense, and placed in the shrine in the middle of the big tent where the performances are held.

Tibetan people tell many stories about the founder of the theatre. One of these legends tells that Thangtong Gyalpo was building a great bridge in a village helped by all its inhabitants, but during the first night some demons came and destroyed all their work. This happened again and again, and finally he decided to sing songs and dance together with some actors. The demons, distracted by their show, did not obstruct their work anymore and the bridge was completed. Another legend tells that he wanted to build strong bridges across the dangerous rivers of the Himalayan mountains to help all the pilgrims and travellers, and in order to collect the necessary funds and convince the people to cooperate in the project he organized the first dramatic performances. Another legend I heard from the old Tibetans in Dharamsala, tells about the Goddess Arya Tara who was so moved by the prayers of the pilgrims who wished to reach the holy mountain Gangs Rin Po Che (Mount Kailash 'Precious Glacier'), but were badly obstructed by a river, that she offered Thangtong Gyalpo seven iron rings to build a bridge. The 'Dance of the Seven Brothers' that he created celebrates the seven rings given by the Goddess.

There are many biographies about this father of Tibetan Theatre. The most famous is 'The Biography of The Builder of Iron Bridges' ('mTshungs Med Grub dBang Phing Leags Zam Po'i rNam Thar') by Ngag Gi dBang Phing. In all these works, Thangtong Gyalpo is always depicted as a great Master, who after completing his studies under more than one hundred teachers and spending many years in meditation, began to teach the doctrine, discovering many ancient texts, *gTer Ma*, and teaching many Vajra Songs. He travelled to India, Kashmir, Bhutan, Ladakh, Mongolia and China and many of the traditional healing rituals are still referred to him. He is traditionally considered as a follower of the rNying Ma Buddhist School, a famous gChod Pa and Dzog Chen Pa, and depicted with long white hair.

Purification ritual

In the traditional *A Ce Lha Mo*, all the performances start with a purification ritual. Usually the statue of the Saint is carried onto the stage and put in the shrine, while all the actors perform a ritual dance and give offerings, according to their different roles. There is always one *dGe rGen*, the Director Master, two *rGya Lu*, the Masters of the ceremony, chosen from among the old actors, the dancing women, *mKha'* 'gro ma' and the Hunters, *rnGon Pa*, with black masks. The male dancers, wearing long white sleeves and carrying coloured sticks, perform many acrobatic leaps and very fast pirouettes on one leg, while the women gracefully circle around, performing harmonious movements with their hands. Then the music becomes more and more frenetic, the dancers follow the rhythm and sing together, while the *rnGon Pa* and the *rGya Lu* exchange witty remarks. Male dancers are arranged in a semicircle on



The Rig Nga Kha-droma, actresses wearing a head dress depicting the five Buddhas.

the right side, while, in front of them, all the women dancers, uniting their hands on their foreheads, raise the coloured fans on the sides of their crowns and finally put an end to the purification rituals singing an offering chant.

On the stage

When the real performance begins, the main actors retire to change their costumes, while the young performers and the 'Kha Gro Ma' who are not playing important roles and form the chorus, stay on the stage together with the head of the actors. Singing a special tune he gives a brief account of the show, describing the characters and the background of the drama.

At the end of the performance there is another ritual: some ceremonial white silk scarves are placed on the statue of Thangtong Gyalpo and afterwards given to each musician and actor by some women wearing traditional Tibetan clothes. All the actors begin a short

In the *Lha Mo* theatrical tradition, there are three different musical executions: narrative songs, alternating songs, and instrumental music. Each dramatic company has two musicians: the first one plays the double-faced drum made of yak leather with a long wooden handle that is beaten by a sickle-like stick, while the other plays the Tibetan wide semi-circular brass plates.

There are many different kinds of traditional dances performed during the *A Ce Lha Mo* dramas. In order to show different feelings, the actors perform characteristic gestures: respect is played by prostrating on the ground with joined hands, sympathy and affection by embracing each other with the right arm, joy for a meeting or despair for a departure are shown by putting a hand on the companion's shoulder and leaning the heads gently towards each other, deep sorrow appears when the actors kneel down and humbly bending their heads, keep their eyes down, enemies fight beating each other's hips and when someone is killed his face is covered with barley flour while he escapes making the audience laugh. During the performance there are usually many sketches and jokes played by the minor actors and the traditional Indian character called A ksa ra amuses the people. Among the most famous dances of the Tibetan traditional theatre, I want to mention the Dzog-chen dance following the rhythm of a drum and becoming faster and faster ending with frenetic whirling movements.

The *rnGon pa* usually wear a big triangular mask with a silver ornament, representing a sun and a moon, on their forehead. They wear coloured brocade clothes covering their hair and shoulders, and on the top of their masks there is a jewel, *Nor Bu*, the gift of the Naga Deities of the ocean to the hunter. The 'Kha Gro Ma' usually wear an ornament in their hair depicting the five Buddhas or their symbols, with stripes of coloured materials hanging down. This is the same crown used by many monks performing ritual dances. These female dancers wear rainbow-coloured paper fans on their ears which are also used on the masks in the dances of skeletons. These fans represent the rainbow body. The actress playing the role of princess wears a great hair-piece with marvellous flowers and a colourful silk mantle. The ministers wear tall cylindrical hats with red silk fringes.

In the traditional Tibetan opera, the equipment on the stage is very simple: a divine or mortal character is transferred to heaven using a chair while the actresses move a white cloth symbolizing the sky. To create the effect of a river a blue material is used and simple decorated structures represent boats, horses and stupas.

Four plays

All the theatrical performances have a religious background, and the most famous narrate the adventures of the old kings, or immortal heroes. In the past there were many famous companies and each of them had their own particular scripts, with a characteristic style, the old Master coordinating while the young actors bring new ideas under his supervision. I would like to briefly introduce some of these famous stories I studied in India.

The first drama is *Cho Kyi rGyal Po Nor Bu bZang Po*, from the Buddhist canon *bka' gyur*: Depicting one of the former lives of Buddha, this drama is said to have been the first performed at the *Lha Mo* festival, in the XVIII century.

