

THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

April/May 2003 • Issue No. 64

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Australia, 2003 The Land of Namgyalgar North

by Carol Albert

From Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's holiday house at Caloundra (Aboriginal Kalowendha, place of beech trees), you can see the Glass House Mountains, hazy purple in the Australian summer sun.

These great rocks have sat there for 60 million years, volcanic cores, standing guardian over the land and the sea. They have seen the local Aboriginal people living there since at least 20 thousand years ago and possibly up to 50 thousand years ago, people coming from other tribes to gather for the initiation ceremonies at the sacred sites called bora rings. In 1841 white settlers witnessed 1000 Aborigines gathered at a nearby bora ring.

The Aboriginal stories go back to their Dreamtime when the mountains were people, members of a family. The mother is Beerwah meaning "up in the sky" and together they are interestingly called "daki" related to the Sanskrit for "sky goer", also the Aboriginal word for stones, "daki comon" or "stones standing".

The local tribes believed there are wrathful spirits living on the mountains. There have been many "UFO" sightings of strange lights on the mountaintops. An Aboriginal guide told us there are caves where sacred implements were hidden.

Now the mountain guardians have watched as 210 Dzogchen retreatants have converged for the first retreat at "Namgyalgar North" with Rinpoche, again making this a sacred place. Although this extension of Namgyalgar does not own the land, the story is similar to that of the Aborigines who came from far away for sacred ceremonies (at the retreat there were people from many countries).

As Rinpoche walked on the land where prayer flags flew on bamboo poles and we sang the Song of the Vajra, the place was transformed, even more so as the Sog Tig Mandarava teachings continued for five days. Where the corroboree dance ceremonies and the traditional didgeridoos had once sounded in the area, we had Tsering Dorjee Bawa of the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts in Dharamsala dance Tibetan sacred dances, and Tsering and Tenzing Tsewang sharing



Aboriginal name of Father Mountain of the Glasshouse Mountains - Tibrogargan

R. ALBERT

Tibetan music and songs with us.

Tsering performed the Black Hat dance (Shanak) to remove negative energies from the mind and evil spirits from the surroundings. It goes back to the time of Padmasambhava in the seventh century to harmonize energy and prevent obstacles caused by the provocations of local spirits. He also offered the dance Tashi Shoelpa, a longevity and prosperity dance performed on auspicious occasions, to Rinpoche for long life.

As a local practitioner I was aware of the connection with this land which has now seen Rinpoche come to teach.



Tsering Dorjee Bawa performs Shanak Dance S. VORON

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CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

SCHEDULE

2003 - 2004



2003

RUSSIA

May 20st

Leave for Moscow

Santi Maha Sangha

May 27th-29th

Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Exam

May 30th-June 3rd

Santi Maha Sangha 3rd Level Training

June 5th-9th

Kunsangar Retreat Teaching: Longsal Tsalung

ITALY

June 13th

Leave for Rome

June 18th-22nd

Dzogchen Padma Nyingthig Teaching Retreat

June 27th - July 14th

Personal Retreat

Santi Maha Sangha

July 15th-17th

Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Exam

July 18th-22nd

Santi Maha Sangha 3rd Level Training

August 10th- 16th

A retreat about Rigs-drug gnas-sbyong

August 18th - 20th.

Retreat with H.H. Sakya Trizin

USA

August 25th

Leave for New York City

August 29th -31st

New York City Teaching

September 1st

Leave for Tsegalgar

September 5th - 9th

Dzogchen Padma Nyingthig Teaching

September 9th -14th

Longsal Gongpa Ngotrod Teaching

Santi Maha Sangha

September 17th - 18th

Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Exam

September 19th - 23rd

Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Training

CALIFORNIA

September 29 Leave for Baja, Mexico

October 3 -5 West Coast retreat, Baja, Mexico

MIAMI

October 9 Public talk -University of Miami-Coral Gables

October 10 - 12 Dzogchen Retreat- St. John by the Lake- Miami Beach

MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA

October 13

Leave for Margarita.

October 31 - November 4

Longsal Tsalung Retreat

December 8 Margarita Long Life Practice (Rinpoche's birthday)

BRAZIL

December 10

Leave for San Paolo, Brazil.

December 12 -14

Brazil retreat

CHILE

December 16

Leave for Chile

December 18

Talk on Tibetan Medicine

December 19 -21

Santiago retreat

ARGENTINA

December 22

Leave for Cordoba

2003 - 2004

December 26 - January 2 Tashigar retreat

Santi Maha Sangha

January 6 - 8

SMS Base Exam

January 9 - 13

SMS 1st Level Training

January 15 - 16

SMS 1st Level Exam

January 17-21

SMS 2nd Level Training

January 23

SMS 2nd Level Exam

January 24- 28

SMS 3rd Level Training

**NEW 2004 schedule for
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
see bottom of page 4**

I would like to welcome everyone to this retreat. We have an almost comfortable place to do retreats.

Sacrifice

In general, in my experience, when we follow the teachings, we are not always that comfortable. We are comfortable when we go on holidays, but not for the teaching. It is almost a kind of tradition. There is also a reason and that reason is that people who are interested in the teachings need to understand that the teachings are something valuable, and since they are valuable we must make some sacrifices.

If you read the history of Milarepa you will understand his sacrifice. There was also a reason for his suffering; Milarepa lived in Tibet where it was not comfortable, not even for teachers. He also made sacrifices for purification and the teaching. That is a traditional kind of way. When I was small I made a lot of sacrifices both for study and for learning how to do the practice. For example, when I was in college, I had no food for many months. I spent time without food because my family was not very near and couldn't bring me any food. Other families who lived nearby promised to bring me food because the college did not provide it, but after some time these families did not bring anything so I had no food. That is an example of sacrifice. Sometimes we have this kind of situation.

The famous Longchenpa, one of the most important Dzogchen teachers, followed a teacher during the Winter but Longchenpa had no food. Longchenpa used only chülen pills every day, for a great many days, and lived and followed the teaching in this way. He also had no place to sleep. He had a bed and maybe a sack to put some objects in; he went inside at night and slept in some corner. Longchenpa explains all this in his autobiography. That is an example of how it is not so bad to make a sacrifice sometimes.