There are two kingdoms in India, one of which is in a state of disorder. The king of the Nagas asks the hunter to destroy the spell, promising him the wish fulfilling gem. The hunter goes to visit the wise man living by the lake and thanks to his gift of a magic cord, he catches the celestial princess he loves. Following the advice given in a dream of the wise man, the hunter gives the princess to the king as a gift, but the beautiful girl makes all the 500 queens very jealous.

These envious women create evil plots with the help of the family priest, making the princess suffer badly and sending the King Nor bZang far away on a false mission. The precious celestial queen flies away to the divine kingdom of gandhars to escape the women's plot and when the King comes back victorious he immediately starts looking for her. Then he goes back to the wise man who gives him the ring of the celestial consort, and he sets out to face some very hard adventures in order to reach her again. He wins thanks to his religious faith and the celestial queen comes back to the earth to reign together with him, giving peace and happiness to the whole country.

Another characteristic drama is *mKha'*

"In 1982, from February to May, I was studying in India, at the Tibetan settlement of McLeod Ganj. I was able to deepen my interest in Tibetan theatre thanks to the kind help given by the members of the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts. In particular I want to thank the Director of the School, 'Jam dByangs Nor bu, and the teacher Nor Bu Tsché Ring, who offered their time to clarify all my questions about the origins and the characteristics of the Tibetan performing tradition. These teachers and their students very kindly showed me their costumes, scripts and musical instruments and invited me to assist in their rehearsals, musical concerts, dancing shows and conferences about theatre. I saw many traditional theatrical performances, and read many original Tibetan texts in the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, and during the summer in Delhi, I studied at the Library of the Tibet House Museum." Clara Pagnozzi.

'Gro'i Bu Mo 'Gro Ba bZang Mo'i rNam Thar. Many people say it describes the real life of the Indian King in the Naga region whose palace is still visible. In this story the demoness Ha Cang, first wife of the king and a hard-hearted woman without any compassion towards other beings, is defeated by two enlightened brothers, sons of the dakini 'Gro Ba bZang Mo, the good wife of the king.

In the beginning the evil woman wants to kill the good queen and her two beautiful children but the good mother flies to the Dakini kingdom of the north and, thanks to her magical powers, she defends her children in the shape of a snake, a monkey, two vultures and a fish. Typical of these dramas is the celestial help which comes in dreams, magic jewels and prophetic omens, and the sudden meeting of characters with no more hope to see each other again. The third famous drama is *Chos Kyi rGyal Po Dri Med Kun lDan Gyi rNam Thar*, which also comes from the Buddhist canon texts and narrates the tenth and last great reincarnation of Lord Buddha: Dri Med Kun lDan. This prince used to gather all the beggars in the yard of his palace and give them money and gifts. In the drama, the parents of the prince, thinking only about material riches, are incapable of offering any spiritual comfort, but the noble prince decides to offer everything he has got for the benefit of others and during an extremely hard exile he even leaves his wife and children. Finally he even offers his eyes to a blind beggar.

The fourth drama is *sNang Sa 'Od Bum Gyi rNam Thar* which tells about the famous heroine Nang sa, whose historical life was spent in Gyantse near Lhasa, where a market is still held in her honour. Nang sa is a 'das log, one of the famous Tibetans who come to life for a second time, to spread spiritual teachings and help all human beings, explaining the reality of the death process to them. In this drama the typical Tibetan peasants' life is clearly depicted and particular emphasis is given to the theme of the impermanence of our life and the importance of the right use of our precious time.

The article is an abbreviation of an academic study by the author, who is a graduate student at the University of Oriental Studies in Naples, Italy. Translated from the Italian by Nina Robinson.



dance singing a chant while some of them toss offerings of barley and wheat. Finally the *dGe rGen* stands on a chair and looking upwards sings a song of thanks together with the other actors. The Tibetan music played during the theatrical performances is very simple: it consists mainly of a drum, the metal plates of a gong and human voices, which play the most important role. In the tradition of Central Tibet there are two styles, an ancient one, with a very slow dance and deep delicate vocals, and a modern one, with a freer energetic dance and high-pitched sounds.

New publications by Shang-Shung

During the last few months, Shang-Shung Edizioni's book production has slowed down. This is due to the fact that our publishing house is trying to develop its internal organization, adopting new methods, preparing more people to work and creating order in our accounting system. In spite of this delay, we shall be publishing the following books in the next months:

Nascere e Vivere, second edition, by Namkhai Norbu, edited by G. Vitiello.
Drung, Deu, Bon, by Namkhai Norbu, edited by A. Clemente.

This is the famous and long-awaited book on Bon.

Il Santo Seduttore (provisionary title), translated by E. Guarisco, edited by E. Guarisco and L. Anfossi, with an introduction by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. This is about the life and songs of Drukpa Kunleg, translated from the original Tibetan text.

We also plan to publish the following titles:

New editions of Santi Maha Sangha and Do As You Please by Namkhai Norbu and La Collana di gZi, by Namkhai Norbu.

The present aim of Shang-Shung Edizioni is to reach a production rate of 10-12 titles per year.

This is the minimum of production required to maintain a real presence as a publishing house, to justify distribution efforts and expenses, to render promotion possible and permit the people working in the cooperative to have the economic possibility to continue to work.

Shang Shung titles will be published in English by Shang-Shung Imprint of Station Hill Press and by the international Dzog-chen Community.

BOOK REVIEW: Bizarre but amusing

Alexandra David-Neel:
Tibetan Tale of Love and Magic
Neville Spearman, Jersey, 1983
Translated by Vidar L'Estrange

If you wish to indulge in love, Tibetan atmosphere, mystical doctrines and some suspense, read Alexandra David-Neel's Tibetan Tales of Love and Magic. It was written over 40 years ago, but has not completely lost its charm and excitement. In 1983 it was translated into English and was published by Neville Spearman.

Alexandra David-Neel is an author of many books. She lived most of her life in Tibet, where she studied Tibetan Buddhism and culture, and she was the first European woman to become a full fledged Tibetan Lama and an initiate of various esoteric practices. Her best known works are My Journey to Lhasa and With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet. Tibetan Tale of Love and Magic is a minor work, supposedly meant to entertain the exotic loving public of the thirties. It belongs to the genre of Pierre Loti and other bizarre and mystic lotus eaters so fashionable since the turn of



Alexandra David-Neel

the century.