In the West the situation is different. In general we don't need to make this kind of sacrifice; there is usually the possibility to get food and have a place to stay. In the West we need money because if there is no money we cannot live. Many people are not able to go on retreat because they have no money. I know that very well. This situation is a pity and very sad; it is the condition of a country and its people and we really cannot do very much about it.

Four Mindfulnesses & Awareness

When we speak, for example, of the qualities of people, one of the mindfulnesses from the four mindfulnesses refers to the perfect condition of a human being. It explains the eighteen qualities - five perfected qualities related with ourselves and five qualities related with our dimension and situation. There are eight missing conditions, otherwise we cannot be free. We say that if we have the eighteen qualities of a human being, there is the possibility to follow the teachings. That is the idea. Not everybody exists as a human being. For example, there is



Rinpoche, Namgyalgar, Australia

Dzogchen Teaching Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Three Considerations, The Three Gates & Awareness Christmas Retreat at Namgyalgar December 26, 2002 Part I

a teacher and that is one circumstance. There is not only a teacher, but the teacher has received transmission and has the possibility to transmit that teaching. Also, there is a person interested in the teaching. These are qualifications. In general, when we are following Buddhist teachings like Sutra and Tantra, the four mindfulnesses are always explained at the beginning and are considered to be very important.

When we follow the Dzogchen teaching, the most important thing is to be more aware, to know the real situation or circumstance. The principle is not to do a kind of analysis by listing the five or ten conditions. These kinds of numbers and analyses do not always correspond to the circumstance. Each country, airport, moment and condition is different. In this case, it is very important that we are aware, that we know how our circumstances are, what the possibilities are and then do our best. Even if we are doing a retreat for only a few days, it is still very important that we are aware and do something useful. Useful means that, first of all, we try to really understand the teaching - what it means and what it is for. We shouldn't consider, "Ah there is a teaching, there is a blessing, there is a title to this teaching, etc." If we go after those kind of ideas then nothing very important remains.

The Three Considerations

The teaching is to understand our real condition and to help ourselves. First of all, if we help ourselves then we can help others. If we gain some realization then we have a possibility to help others. Therefore it is most important to be aware. There are explanations in the teachings which refer to the three considerations. The three considerations means that a teacher is similar to a doctor or physician and we have an illness. It is not that we are really ill, but we have a condition, for example, we have very strong emotions. We have three or five different kinds of emotions.

When we are conditioned by these emotions it is very similar to having an illness. We cannot control the emotions by ourselves and they create problems. That is a particular illness, not a general illness.

In the Buddhist teaching there are also many different names of Buddha and one of the important is Menpa Chenpo which means "great doctor" or "great physician". It does not only mean physician for healing some part of the body, but for healing the illness of samsara, the illness of the emotions. We already have this illness. For that reason when we follow the teaching, we need to consider the teacher as a doctor and the teaching as medicine. The doctor gives medicine; not only medicine but also advice. The doctor also discovers which kind of problem or illness we have. That is the reason we go to a doctor, otherwise we don't need to go. Most of the time we don't know we have this illness, only when we feel a concrete illness in our existence and we don't know what to do, then we go to a doctor. The doctor checks us, does an examination, asks us questions, all to discover which kind of problem we have. Finally he gives us advice. First of all, he sees which kind of behavior we have and whether we need to change it. Then whether we need to change our diet because we have a physical body. The physical body is similar to a car, for example. A car needs water and petrol continually, it cannot work without these things. In the same way, we eat at least three times a day, eating and drinking continually to maintain our life and our physical body.

When we talk about medicine we know that medicine contains many ingredients which have different functions. Food is similar and is produced with different kinds of ingredients. Some food is good for us and some is not. When we have a certain illness some foods are not good for us and for that reason the doctor gives advice about diet and also behaviour. Then he gives us medicine. After we go to the doctor, what should we do? We have

learned that when we visit the doctor we should ask very precise questions so we do not remain in doubt about what to do. Then when we understand, we can apply that. It is not sufficient only that we have medicine; we must take that medicine. In the same we follow the teaching; first we learn in order to know why and what for and after we use what we learn to have some benefit.

This is what we call the three considerations. The teacher of the three considerations is like a doctor, the teaching is like medicine or the advice of the doctor and we are the person who is ill. If we follow in that way then it has some benefit.

Intellectual learning does not have much benefit. In general, most people learn the teachings in an intellectual way. We can also learn about medicine in an intellectual way, but if we never use the medicine, behavior or diet, we cannot have any benefit even though we may understand it very well.

It is very important that we are aware of this situation. Particularly we must not have three wrong considerations because when there are incorrect considerations, there are also wrong ideas. Wrong ideas are something like seeing the teacher as a deer. A deer has a horn and this fresh horn is very precious medicine so many hunters kill it in order to take it. Sometimes students may think of themselves as hunters and the teacher as a horn. Then their only interest is to take the horn with no consideration of the value of the teacher, of the teaching, etc. It is necessary that we know this value and work together because we need the teacher and teaching until we have total realization and that does not mean just one or two days. It seems that people have this wrong idea, not the correct three ideas, because they think the teaching is a technique which they can take. This is very dangerous and particularly in the West there are these kinds of problems. In Tibet we don't have this problem very much because, even if they don't know very much about or follow the teaching, everybody understands something. Otherwise, even if they do not understand, they have faith and consider that they have received a blessing. That is all.

In the West there are many people who think, "Oh I want to go to this teacher, I want to interrogate this teacher and I want to discover this method. Then I can use this method for my comfort, create something and later I can do a workshop and write a nice book." Many people are interested in this kind of teaching - in Tibetan we say 'ra med lug med'. 'Ra med lug med' means no goat, no sheep, no-one, they take a little from Hinduism, a little from Buddhism, a little from Sufism and put it all together and say, "Oh I wrote this book", and later do a workshop. A lot of people go to the workshop and say it has much benefit. Sometimes there are some

small benefits, but small benefits cannot really help to free us from samsara. The teaching is to free us from samsara, from all our emotions, etc., not only to have some small benefit.