Tibetan Tale of Love and Magic has no big revelations to somebody who is familiar with Tibetan culture and religion. The story itself is simple and lacks regrettably the doings of a great saga à la Karen Blixen. The hero is strong and handsome, the heroine is feeble and beautiful, the romance is passionate and sensuous and it ends tragically. If you don't care so much for romance and so on, the rest of the book is quite enchanting. Tibet is there so

vividly that you can breathe it, smell it, taste it and touch it.

The most intriguing part of the book consists of the description of the Bon tradition. The villains of the story are the Bon priests who try to lengthen their lives by sucking in the putrid remains of their willing victims.

Alexandra David-Neel says in the prologue that she hesitated for a long time before letting the book out because of these details. And she assures the reader that her information is based on facts which she gathered near the Mongolian border. She did not consult any Bon experts, her information comes from some unnamed Buddhist lamas.

I, as many other western students of the Dharma, have had an opportunity to meet outstanding Bonmasters including an authority like Lobpon Namdak contrary to Alexandra David-Neel who bases her "knowledge" on hearsay and superstition. We need not be intrigued by her revelations but instead have a giggle and go on reading. For others, who do not have background, Tibetan Tale of Love and Magic is really not the best source of knowledge and for sure does not give an accurate picture of Bon.

Leena Larjanko

Merigar Library grows




Recently, the Library at Merigar, which is situated in the "capannone", received many Tibetan texts from both India and China.

From China the Library received part of *Rin chen gter mdzod*, an important collection of terma. The Library of Tibetan Archives in Dharamsala, India, has started to send some copies of Tibetan texts from their Archives.

They have promised to gradually send copies of their entire Library to Merigar and this was the first shipment.

The shelves at Merigar are greatly lacking books in English on Teachings, Tibet, Tibetan culture, medicine, astrology, and Dharma books in general.

If readers are able to donate any volumes of these kinds to the Library, they will be very welcome since there are not sufficient funds to buy them. The Library is also interested in receiving any scientific articles which have been published on these same topics.




ཤང་ཤུང་འཛིན་པོ་

VIDEO

Shang Shung Edizioni

YANTRA YOGA



PAL system, in Italian or English available for \$ 40 US (postage included) to Shang Shung Edizioni, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.
NTSC system, in English only, for \$ 35 US to Tsegylgar, PO Box 277, Conway Mass 01341, USA

Useful Tool

by Jim Valby of the Tsegylgar Dzog-chen Community

I like to read Tibetan books, so I've spent lots of time looking up words in various dictionaries. For eight years I wrote the definitions on individual pieces of paper (they get lost and aren't in alphabetical order), in notebooks (hard to lose, but the words still aren't in order), and on index cards (time-consuming to put in order, big bulky boxes). For four years I entered the words and definitions on various mainframe computers where I studied or worked. This was a great improvement, but these computers were often busy, slow, hard to use, far away or expensive.

For the past eight years I have used a home personal computer. My ever growing 35,965 word Tibetan-English dictionary displays any definition on the computer screen within one second. When there's an unknown word, I look it up in a dictionary, make a computer note of the page number, and later type that word and all associated compounds into my dictionary. Then I never have to spend more than a few seconds looking up that word again. Hurray! This saves lots of time, and allows me to concentrate more on the book I'm reading.

But there are some serious shortcomings with my dictionary. It does not contain any examples of word usage, so I must understand the context and select the appropriate definition. The dictionary does not indicate the source for the definition (sources include Jaeschke, Das, and the glossaries of many English language translators), so it's difficult to meet rigorous scholarly standards. There are about 2000 cross references (indicated by SA), but I must know possible alternative spellings from reading experience. At the suggestion of my friend Bob Kragen, I recently made a version available for use by others. Unfortunately this version has the unbelievable shortcoming that users cannot add their own words and definitions.

Here's an example from my dictionary:

Word? ye shes

jnana, (exalted, primordial) wisdom, (primal transcending, original, unitary, authentic, pure, absolute, a priori, genuine, spiritual, ever-fresh, pristine) awareness, pristine cognition, mystic illumination, gnosis, understanding by peak experience, (intuitive, transcending, comprehensive, true) knowledge, SA mched pa'i ye shes, mnyam nyid ye shes, me long ye shes, chos dbyings ye shes, bya sgrub ye shes, sor rtog ye shes.

Next time I'll describe the contents of a book I'm reading with the help of this useful tool.

Yantra Yoga booklet revised

A new Yantra Yoga booklet according to the teachings given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche based on the text of Vairocana is now available in both English and Italian. The preceding version (available only in Italian) has been checked and revised by experts from the International Translation Committee of the Dzog-chen Community.

The booklet, which will be in a photocopied version, contains the preliminary movements, the tsigjong, lungsang or eight movements and tsandul and the first and second group of positions with appropriate breathing.

Use of this booklet is intended for those who already practise Yantra Yoga but who need an easily consulted handbook, limited to the fundamental exercises but brought up to date.

The Italian version is available from:

Shang-Shung Edizioni, 58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy.

The English version is available from:

The California Dzog-chen Community, c/o Norman Lundell, 122 Pleasant Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95062, USA.

Kalachakra Initiation for World Peace

His Holiness the Dalai Lama will give the Kalachakra Initiation in New York City on October 21st to 23rd.

This rare and historic event will take place during October 1991 as part of the celebration of the Year of Tibet.

His Holiness will give preparatory teachings on the Path of Compassion from October 16th to 19th.

The Namgyal monks will perform ceremonial dances as part of the preparations for the Initiation on October 20th.

His Holiness' teachings will be preceded by five days of teachings on Nature of Mind given by preeminent lamas from each of the five Tibetan religious traditions

October 11th Venerable Lobpon Tenzin Namdhak, Bon tradition

October 12th Venerable Trulshik Rinpoche, Nyingma tradition

October 13th Venerable Tenga Rinpoche, Kagyu tradition

October 14th Kyabje Sakya Trizin Rinpoche, Sakya tradition

October 15th Venerable Tara Rinpoche, Gelug tradition

(Sogyal Rinpoche will translate for Venerable Trulshik Rinpoche)

If you would like to receive registration information, please send your name and address to: Tibet House, 3rd Floor, 241 East 32nd St., New York, NY 10016. Tel. (212) 213-5592.

Computer science

The Typestyle Jockey: Putting the Right Horse Out Front in Tibetan

By Reid Fossey

In the last three to four years the Western humanist has taken a leap into the twentieth century. Rather than packing the illustrious scholar's pen and infamous typewriter, the philologist of the future is already astride the "typestyle jockey", using tools of a far more sophisticated nature to create a stock of non-European fonts for languages from Bengali to Vietnamese.

The graphics based Apple Macintosh, introduced in 1985, quickly became the leading typestyle jockey in the field of indology, making way for at least five Tibetan typestyles and numerous possibilities for transliteration. Recently, however, with the improvement of graphics capabilities for the IBM-PC, a new breed of IBM-compatible fonts is emerging to challenge Apple's stronghold of recreating the South Asian word.

With such a line of contenders available at the finger tips of the Asian scholar, it would seem that indology had taken a step into the future and that automated translation lay only a mouse click away. Unfortunately, however, despite the numerous and readily available typestyles at the indologists' disposal, there has not yet developed a comprehensive standard character set for defining how these various typestyles should be encoded and manipulated within the computer environment.

Texts created in one typestyle cannot easily convert into another typestyle, and similarly programs designed to manipulate these texts, for storage, retrieval, alphabetization and so forth, cannot be easily used interchangeably. As a result of the plurality of the typestyles available lacking a common character set, western indological scholarship may find itself in serious danger, if it has not done so already, of putting the cart before the horse.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is to narrow the field of contenders and give a track record and rundown of the various typestyles available in Tibetan.

The Tibetan Paddock

The LTibetan

The first Tibetan horse out and running in the Macintosh field was the dot-matrix typestyle "Tibetan" created and released by Pierre Robillard in 1985 together with a supplementary typestyle "Mantra". These were later transformed in 1987 by a Laser typestyle dubbed "LTibetan" with its counterpart, "LMantra".

The members of this typestyle family exhibit an intricate and beautiful orthography that would please all but the most finicky lama, reproducing quite elegantly not only the complex multiply stacked ligature of the Tibetan written language and its mantra forms, but also most of the characters of the transliterated (Tibetan) Sanskrit in its manifold conjunct forms.

While the Robillard typefoundry does ample justice to the Tibetan script, one of the major drawbacks of the typestyle is the complicated and exceedingly large number of keystrokes required to master the full range of possible character combinations.

Fortunately, the problem of an overwhelming number of keystrokes has been ameliorated significantly by the introduction of the two programs created to lighten the typist's burden.

The first, the "Tibetan Editor", designed by Robillard in 1988, automatically creates an appropriate character stack

through the typist's signalling the beginning of a stack and typing in the appropriate sequence.

The second even handier program, called the "Wylie Editor" created by Chet Wood in the same year, automatically generates the appropriate Tibetan character or character stack when the typist keys in the appropriate Wylie



transliteration.

The Wylie Editor is also useful in that it allows one to convert entire documents typed in other word processors with Wylie transliteration into Tibetan characters.

A few limitations of both of these programs, however, is that they only operate in the environment of their own text editor programs (something like a simple word processor).

As such they are not able to be implemented within the context of larger word processing programs or data based programs familiar to the Tibetan scholar. One further useful feature of the LTibetan family is a "Tibetan Sort" program developed by Robillard as a Desk Accessory to sort and alphabetize Tibetan characters created within LTibetan and related typestyles.

A Desk Accessory in "MacIntalk" is a term describing programs readily accessible throughout the Macintosh environment.

Tibetan Sort can thus be executed within the context of larger word processing and database programs.

The Rockwell

Another Tibetan typestyle out early in the race was the Tibetan typestyle "Tibetan 11/3" created by John Rockwell of the Naropa Institute in 1985.

While Rockwell's typestyle was a brave attempt in a difficult field, there were significant problems with the initial phase of its development, though remedied since its initial release.

For example, one was required to manually "push" vowel markers into place through the use of a "pixel bar" in order to get the vowel markers to rest in their proper place.

Also, it was not able to write a complete Tibetan word unless the lines above and/or below the line were clear.

The LaserTIBETAN

Recently released by Linguist's Software this year, is a new contender on the market for Tibetan with the name

"LaserTIBETAN", developed by Mark Giaccone and Dr. Philip Barton Payne. LaserTIBETAN shares the same graphic input entry system as LTibetan, with numerous keystrokes and an extended character set. But similarly again, it does not share the same keyboard or internal representation as its predecessor.

And since it does not share the same internal representation, lacking are the useful Wylie Editor, Tibetan Editor and Tibetan Sort features.

LaserTIBETAN is also quite lacking in its ability to represent many important character stacks required for normal Tibetan use, as well as much of the specialized mantra and Sanskrit stacks. Orthographically, LaserTIBETAN seems to attempt to imitate the traditional Tibetan "wood-block" style, varying in length and shape of some of its characters and vowel markers. Unfortunately, it does not succeed well in its mimicry and a good number of characters appear malformed, if not incorrect.

The Thimphu

There is soon to be released another Tibetan, or properly Dzongkha (Bhutanese) family of typestyles for the Macintosh together with a Tibetan/Bhutanese Macintosh system.

The typestyles of this family will be available in two dot-matrix versions, named "Thimphu" and "Punakha" modelled significantly after Robillard's typestyle and a laser Thimphu typestyle modelled after original calligraphic samples and advice from Bhutanese calligraphers.

As such, the postscript typestyle demonstrates a much more refined orthography than other Macintosh and IBM typestyles, reviewed so far, which have copied the form (and errors) of metal press typesetting.

Both the system and the typestyles developed for the Bhutanese government, will be released within the next few months by Peter Lofting of LaserQuill of Windsor.

The TTPS

Some fierce IBM Competition: The TTPS, the Nalanda and the Atisha. An early IBM attempt at computerizing the Tibetan script was the creation of the Tibetan Text Processing System (TTPS) that began as early as 1977 and

was completed in 1983, under the direction of Geshe Lobsang Tharchin with a team of volunteers headed by Stephen Brzgalis.

Even though an early starter, the TTPS program sported a rather sophisticated design, including an alphabetic keyboard entry system following the Wylie transliteration, and the ability to transform Wylie documents created outside the TTPS editor into Tibetan script.

Unfortunately however, this front-runner had a number of limitations. Perhaps its biggest drawback was that it was limited to a dot-matrix typeface and could only function with a one dot-matrix printer.