So all of this is very important and related with our awareness. We must understand this particularly when we do a retreat. For example, from today we have seven more days of retreat; this is a longer retreat, not a short one. In general, I do many weekend retreats of only three days. Seven days seems to be many days, but in the real sense it is not, it passes very quickly. So it is very important that you concentrate for that short time and learn something concrete in order to have some benefit. Then, when we have finished this retreat, you can ask yourself, "What have I learned and understood?" That is something important.

If you have only learned how to sit and breathe when doing practice, these are only secondary things and not the main point. Of course you can learn these things, they are necessary and, in any case, whether you practice or not, you sit somewhere. There are correct ways to sit and this brings some benefit for that person while the incorrect way creates some problems. That is an example. It is necessary to sit correctly but is not the main point. When we do a retreat, I try to introduce the main point of teaching; I repeat it again and again. So you must try to understand that this is something very important, not only intellectual understanding, that it brings great benefit for you. It is not only sitting in a correct position sometimes and saying we are doing meditation. It is not that.

The teaching is for living until we die, in samsara. It is not to escape from this condition, but so that we can integrate, feel better and have fewer problems. The teaching is very useful for everybody. In general, people consider that the teaching is for "spiritual people". Those who do not follow the teaching think, "Oh it is not necessary". Of course, you can live without following any kind of teaching. If you say you live without eating and drinking, that is not possible. You can live very well without following a teaching but you will have many problems arising continually. If you understand the sense of the teaching, you integrate in the teaching and have fewer problems in this life. This is also a sign of a practitioner. Many people ask me, "How can we discover if we are becoming realized?" I reply, "You don't have to worry about that. Do practice and you will discover." When you practice, your clarity also develops; you can understand, you can also check and observe yourself in your daily life. If you feel you have fewer problems, that means your practice is working. It has a function. If you always have the same problems continually, that means you are not integrating your knowledge of the teaching in this lifetime. It only remains an intellectual understanding. Even if you know many things, it doesn't help very much, just like knowing many things about medicine and not applying it. It is similar.

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The Three Gates

It is important to know the real sense of the teaching. We cannot find it outside of ourselves. To discover the real sense of the teaching we must observe ourselves and discover how we are, how our condition is. In speaking of the condition of mind I am first of all speaking of the nature of the mind. But before we can speak of the nature of mind, we must try and discover how our mind is, how our body is and how our energy level is. In general, in the teachings, we speak of the Three Gates: body, speech and mind. That means a physical body, the function of the energy level and the mind, which is always thinking and judging. These Three Gates are what a person is composed of. We each have them and live with this condition so it is very important that we know how this condition is.

The mind is like a commander, always ordering our body and our energy: do this, do that, go this way and that way. Then our energy and our body follow. You see, everything arises first in our mind, "Oh, I want to do this," and then we do it. So, of course, the mind is very important. But mind is dependent on our energy level, our energy level is dependent on our physical body, and our mind, energy level and physical level, everything, is very limited because we are living in a limited world. We live with dualistic vision. For example, we cannot see anything without opening our eyes. Seeing is related with our eyes, hearing with our ears. We are dependent on all the organs of our senses and our senses are related with our physical body. The function, we say, is the consciousness of the senses and that is more related with the energy level. The energy level communicates what is seen and heard immediately to the mind. Then the mind thinks, judges and commands. So we can understand that the mind is most important. But only going after mind is not so very easy until we are able to control our energy and our physical body.

That is why we have so many aspects of practice related with the physical body in the teachings, like Yantra Yoga. Also with the Vajra Dance, we have movement of the physical body. These practices are related with the energy level because through the physical body we can control our energy. Once we can control our energy, we can control the mind. That is why all three aspects are important.

It is very important that you understand what is meant in the Buddhist teaching tradition when we say that all teachings of the Buddha are the same. We say that Buddha, Dharma, everything is the same, in a unique way, but always the same. In the real sense they are not the same, because everything is related to the condition of the individual and whether an individual has a high, medium, or lower capacity. Then the teacher needs to find a different way, just like with medicine. For example, there are hundreds of different kinds of medicine in a pharmacy. It is not sufficient to have only one kind of medicine for everything because there are different situations and different conditions. In the same way, there are many, many different kinds of teachings.

These teachings can be considered to be of three kinds belonging to the three vehicles of Mahayana, Hinayana and Tantrism or Vajrayana. When you read about Buddhist teachings or history you will understand that. We are learning about the Dzogchen teaching in which there is a kind of introduction of the path, the teaching. This is something characteristic of the Dzogchen teaching and is very, very important. If you know that, then you will have less problems, less confusion about the different teachings. All teachings are just like medicines and all medicines are for curing different kinds of illness. A person can have different kinds of illnesses at different times, not necessarily one illness all the time. And everyone does not have the same illness at the same time, it depends the situation. In the same way all teachings have their qualities, their value.

The teachings are related with our Three Gates, the three existences of body, speech and mind. This is very important and something you should always remember. There are three kinds of teachings corresponding to the Three Gates. This doesn't mean there is a teaching belonging only to the physical body or mind - this does not exist. There are teachings related mainly to the physical body or the mind. Human beings do not only have a mind or physical body. We need all three aspects. The teachings mainly for the mind level are elevated or higher teachings because the mind is more difficult to understand. You can understand that the mind is more important than the physical body because when we die, for example, our physical body goes to the cemetery and remains there, not the mind. When we transmigrate it is not our physical body transmigrating but our mind. So the mind is more important. Also when we consider realization, realization is related with our existence of mind, body and energy. For that reason we can understand that the mind is more and more difficult to understand. Everything on the physical level is easy. For example, on the physical level you can see with your eyes, you can touch and have direct contact. Physical things are objects of our senses so it is not so difficult to understand.

The mind is not like that. If you observe the face of someone and try to imagine what that person is thinking, if you have no realization you cannot understand what that person is thinking. But you can always understand the energy or physical level of a person and recognize them. That is because that person has specific physical characteristics. It is very easy. It is also easier to recognize someone on the level of energy rather than the mental or mind level. For example, if someone is angry, you can look at that person and understand that the person is very charged up and nervous. For that reason the teachings are related mainly with these three conditions.

Vows & Integration

This is also a kind of introduction to the Dzogchen method of teaching. It is not taught this way in general Buddhism. In the general Buddhist way we speak of the three vehicles. If you become a Dzogchen practitioner you must understand all three levels characteristic of the teachings, because you can inte-

grate them when you need to. It is not obligatory that you learn and follow the more general Buddhist methods, but sometimes it is necessary.

I will give you a very simple example. Some people say, "Oh I want to stop smoking, I have discovered that smoking is not good for my health and creates illness." That person then has a desire and tries to stop. They see that smoking is no good and they no longer want to smoke. They decide that they want to stop today. Tomorrow that person meets a friend who smokes, and he or she is smoking and asks if the person wants to smoke. The person says, "Oh, I stopped smoking yesterday, but maybe I'll have just one today." It goes ahead like this and you never stop smoking. You continue to try to stop but then you repeat and continue smoking. Everybody has this kind of weak condition.

This method not only works with smoking but with everything, particularly with our emotions. When we speak of the Dzogchen teachings we say we need to be aware; with awareness we can control everything. Sometimes we cannot control everything, even if we are aware. In this case, what can we do? There is no particular method in Dzogchen for taking a vow; taking a vow is part of the Sutra system, particularly Hinayana. It is not Dzogchen, but Dzogchen practitioners sometimes need to take a vow. If you cannot succeed in stopping smoking, then you can take a vow, for example. You can take a vow from your teacher if you consider the teacher important and taking a vow from your teacher carries some weight. If you don't feel like doing that, then there are other possibilities. For example, if you go to visit Bodhgaya, you think, "Oh this place is very, very important. Buddha was illuminated and taught the teaching here. This place is a really sacred place. I want to do something important. What shall I do? I will stop smoking." Then you take a vow, not necessarily from someone, but you take it by yourself, "I won't smoke anymore." Then tomorrow, even if your friend offers you a cigarette, you think about it and weigh up which is heavier. Your vow always carries more weight. Then you won't smoke. If you don't smoke for a week afterwards you will feel less desire for smoking. Then two or three weeks pass, still less. One year passes and instead of feeling like smoking, when you smell smoke you are very sensitive and it disturbs you. That's an example. So you see, sometimes it is necessary to follow a vow.

There are not only vows, but many methods in Mahayana and Hinayana and sometimes we need them. Practitioners must be open. No one should say; "Oh, I am Dzogchen practitioner, I should only use the Dzogchen method." We should do everything integrating it with our awareness. Our interest is to have total realization. That is what we need, so it doesn't matter if it has the title of Dzogchen or not. For that reason we learn about these three characteristics of the teaching and we try to be aware. That is important.

Transcribed by Jenny Hutcherson
Edited by Naomi Zeitz & Liz Granger

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"I AM ALMOST OPTIMISTIC"

AN INTERVIEW with CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

by Mirror Representatives Anna Eid and Joy Dahl, April 16, 2003 at Namgyalgar, Australia.

Mirror: Thank you for your precious time Rinpoche. For many years you have been bringing the richness of the Dzogchen teachings to many people, to many cultures, all around the world. Now we have so many Lings and Gars and practice groups devoted to following these teachings and a large Dzogchen Community worldwide. What is your vision for the future of this worldwide Dzogchen Community?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: I am almost optimistic for the future because in our time we always say, "we are going more and more towards Kaliyuga." That is the general view. I think that slowly more people will have an understanding of Dzogchen teaching; an understanding of Dzogchen teachings doesn't mean building many temples or increasing numbers of people, but increasing awareness.

This is one of the most important aspects of the Dzogchen teachings. It's not necessary to be in a monastery, it's not necessary to be in a spiritual group. In our society that awareness can develop slowly and helps very much for the human condition. Everyone becomes more aware and develops more understanding of the situation.

In my experience, for example, when I arrived in Italy I was teaching Tibetan culture and history at the University. In that period no one understood Dzogchen. After a few years people became interested in Buddhist teachings, and in particular people understood that the essence of Buddhist teaching is Dzogchen.

Today Dzogchen has become a kind of a fashion and some people are not really interested in the teachings, but in fashion. Becoming a fashion is not so very positive. There are many seriously interested in Dzogchen and if only one person is interested and learns the Dzogchen teachings, that person can contribute to others. In this way the teachings multiply. Time is going ahead slowly. In this way the teachings can really contribute very much to the human condition.

Particularly, with our condition in our busy modern society, there is not very much space to do complicated practices. Dzogchen teaching is a knowledge, an understanding that can be integrated into any kind of circumstances. Therefore this teaching becomes more and more important and useful for everybody. I hope very much that this teaching - for the future - contributes a kind of evolution in human beings. This is my hope. So I can say I am almost optimistic, not that I am really thinking something in a concrete way.

Mirror: Are you saying that the way you present the Dzogchen teachings, they are very essential teachings and practices that can be integrated with daily life?

ChNN: Yes. That is most important. For example, when Buddha first explained his teachings, he said the epoch of lung - that means "words of Buddha." In that period everyone studied and then as time passed more *topi tenpa* developed. That means understanding. That means not giving very much possibility for study and developing outer aspects. That is the example today in our modern society; there is not very much possibility for study. For many people it is not so easy at all to do a formal practice like Ngondro; they can't do it.

If you are fortunate and have the possibility to meet a teacher, you can also meet a teacher who has knowledge of Dzogchen and receive that knowledge. Then going ahead with this knowledge, you also have the possibility to inform and transmit to others. This is how the knowledge was passed on for centuries and centuries in the past times. Before Garab Dorje, for example, we know there had been many epochs of Dzogchen teachings, different kinds spreading on earth. These teachings disappeared also because time is impermanent and changing; related with circumstances. Even in that period the Dzogchen teachings developed continuously.