The Nalanda

Two researchers from the Nalanda Translation Committee, Gerry Wiener and Tony Duff, later took up the design of the TTPS and improved the program to include on-screen Tibetan characters and laser print capability in a typestyle just released six months ago called "Tibetan!" (with a well deserved exclamation point I might add).

Furthermore, they also extended the TTPS capabilities to work within the context of the popular word-processing program, Word Perfect, rather than the somewhat sparse word handling milieu of the TTPS editor.

"Tibetan!" also adds an alphabetization program to the works and supports Sanskrit roman diacritics on-screen and off.

One of the few disadvantages of the Nalanda, is that, so far, it only functions in the context of one word-processing system, Word Perfect, and does not yet support the full range of mantra and transliterated Sanskrit character stacks. Also the Nalanda system supports only one model of laser printer, the Hewlett Packard Laser Jet Series II and higher. Work is underway, I am told however, to expand the typestyles and allow the Nalanda program to function under the Windows environment, which would mean that the Nalanda could be used

These keyboarding procedures seem more time-consuming and difficult to remember than the graphic entry system of the Macintosh.

Round the Club House

Along with the numerous typestyles and so forth that have proliferated the market, there are also the beginnings of some important projects in the field of the Indian and Tibetan studies, of which I will name but a few.

The Maharishi Vedic University has just come out with an optical character recognition program (OCR) for Sanskrit, saving untold number of manual labor hours (but not necessarily hours of editing) from entering texts by hand.

In the Tibetan arena, there has recently been completed the first part of an ongoing project conducted by the monks at Sera monastery near Mysore, India, under the direction of Michael Roach, to put a large portion of the Tibetan Buddhist Kanjur and Tanjur on-line, the first ten texts being released last year in a series of 12 discs, with two catalogues of the Kanjur and one catalogue of the Tanjur as well as a full bibliographic listing of the Library of Congress Tibetan accessions.

Dr. Betsy Napper, from the University of Virginia, has recently completed the re-editing and entry of Melvyn Goldstein's *Modern Colloquial Tibetan* into computerized form. Spanning both Tibetan and Sanskrit as well as several other languages, Professors Thurman (Colombia) and Lancaster (UC Berkeley) have recently applied to the National Endowment of the Humanities to put the entire Buddhist canon onto CD-ROM, and we may verily wish them well in this pursuit.

New developments in the general field of computer science have recently placed a number of potent tools at the philologist's disposal and we may look forward to a number of possible benefits in the future stemming from these.

Most notably, in the IBM world there has been released in the last few years



within nearly any program operating on the IBM.

Work is also underway to adapt the Nalanda for use with other laser printers.

The Atisha

Another late-breaking typestyle appearing in 1989 was the Atisha Word Processing system developed by Peter Ebbatson.

This Tibetan typestyle was designed to accommodate a general word processing system called CHIWRIER, which is a much less sophisticated word processing program than Word Perfect, though considerably cheaper.

The Atisha system supports the Hewlett Packard line of laser printers as well as other postscript based laser printers and a large number of dot-matrix printers.

The Atisha exhibits an impressive number of Tibetan characters and conjunct formats, though requiring an extensive number of keystrokes to achieve its aim.

the data based program "Word Cruncher", for creating indexes and concordances.

Released just this year, the program "IT" (the Interlinear Text Processing System) for the Macintosh, offers the linguist not only database capabilities, but also possibilities for creating tags for interlinear grammatical and morphemic analysis. HyperCard, available for both the Mac and the IBM, offers exciting possibilities for text management as well as audio and visual language training.

This article is a portion of a much more extensive paper written by Mr. Fossey and appeared for the first time in the 1990 Report of the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies published in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Unfortunately we were unable to print Mr. Fossey's paper in its entirety. Anyone interested in a copy of Mr. Fossey's paper is encouraged to contact The Mirror.

MERIGAR

Simhamukha Transmission

On the 7th of June, Dakini day, about 250 people from Italy and different parts of Europe gathered together in the Gonpa at Merigar to receive the Simhamukha initiation from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The weather was unusually windy and wet and people hung on to their umbrellas as they trundled down the road to the Gonpa. During the morning session, Norbu

Rinpoche gave several explanations of the various parts of the initiation. He told those present that he himself had received the transmission from three different sources and had done a personal retreat of this Simhamukha practice for three months. He added that those who receive the initiation should not consider that this made them capable of giving transmission themselves

and that doing so would become an obstacle to their practice. After the initiation there was a shower of rain which some considered to be a blessing. The morning after, we gathered together in the Gonpa to do this Simhamukha practice with Norbu Rinpoche. During this session he also explained the ways in which a Simhamukha retreat can be done.

Karma Yoga Weekends

This summer at Merigar we have been actively engaged in Karma Yoga weekends.

This has included gardening, building, repairing and a general cleanup of the grounds and buildings.

Specifically the activities have included: cutting the grass (several times because it's rained a lot),

beginning to repair the road to Merigar 2, sewing covers for the Tibetan books in the Library, cleaning the area around the Capannone, cleaning the wooded area near Rinpoche's retreat cabin, with a lot of help from Rinpoche, rescuing the cherry trees from overgrowth, planting flowers in the forest, making a vegetable garden and putting a fence around it, removing stones and laying grass in front of Rinpoche's house, repairing and organizing the tool shed behind the Merigar house (a seemingly mammoth undertaking), repainting the Stupa that is now radiant in the long awaited sunlight.

Work still to be completed:

cleaning around the Capannone, enclosing the stair area at the Gonpa, clearing the wooded area and bringing up the wood to Merigar to use for our oven (for bread, etc.), varnishing the wood at the Capannone, Gonpa, the windows at the house, replacing the windows at the Capannone. As you can see, much work has been done and there is always something more to do.

The people participating are enjoying the activity of physical work and the opportunity to work together.

It is also gratifying to help to replenish and give back to Merigar, since it has provided us with so many years of a beautiful environment where we have been able to receive the precious Dzog-chen teachings.

There will be several Karma Yoga weekends at Merigar during this summer. See the Merigar program page 7.



Courier service

Please, before travelling to Italy from the U.S., contact Sara Renner Handley, the secretary at Tsegylgar, to see if there are important messages or small items or letters to be transported. Telephone: 413 369 4713.

All other countries can contact their Gakyils for the same service.