Nyenyuds for example. (*A Nyenyuyud, as explained by Rinpoche in the Introduction to his 1997 Longde Teachings, is a secret phrase of a few words, like a key, used to communicate the essence of Tantras and practices during times when it was difficult to even speak about teachings, due to circumstances. Where many original texts have disappeared, their essence remains in the form of Nyenyuyuds which have been orally transmitted over epochs.*) *Nyenyuds* are an example of how the essence of the teachings remain even if formal outer teachings disappear. Dzogchen teaching can be Sutra, Tantra, or any kind of teaching. The real essence of teachings is Dzogchen teaching. If there is a continuation of Dzogchen teaching, the essence of teaching always continues and does not disappear.

In some Dzogchen Tantras it says that at the end of the world when it is destroyed with fire and elements, in that period, people have very short lives. That is called *tse lo chupa*, which means more or less that the length of life is only ten years. It says that until *tse lo chupa*, the Dzogchen teaching will continue. That is what is said in Tantra. Why will the Dzogchen teaching continue? Because Dzogchen is not connected too much with the outside. It is the essence. When there is mainly understanding and a kind of evolution and people have that knowledge and awareness, then there is always the possibility of continuation.

Mirror: How can practitioners who follow Dzogchen teachings best collaborate with you and each other in developing this optimistic vision?

ChNN: Collaborate with me? They try to apply what I have taught; the teachings. (laughing) Apply what I have said. That is very important and is the best collaboration. For example, if I say, "You try to do Guru Yoga, mainly concentrate on it and integrate with Guru Yoga." That means you try to be, as much as possible, aware in daily life.

If you do that, the collaboration can be with the teacher, with brothers and sisters of Vajra, and that can also be very useful and beneficial for all sentient beings. In that way we can develop our spiritual path more concretely, not only a formal organization.

Mirror: Thank you Rinpoche.

The Art of Happiness

Teachings and Public Talk with His Holiness the Dalai Lama
Paris, France
October 11-17, 2003

Introduction to Buddhism
Saturday October 11, morning and afternoon
Sunday October 12, morning

Although the modern world has made unparalleled material progress, the search to find meaning in life and overcome suffering remains at the heart of all our preoccupations.

In this context, His Holiness the Dalai Lama will present a complete introduction to the Buddhist path and will show how, through spiritual practice, we can not only liberate our minds from suffering, but also achieve profound and authentic happiness.

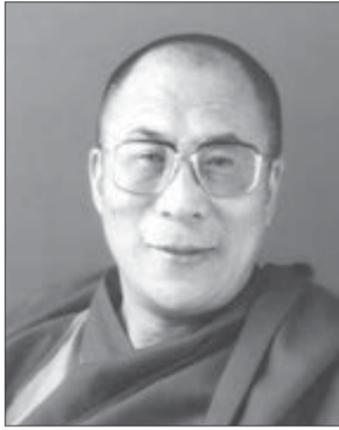
Public Talk

Inner Peace, Universal Peace

Sunday, October 12, afternoon

"Outer disarmament begins with inner disarmament. The only true guarantee for peace is within oneself."

His Holiness the Dalai Lama



Teachings

'Homage to Emptiness' and 'Commentaries on Bodhicitta'

Monday & Thursday, October 13 - 16; morning and afternoon

During these four days, His Holiness the Dalai Lama will comment on two short treatises by Nagarjuna: Homage to Emptiness and Commentaries on Bodhicitta.

Akshobya Empowerment

Friday, October 17, morning

An empowerment is an indispensable step that precedes the higher practices of Tibetan Buddhism.

This transmission is specifically related to Akshobya Buddha (Mitrukpa in Tibetan), whose principal activity is the alleviation of frustration, suffering and sickness.

This empowerment is open to all and may be received simply as a blessing.

To receive the full program and registration form please contact :

By mail : Compassion Paris 2003 - 36 rue Mauconseil - 75001 Paris - France

By email: inscription@dalailama-paris2003.com

You can also register directly through our web site: www.dalailama-paris2003.com

His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New York City, USA
September 17-21, 2003

For more information: <http://www.dalailamanyc.org/>

Namgyalgar Welcomes "The Monks" First Scholars In Namgyalgar Scholarship Program

by Jan Cornell

Namgyalgar's scholarship program is finally underway with its first resident scholars arriving from Katmandu to study and practice Santi Maha Sangha at the Gar.

Originally the brainchild of Mark Farrington, endorsed enthusiastically by Rinpoche and taken up by the Namgyalgar Gakyil, the program annually offers a small stipend to three members of the world wide Dzogchen Community to undertake Santi Maha Sangha study and practice for periods of six months to one year. Rinpoche asked that the first scholars be three of his students - Tibetan monks originally from Taglung Monastery and Tartung Monastery in Amdo, Tibet, who have been living for the last few years in Nepal as refugees. After mammoth efforts and negotiations taking over two years by Vikki Floyd in Nepal and Mark Farrington in Sydney, the monks finally arrived at Namgyalgar at the end of April, 2003.

Nawang Phuntsok Lama and Rabten Lama arrived for the last part of the Easter Teaching Retreat and Thupten Rabgyi Lama arrived a few days later. They are presently living with Rinpoche in Gawaling (Rinpoche's house in Namgyalgar) where Rinpoche is giving them intensive instruction before he leaves for Tokyo on May 14th. After that time they will continue to live at the Gar for twelve months carrying out a schedule of daily practice and study, and integrating with the local Dzogchen Community. A small committee has been set up to look after their needs; like overseeing English lessons, taking them shopping, sightseeing, etc.

Thanks must go to the persistent efforts of mark Farrington and Vikki Floyd for making Rinpoche's wishes manifest.

Namgyalgar welcomes its first scholars warmly and looks forward to a lively cultural exchange and sharing of knowledge, skills and information.

More updates to follow.



F. ANDRICO

summer at merigar

retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

June 18th -22nd
Dzogchen Padma Nyingthig Teaching Retreat
June 27th - July 14th
Personal Retreat

Santi Maha Sangha

July 15th - 17th

Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Exam

July 18th -22nd

Santi Maha Sangha 3rd Level Training

August 10th- 16th

A retreat about Rigs-drug gnas-sbyong

retreat with H.H. Sakya Trizin

August 18th - 20th initiation of Guru Dragpo



2004

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU SCHEDULE



PERU

February 9

Leave for Peru

February 13 - 15

Peruvian retreat.

MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA

February 18

Leave for Margarita.

February 21

Tibetan Losar

March 15 - 21
Gomadevi.

Longsal program: Teaching and Practice of

April 16- 20

Easter retreat

May 15 - 19

Longsal program

June 11 -20

SMS Teacher's Training

July 17 -August 1

Mandarava Chülden retreat

September 10-19

Longsal program

October 14 -25

Kalachakra teaching & practice Anuyoga system primarily according to the Terma of Jangchub Dorje.

November 12 -21

Complete teachings & practices of Lhalung Sangdag, the Terma of Heka Lingpa.

December 5 -8

Birthday teaching and Practice of Long Life

TASHIGAR, ARGENTINA

December 20

Leave for Tashigar South

December 26 - January 2

Tashigar retreat: Teaching and Practice of Gomadevi

2003 U.S. Dzogchen Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

All retreats are open to the public; there are no prerequisites to attend.

EARLY RETREAT REGISTRATION DISCOUNT DEADLINE JULY 1st!

One cannot apply both the membership and early registration discounts. If you're a member, you should apply your membership discount only. You will not see your membership discount reflected on your invoice if you register online. You will see the discount reflected on your credit card statement.

For travel and accommodation details for NYC, Tsegylgar, and Miami retreats, please visit www.tsegylgar.org and for West Coast retreat, www.dzogchencommunitywest.org.

August 29–31 New York City Dzogchen Teachings

Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Synod Hall
110th Street & Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY

Local contact info: nycdzogchen@aol.com, 212–252–6818 (hotline)

\$175 early registration discount till July 1
\$200 after July 1
\$160 Basic/Senior/Student members
\$120 Sustaining members

September 5–9 Tsegylgar Dzogchen Retreats

18 Schoolhouse Road, Conway, MA
Teaching: Dzogchen Padma Nyingthig

September 9–14 Teaching: Longsal Gonpa Ngotrod

\$275. Early registration for each retreat
\$500. Early registration for both retreats
\$300. For each after July 1
\$550. For both after July 1
\$240. Basic/Senior/Student Member (20% discount)
\$180. Sustaining Member (40% discount)

Good Service Members attend at no cost.

\$60. Per day

Santi Maha Sangha at Tsegylgar

September 17–18 Level One Exam
September 19–23 Level Two Training

Contact info for Tsegylgar (and NYC and Miami retreats):

Tsegylgar, Dzogchen Community in America, Inc.
P.O. Box 277, Conway, MA 01341
Tel: 413–369–4153
Fax: 413–369–4473
Email: secretary@tsegylgar.org
Web site: www.tsegylgar.org

October 3–5 West Coast Dzogchen Teachings Baha, Mexico near Los Cabos

Local contact info:
Tel: 510–644–2244
Email: aha@dzogchencommunitywest.com
OR aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org.

Retreat fees TBA.

October 10–12 Miami Dzogchen Teachings

St. John's by the Lake
4760 Palm Tree Street on Miami Beach, Miami, FL

Public Talk: Oct. 9, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL

Local contact info: info@DzogchenMiami.org

\$125 early registration discount till July 1
\$150 after July 1
\$120 Basic/Senior/Student members
\$90 Sustaining members
practices).

office AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BEFORE MAY 31st.

TO REGISTER FOR RETREATS

Register online with a credit card at Email: www.tsegylgar.org or to pay with credit card by Tel: 413–369–4153, Fax: 413–369–4473.

To register by mail with a check or credit card info:

Dzogchen Community in America (DCA)
P.O. Box 277, Conway, MA 01341

Make checks payable to Dzogchen Community or "DCA."
All dollar amounts in US\$'s.

Discounts/payment plans available for those with disabilities or financial hardship.

Congratulations to

Yuchen Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani
Married
March 31, 2003

The members of the Dzogchen
Community extend our warmest wishes
to Yuchen Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani,
married on March 31, 2003, in Thailand.
We look forward to celebrating this joy-
ful event with them in August at
Merigar!



Rinpoche with New Caledonians

The Retreat at Gaia Pacific in New Caledonia

by Maria Simmons

Everything is unreal", Chögyal Namkhai Norbu told us several times, quoting the Buddha, and casting a special light on the dream-like beauty of your surroundings. Nouvelle Calédonie – the most distant and among the last of France's overseas colonies – was the scene of this second retreat with Rinpoche just before Losar, February 28th to March 2nd.

Captain Cook gave the South Seas archipelago, 4 days by ship from Australia, the ancient Roman name for his native Scotland and North Britain; it is still, despite the damage of colonization, a tropical rain forest embraced by 24,000 square kilometers of transparent lagoon, the largest in the world. The lagoon is full of coral of all colors and of tropical fish, and Rinpoche enjoyed swimming there every day. He brought bread to feed the fish, among them one species spotted like a leopard, another rainbow hued and a particular fish of an intense phosphorescent blue which he said was "the color of Samantabhadrā".

Rinpoche arrived with Fabio in Noumea, the capital, on the 22nd of February, and we greeted him with peacock feathers offered by a beautiful Tahitian woman in a nearby but seldom visited valley. A group of native islanders, Melanesians, came to the teachings bearing traditional gifts for an honored guest, and with tears in their eyes expressed their joy and gratitude for so spiritually important a visit.

I arrived, to translate the teaching into French, two days before Rinpoche's coming. The small whitewashed colonial buildings, the French flags, evoked for me Babar the Elephant's capital of Celesteville. Marie Lascombes, who lives on the island with her two children, kindly invited me to stay at her home. She organized the retreat along with Pascal and Sylvie, the owners of lovely Gaia Pacific, who for the occasion had

built a splendid traditional wooden hut, on stilts, to house the event. From where Rinpoche sat, there was an uninterrupted view of the river, lined by lush flowering vines and banana and mango trees.

Rinpoche began the process of awakening us by explaining that the teaching is useful for our daily life, concretely related to our experience, an ancient knowledge but not a dogma nor a religion. Without this understanding, we live within our judgment, thinking and reasoning, always believing in our justifications, continually making mistakes. This is how our mind manifests.