Guiding and dedicating the practice



Photo Lewis Mills

by a Practitioner

Every so often we practitioners should stop and observe ourselves. We should observe ourselves without being afraid of finding faults or errors. In one of these moments of observation we may ask ourselves what is our attitude, our state of mind when we gather together to do a practice or a tun. The reasons why we are all on this path are so obvious that there is no point in speaking about them. But apart from these obvious reasons and the indisputable reason of final realization, what do we, with our human point of view which meets so many difficulties so easily, try to develop when we consider doing any type of practice?

What are we trying to make better?

In short, let us observe our state of mind when we prepare to do a practice. The sensations, the hopes, the promises and the wishes that each one of us feels and renews from time to time during the practice are numerous, very personal and the fruit of our sensitivity.

Yet among all these sensations, there should be some which are common to all practitioners, such as a positive state of mind, an attentive attitude, a joyful sensation and a form of sincere offering and devotion.

This is because we are about to be in touch with the Master, the Illuminates, the Dakinis and many other beings whose dimensions we do not know.

If we consider our practice to be also an offering, we can improve our type of attitude. We can make this offering with great kindness and generosity which comes from the depth of our heart. In this way we can consider that the beings to whom we dedicate the practice, including the Master, are all present in front of us even before starting the practice!

Therefore it is clear that the person who leads the practice makes a double offering and that is why it is very important to guide the practice even if it is not done perfectly.

Our attitude when we do a practice is far more important than whether we do the practice in a perfect way.

When we do the collective practice (not the tundra etc.), it would be a help and a great kindness for the practitioners, the practice and oneself if the person leading the practice would recall the attention of the other practitioners to what they are doing in two or three words, from time to time.

Guiding and dedicating the practice is a form of love and an offering to the Teaching, the Master and the other practitioners.

If you wish please send your questions about your doubts and uncertainties to The Mirror. We shall try to clarify them together.

Reprinted from the Merigar Letter n° 59

Tibetan Bon culture

by Tsula Saarikoski

Lobpon Tenzin Namdak, who was the last principal Teacher of Menri monastery in Tibet, and now the Lobpon of the Bon monastery in Dolanji, near Simla, in India, still continues to work on behalf of the Tibetan Bon refugees both in India and in Nepal.

"There are about 80,000 Tibetans, scattered around India. The majority, about two thirds, live in South-India, in five or six different districts. Indian government cut down forests to make farming land for them, and they are still mostly farmers. They live in a climate that is rather too hot and damp, and the altitude is very low being near the sea. The Tibetans who live in North-India, near the Himalayan range, and have a direct contact with Dalai Lama's exile government in Dharamsala, have adapted themselves more easily, as the climate is more like their own," Lobpon Namdak says.

"In Nepal there are several thousand Tibetan refugees, but no exact figure is available. Tibetans who are not Buddhist by religion but Bon are a very small minority, in India and Nepal altogether about 3000 to 4000 people. In the Bodhi area there has been a strong population of the Bon for many centuries."

"They are a minority, and they are very poor. After we established the Bon monastery and settlement in Dolanji, a possibility to get a high level monastic education was settled in India, but the Nepalese Bon, who live near the borders of Tibet, were too poor to be able to afford to send their sons to Dolanji." So Lobpon Namdak managed to buy land in Nepal, in Kathmandu, and started a school and a Bon cultural centre there. Since teaching in Tibetan language was

not allowed in Nepalese schools for a long time, this opportunity was badly needed. It can also serve Tibetan boys who live near the border but on the other side, since the Chinese education system is still not functioning very well, and Tibetans in Tibet have very little possibilities of going to school, at least in the countryside.

"There is not that problem in India, because the Indian government supplies schools for all children, both girls and boys, and also Tibetan is taught. In India the main problem is how to make the ancient Bon culture survive. As the Bon are poor and cannot travel or make contacts with foreign organisations or humanitarian groups, Bon colonies have so far received very little help from outside. Among the Tibetans, the Dalai Lama and many other leaders of the Tibetans see the necessity of survival of the Bon culture as part of the Tibetan culture in general. That support we have. But mostly the basic economy of the Bon schools comes from local Bon settlements, which are not well off themselves," Lobpon Namdak explains the general background of his active work.

"Now the Bon religion and culture begin to be better known in the west, but achieving financial support is still not easy." At the moment there are 60 boys in Dolanji and 15 at the school in Kathmandu, where building is proceeding well, but means for having more pupils are still lacking. One boy's boarding and education costs approximately 20 US dollars a month. "For the girls the only possibility to get education is to go to normal Tibetan schools. So far we can only educate boys as we hope to keep our religion alive by preserving the monastic system,

although if the boys want to become monks or not is their own decision. In a monastic system education is only for boys."

Recently, in April and May, Lobpon Namdak travelled in Europe with Geshe Nyima, who is principal of the Kathmandu school and one of the first geshe (highest academic degree, corresponding to a western Ph.D.) from Dolanji. Lobpon gave teachings in Austria, Italy, both in Rome and Merigar and in England, in London and Devon. From Italy, Lobpon Namdak flew to England, and from there to Amsterdam, Holland, where he had been invited by the Dzog-chen Community.

Lobpon has now returned to Kathmandu in good health, and will stay mostly there, in Nepal, until his next journey, which will be to the USA, in October.

Lobpon Tenzin Namdak at Merigar

by Adriano Clemente

After almost two years Master Lobpon Tenzin Namdak has returned to Merigar. The teachings started on the afternoon of May 3rd with a general introduction to the Tantric tradition of Bon. The next day Lobpon Namdak continued with a full analysis of the Tantric practice methods, kyledrim and dzogrim.

Lobpon also transmitted a short Sadhana of Meri linked to the formal initiation which he had already given at Merigar in August 1989, and only a week before in Rome. On May 5th, at the request of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Lobpon Tenzin Namdak concluded by giving the Lung of the whole Shang-Shung Nyin gyud, the oldest and most authoritative Dzog-chen text in the Bon tradition.

Congratulations and all best wishes from The Mirror and the Dzog-chen Community to Elio Guarisco and his bride, Dolma, a Tamang girl, whose people are of Tibetan origin and live in Nepal and the north of India.

The couple are building a cosy "cottage" in the hills of Sonady, West Bengal, where Elio is still working on the translation project of the "Shes bya kun kyas" of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodra Taye, an encyclopedic work. Long life and happiness to them both.

Lublin, Poland

May 12th, 1991

Dear Community, Tashi Delegs,

Thank you for your letter of January 25th and the issues of the Mirror. I have made contact with some of the friends from Cracov, and received a book on Yantra Yoga.

I am not very fast in learning Yantra Yoga, and am still practising some Hatha Yoga, which I am more familiar with.

I recall the phrase of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche that says that when we concretely discover our existence, this is much more important than practice and vital to our life in society. So, I am trying to observe myself without self condemnation.

Lastly, we received some training of Shambala from Trungpa, and I am happy to announce that Lama Tenzin Namdak is going to visit us at the end of June.

Best wishes to all of you.

Marek Macko

A letter from the dark

by Kathy Smith

This July will mark the beginning of the seventh year that the Tsegialgar Yang-tig cabin has been open. Even before Rinpoche's consecration of it, people were drawing energy from and contributing energy to this small pioneer cabin in the woods. In the fall of 1983, Rinpoche spoke to us of a special practice that he had introduced to his then small group in Italy. For certain reasons or secondary causes, this practice did not develop there at that time. Also, there needed to be a place, a small house of specific construction and conditions to do this practice. Being inspired by this, Joe Zurylo offered his Conway land to Rinpoche for the future of this Yang-tig practice. Joe had been having thoughts of his own on building a small retreat cabin because there was no room or privacy at our group house. Rinpoche accepted and went to the 11 acres to find a location. The site was chosen at the land's highest point at the base of a long dead tree where the lines of three-pronged tree clusters intersected.

Next, what to design? Rinpoche suggested a small house with eight rooms each 6 feet by 6 feet. But, we said, many western people are over 6 feet tall and wouldn't be able to lie down. True, he said, so we will have six rooms. And so, carpenters, designers, people with good ideas and active imaginations merged. The design of four upstairs rooms, two downstairs rooms, wash place, tea place, heating system, septic, ventilation, water and safe passage not to mention total darkness proved to be exhilarating. Many "concrete concepts" had to be thrown out to think in a new way. Popular Mechanics magazine had no kits or proven blueprints for a dark cabin so the entire project became an exercise in collaboration and integration.

By the following spring, we were ready to build. The foundation went in and in July, the deck went on. Rinpoche filled a clay pot with mantras, relics, and the donations of "something valuable" from the retreat participants that year. This collective treasure was buried under the foundation of the Yang-tig cabin



Kathy Smith, attendant of the Yan-tig cabin

as we all did a practice and made offerings to the Guardians. I think we all had the sense of history in the making, personal and otherwise, as we stood on the cabin's deck, surrounding the buried treasure. The soft notes of the Song of the Vajra were drifting upward to the Dakinis who were sitting in the trees and on the clouds. The summer after that we were ready for the first group of six, led by Norbu Rinpoche, to take the cabin on its maiden voyage.

When Rinpoche told us that the Yang-tig cabin would need an attendant to bring food and organize the schedule, I felt that maybe I could help. The cabin was in my backyard and so my kitchen would be the closest. Water power came from our house which is about 600 feet away in the woods. We had the nearest phone and transportation drop-off point. At that time, I was raising an eight-year old son and wanted to spend more time at home. This also seemed like the perfect chance to merge worldly needs with valuable group practice. I had remembered that years before, after doing some cleaning for my teacher, Mrs. Anderson, she had told me with a sparkle in her eye that I cleaned and took care of things well. This praise had an opposite effect at the time. I was embarrassed and depressed that while other women were making themselves known in graphic art (my chosen field) at a time when women were breaking out from the "old mould", I, in

contrast, could make a dirty sink shine. Big deal! But now, thinking back, maybe she was unknowingly reading my future usefulness. Meaning can be found in unexpected places and the Teachings do not insist that one's capacity come directly from career development. And so, I offered my services as cabin attendant.

Since there was not a real job description or role model beyond food, water, heat and transportation, the details of the job were mine to solve. Questions naturally arose. What could I feed people in the dark? Rinpoche suggested sandwiches as a simple way to put the food groups into an easily edible package and maybe soup in the evening. How do I behave and communicate in the dark, no body language or eye contact here? The interpretation of sounds became important in understanding how someone was doing. Was their signal knock loud or soft? Were they sighing, laughing, coughing, belching, or drinking too much water or not eating their soup? All these things became clues to the understanding of how the person on the other side of the door was doing. At first, I tried to maintain the cabin as a regular household, cleaning and organizing it daily. One day I was sweeping the dark hallways with a pushbroom when Nancy Simmons took me aside and said, "What are you doing?" I replied that I was trying to keep the cabin clean.

"That's very dedicated of you," she said, "but don't you think that a peaceful, quiet atmosphere is more important than sweeping dust on the floor?" And of course, she was right. After that, I continued to clean but with the knowledge that I must maintain a light, relaxed and inconspicuous presence. The dust could wait.

Normal patterns of activity had to be re-examined. If people needed to be taken care of and couldn't see, then I had to anticipate their movements ahead of time. All things must be conveniently placed and easy to operate. Along with my own ideas, many other people were able to contribute helpful suggestions from their own experience. There is a subtle joy in this collaboration of practitioners who shape something concrete in the Teachings for the benefit of those who will follow. Something is taken, yet something is given. The energy of the efforts made both in the practice of Yang-tig and the support of it seem to collect yearly. It resonates in the cabin, you can feel it and be inspired by its presence each time you do a retreat. Generally, when people first come to the cabin, they are a little apprehensive. After all, a trip in the 'almost' Bardo is not to be taken lightly. Also, they think that I will escort them to the door, push them in the right direction and wish them good luck. Instead, they receive a full "lights-on" tour. People can see the different rooms, choose one and learn where everything is and how to use it. Food packaging, window operation and communication is explained. I have found that the more comfortable and familiar people feel with their new dark surroundings, the more quickly they can integrate and benefit. When people have nothing to worry about, more of the "worry" energy can go into the contemplation of viewing oneself in the dark mirror.