A human being's first existence is the physical body, its second existence is its energy which is invisible but which we can feel and therefore is less comprehensible. We have five elements: air, space, fire, earth and water; not just our body but everything around us is related to the five elements. Our vital energy is related to our breathing and to our speech (energy is a very general term but voice is something which we can hear and which we produce with our breathing) For example, in yoga to coordinate our energy we do breathing exercises. Mantra is sound first uttered by a realized being who possesses the potentiality and transmits this specific function through sound. We receive this sound in our ear, it's like a seed which can grow. We produce the function by reciting the mantra many times.

Our third existence is our mind which is more difficult to discover. Observe your thoughts and you will discover only emptiness. You cannot confirm mind is any one thing, yet you discover it exists through the continuous rising of thoughts.

Since the body is easy to understand, people of lower capacity can utilize teachings more related to the physical level, however this teaching will be more limited because our physical level is more limited. Tantrism is more related to our energy level and the people who follow the Tantric path need a more developed capacity. In Tantrism emotions are not negative, not to be elimi-

continued on next page

nated, but rather are part of our potentiality, to be transformed into wisdom.

The teaching more related to the level of mind is Dzogchen.

Rinpoche went on to say that in Dzogchen it is explained that the root of all our condition is sound. The Dharmadatu is the real condition of all phenomena which is emptiness. Emptiness possesses infinite potentialities which manifest like clouds in the sky. The void is like the sky, deep, blue and empty. In the same way, the real condition is empty and its potentialities manifest through sound. But not just the sounds we hear which are part of our ordinary experience. In the teaching we distinguish between outer, inner and secret sound: outer sound is part of the relative condition which we hear with our ears, inner sound we hear through vibrations and secret sound is close to the condition of emptiness and not easy to discover for ordinary people. But through practice it can be discovered.

In the following sessions which passed all too quickly, Rinpoche communicated to us, in a miracle of condensation, the background and the principles of the Dzogchen teaching. He spoke about the three main paths of the Buddhist teachings, that of Renunciation, Transformation and Self-Liberation. He taught the *tawa, gonpa* and the *chodpa* of Dzogchen, the essentials for leading a conscious life. He gave us direct transmission and explained Guruyoga and the short Thun, and taught us how to integrate the teachings in our daily lives with Guruyoga and the practice of the night. He also transmitted the *lung* of many secondary practices, emphasizing however that contemplation is the main practice.

He left us with deepening awareness that our life is illusion, and therefore that there is no ground for the heaviness and drama with which we take it, creating unjustified anxieties and problems for ourselves and others. It seemed that each of us experienced Rinpoche's teaching as direct personal advice whispered in the ear. To have the state of Samantabhadra communicated to us, once again for a few, for the first time for many others, was bliss and relief.

PASSAGES

DIED:

Laura Albini 1912 - 2003

Laura Albini was born and raised in Trieste when it was still part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She was one of the few women of her time to obtain a degree in philosophy at the University of Rome. After her university studies she married her first husband, a brilliant mathematician, who was a university professor in Egypt where she lived for ten years. She was in Egypt when the Second World War broke out. After her husband's untimely death, Laura had to face the difficulties of being a foreign woman, a widow with children in an Arab country in times of war. She looked for a job and became an official hostess for the Middle East Allied Command under General Giles. Her fluent knowledge of Arabic proved to be a great asset to the Allies in many of their negotiations during the war and she received many famous political personalities of that period.

When the war finished, Laura married an American journalist and went to live in the USA with her husband and children. The marriage only lasted a short time, but Laura remained in the US and accepted American citizenship. Although she was offered a position in the State Department due to her work with the Allies during the war, she decided to work on her own and started to paint, specializing in portraits. She also went to work in some of the textile factories around New York. She learned the trade by sheer graft on the factory floor and, later on, opened her own fashion house which was to become quite famous.

During this period she met Alessandro Albini, an Italian businessman, while he was on a business trip to New York. They had a whirlwind romance and were married within a week in Arlington, West Virginia. They remained in the US for about a year and finally moved to Milan, Italy in the early part of the 50's. It was here that Laura had her third child, Costantino, in 1954, during the period she was studying painting at the Milan Academy of Brera with Prof. Aldo Carpi.

Before meeting Laura, her husband had spent several years working and living in China as a lawyer and had been greatly influenced by Oriental and in particular Buddhist culture. As a result of this, in 1970 he organized a holiday trip for Laura and Costantino to the East. They traveled widely visiting Tehran, Afghanistan, the Punjab, Nepal and finally concluded their tour at Rumtek monastery in Sikkim where they met the Gyalwa Karmapa. This was a special meeting for Laura who was deeply struck by the Karmapa. It was only natural that when the Karmapa came to Rome in 1973 to visit Pope Paolo VI, Laura came to meet him. The Karmapa's translator during this visit was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Laura and Costantino both took refuge with the Karmapa and were presented to Namkhai Norbu on that occasion; a meeting that was to prove to be highly auspicious.

The following year Karmapa asked Laura if she would set up a center for him in Rome where many people were interested in his teachings. On his advice, Laura repeatedly asked Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to give teachings, but it was not until 1976 that he finally agreed. He said that it would be best for all those interested to do a retreat together, so Laura found a beautiful 18th century villa with a big garden near Subiaco. The retreat lasted the whole summer from the beginning of July until September and there were twenty to thirty people. Rinpoche taught from morning to night in his familiar, yet at times, formal way. During this first retreat he gave teachings of Zogchen Khregchod, some Semdzin, the Four Chogshag, Mi lam (dream yoga), the practice of the Guardians, Korde rushen, one type of Tummo, Chöd, Guru Dorje Drolod, Simhamukha, Yantra Yoga and even some Tögal! He also gave the transmission of the nyingtig by Cetsün senge wangchug ('lce btsun seng ge dbang 'phyug') from the tradition of Vimalamitra. Laura was there the whole time taking care of the overall organization, scolding those who needed to be scolded, but always showing great generosity towards all. In fact, the retreat was a total offering on her part.