There is a misconception of many people that the cabin is filled all the time as it is in July when Rinpoche visits. This is not the case. Because time is short and plane tickets are expensive, people try to combine a Yang-tig retreat with the larger retreat at Tsegialgar. July is usually

the warmest and most humid month of the Massachusetts year. The cabin feels hot, the air is still except for the occasional floating "mosquito from hell". Unfortunately, sometimes people think this is the permanent situation. In August the days cool down and the rooms become very available. Fall, winter and spring are the best retreat seasons. The wood stove heating system makes the cabin a year round possibility. Also there are many times when one can do a retreat completely alone, without even a mosquito!

I feel very grateful to the Community for making this Yang-tig attendant's job possible for me. Over the years, I have met many wonderful people from all over the world. For a brief time we share the intimate experience of real collaboration. Because of the nature of the retreat, pretence is left on the doorstep and trust must take over. I take this role very seriously because each person I take care of is an active renewal of my samaya. Also, it gives me a chance to combine the practices I have learned in the past with those I am learning now. The Gurdjieff teachings taught me that awareness can happen when sitting calmly or working in the world. We actually did very little sitting practice. Instead, our methods gathered experiences of self observation while gardening, dancing, cooking, babysitting or building things. These are the activities of our everyday existence and if we can practice then, all moments will have the potential of awareness. I try to bring this knowledge to my "wordly job" of cabin attendant as I also study Dzog-chen. I have had great support from all of you in making this rare situation my practice. Also, many thanks to Rinpoche for the endless flow of blessings that we all share! I am looking forward to taking care of all of you in the future! If you wish to do a retreat please call or write to:

Kathy Smith
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Conway, Ma. 01341, USA
Tel. 413-625-9263
Please give me at least one week's notice before your planned retreat.

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The North European Tibetologists' conference will take place in Finland on the 16th to 18th of August, in Ostersundom, outside Helsinki.

For information, contact: Mr. Olli Holopainen,

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THE SIX VAJRA VERSES

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*Jixinva xes midog yan
nambar nanzad gundusan*

Even though there is no thought what is called 'just as it is', These various appearances which are created are ultimately good (transcending relative good and evil).

What is 'as it is'?

Jixinva means as it is, without correcting, changing or influencing. Changing or influencing is an activity carried out by the mind. Throughout our lives, we enter into mental reasoning and analysis. Reasoning is not part of peaceful living. If you want to relax, you have to go beyond this and find yourself in your condition as it really is. This is one of the principal things in the practice. The fourth agreement of meaning in Dzog-chen is thus related:

drandonla midon nesdonla don
(drang.don.la. mi.rton. nges.don.la. rton.)

The whole phrase means, 'do not rely on drandon', which means not what things seem to be according to what people say, but on how things really are.

Don means 'meaning'. Dran can be understood in the following way.

If someone is a bit unfriendly to me, somehow I make him my friend. Whether it is a matter of giving him a present, or saying some pleasant words, psychologically I make him feel that he is wonderful person. Perhaps I enter into the person's culture and habits. I might not like smoking because I know it is bad for me. But if I am with somebody who likes smoking, I might get on with him by trying a cigarette. That means I am entering into that person's habits, at least, in order to communicate with him.

We know what causes the six lokas, each of which has its particular karmic vision. We know that Sakyamuni Buddha, for example, entered into the karmic vision of individuals in order to be able to communicate with them. He did not argue about what people believe at a relative level. You will know if you have studied some Buddhist philosophy, such as the Abhidarmakosa in particular, that there is an explanation of kham (kham), the universe, or Dhatu in Sanskrit, which is about the world with Mount Meru and the four continents etc. Many pandits, particularly learned monks who are rather conditioned and limited by words, think that this is the specific Buddhist view of the cosmos, as expressed by Buddha. When you speak about the round planet earth, as we do today, they say, 'How can that be possible?'

When I arrived in India for the first time, I was in Kalimpong for a few months, where there was an able and learned Mongolian gexes (dge.bshes). This gexes interested me a great deal and I was a very good friend of his because I was studying



Garab Dorje

Mongolian language and literature. Whenever I did not understand something I went to him, so we spent a lot of time together. But we got into arguments sometimes. He said to me, 'What do you think of this round earth business?' I said, 'I do not think that it is very strange. I myself believe it.' He said, 'For goodness sake, it is impossible to have a round earth! If you believe in that sort of thing you do not believe in the Buddha's words!' I said, 'Who says that I do not believe in the Buddha's words?' He said, 'Well, look at the whole Abhidarmakosa.

The explanation is there, how could you possibly believe in a round earth?' I tried to argue a little, but felt that it was impossible, so it was better to leave him alone. I was afraid that if I argued too much, I would not be able to study Mongolian with him.

A few days later, he showed me a whole exercise book he had written out with the argument disproving the round earth.

He told me to take the book home to read what he had to say and wanted to tell me to tell him what I thought. He was sure that if I read this book when I went home, I would discover that I was mistaken. I can understand that mentality perfectly, because there are a lot of people who think the same way.

But the truth of the matter is that the Buddha entered into and communicated through the culture and habits of the people. In the Abhidarmakosa, the whole explanation of Dhatu, of the universe, is typical of the culture that existed well before the arrival of Buddha in India. Buddha did not take birth to provoke a revolution in India. Buddha knew very well that these were concepts one believes in, that is why he said that until final realisation, everything is illusory. But if Buddha did not believe in anything real and did not confirm anything, why did he make such an explanation as in the

Abhidarmakosa? What happened is that Buddha accepted and entered into people's understanding in order to communicate with them. That is what we mean by drandon, entering into the meaning of things to carry people through.

In the Buddhist teachings, we speak of drandon and nesdon.

The Buddhist Sutra is the vehicle of drandon, the vehicle of the cause, to carry people into understanding. Dzog-chen teaching, however, is the vehicle of nesdon. Nesdon means 'real', the 'true meaning'.

It is called the true meaning because we enter into the real meaning without changing anything, as it is. Jixinva means this. This is not a knowledge about the final stage of meditation. This is something very important to discover.

When people learn Tantrism, they learn a lot of subtle definitions and when they speak about the nature of the mind, they think they are reserving it as a final point to arrive at.

In Dzogchen, when we speak about jixinva, we are not only speaking about the nature of the mind, we are also speaking about our existence as it is.

The real understanding of the existence of our body, voice and mind is not the conceptual idea of 'the nature of the mind,' and we have to find it in the state of jixinva. When there is this knowledge of jixinva, that is called Dzog-chen.

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