During the early years of the Dzogchen Community, Laura was ever present at Rinpoche's side, organizing and assisting. Whenever Rinpoche was absent, she was the first to defend his words, making sure that they were never misunderstood. She continually showed us the correct way of showing respect to him and from the very beginning, had the deepest devotion towards him. She supported Rinpoche as much as possible in his choices and enthusiastically followed him when he decided to do something. Her energy was boundless.

Laura followed Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in almost all his retreats around the world when it was possible. She always helped new people even though her approach was frequently wrathful when necessary. She was very determined but also very motherly towards the young Dzogchen Community.

Her generosity was unlimited. If anyone was in difficulty, she would do everything possible to help, particularly if it was linked to practice or travelling in order to receive teachings. In Rome she opened her home every week to practitioners in the Community to meet and practice together.

Laura's health started to fail in 2000 when she had two transitory ischemic attacks, followed by a bleeding stomach ulcer and an eye stroke. For the last three years, although she was confined to a wheelchair, she still participated as much as possible in the retreats given by Rinpoche. A year ago, she had a stroke which resulted in partial paralysis and speech difficulties. Those who were at Merigar last summer witnessed Laura's unflinching devotion to Rinpoche during their last poignant meeting to celebrate her 90th birthday, held outside under the pergola.

Most of Rinpoche's long-term students in Italy and around the world will fondly remember Laura for her unwavering devotion, boundless energy and heartfelt generosity to the Teacher, the Teaching and her Vajra brothers and sisters. Thank you Laura for your wonderful example to us all.



Tara Retreat with Yuchen & Rosa Namkhai Easter Retreat, Tashigar South April, 2003

by Marisa Alonso

Easter in Tashigar South usually means all the colors of the elements; blue sky, white flowers, little clouds, green, yellow and red leaves altogether on the trees, giving a precious gift to our senses.

This year was also this way, but this time we could share it with Yuchen, Rosa and Luigi. What a joy!! Yuchen came for the first time to this Gar to lead a Green Tara practice retreat. We were more than forty people in the small Gonpa in the main house, deeply touched by her humble and sweet attitude, singing alone again and again the new

melodies before the practice, teaching us how to do them, and explaining again the steps of the practice as soon as she noted new people among us. We also had time to practice the complete Thun of Dance of Vajra in the mornings and Yantra Yoga in the afternoons, share our "asadito" once, and do a Ganapuja outside, together with, in some cases, long time "missed" practitioners who came for this auspicious event. We hope they remain this time!!

Since Rosa, Yuchen and Luigi went away, the clouds have covered Tashigar and a persistent mist make this beautiful place a little sad... or maybe is that we are a little sad and for that the clouds are still here...

Anyway, I (and I'm sure everybody) want to thank Rosa deeply for her unlimited kindness and love that makes each of us feel she really cares of us, Yuchen for giving us a living example of a correct attitude, Luigi for his friendly and open manner, and finally, our Master, for making all this dream possible for us.



Yuchen explaining Tara Practice

D. SIMONELLI



Practitioners on veranda at Tashigar

D. SIMONELLI

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Comments on Practice for the World Situation

When asked what Rinpoche recommended to help pacify the war in Iraq and all of the aggressors on all sides, his response was as follows:

"Everything is relative, particularly, we should live in the dimension of awareness and that means knowing how the real situation is."

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 3/19/2003

guru yoga prayer

༄༅། །དབལ་ལྷན་རྗེ་རྗེ་སེམས་གཉིས་པ།
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 །དགོངས་པ་རྣམས་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སྦྱོབས།

Second Śrī Vajrasattva,
 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, think of me;
 Bless me to realize
 Samantabhadra's state of
 knowledge.

Malcolm Smith 4/2/03

The History of the Tibetan Calendar can be found in the following article by A. Berzin:

http://www.berzinarchives.com/tibetan_astrology_medicine/tibetan_astro_science_2.html

Berzin mentions that present-day Tibetan calendars give the royal year number. This is the count of years passed since the ascent of the first Tibetan king, Nyatri Tsenpo, in 127 BCE.

Courtesy of S.Uvarov



SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE - ITALY

An important communication from the Shang-Shung Institute, Italy Tibetan Trip Cancelled

With great reluctance, the Shang-Shung Institute, Italy, has decided to cancel the teaching/cultural trip to Tibet this summer in order to not expose the participants and Dr. Nida to the risk of contagion by the SARS virus rampant in China at the moment. The trip is postponed to next year.

Consequently, Dr. Nida Chenagtsang will hold two courses at Merigar in July: Mantra Healing, First and Second levels from July 4 - 7, cost 200 Euro, and Diet and Behavior according to Tibetan medicine to prevent disorders and cure imbalances of the Three Humors, July 26 - 27, cost 100 Euro. There will be two sessions each day, 9 - 12.30 and 14.30 - 17.30. To register, please contact the Institute's office.

Dr. Nida will also be available for consultations for one week after the Mantra Healing course. Ku Nye students who have just taken their diploma or who have attended the third level course will have the opportunity to do clinical work that week, assisting Dr. Nida in his work.

The Institute will also like to announce that Dr. Nida Chenagtsang will hold a conference entitled "Tibetan medicine between East and West - The experience of a Tibetan doctor in the West" at the Babele Bookshop, Via San Nicolao 10 (near piazza Cadorna) in Milan from May 19 - 21.

BAGCHEN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

The Shang-Shung Institute Austria, Non-Profit Association for the Preservation of the Tibetan Culture, is happy to announce the details of the BAGCHEN TOURNAMENTS which will start in June, 2003 in Kunsangar and Merigar.

Everyone who wants to participate can play. We ask everybody who is interested in taking part in this world championship to sign up as soon as possible. Please send an email to: ssi-austria@utanet.at

You can pay your starting fee at the tournament in Kunsangar or Merigar and it is not necessary to pay it in advance. It will not be possible to play Bagchen on line. Bagchen is an interactive game which - according to our understanding - cannot be played alone sitting in front of the computer.

1. Places:

In 2003 there will be big tournaments in Merigar and Kunsangar and maybe next year there will be tournaments also in the other Gars.

2. Dates:

Kunsangar: probably June 3rd - 5th, 2003 during the period of the retreat of our Master, every day there will be one round lasting 3 hours. It is played in the afternoon or evening (depending on the program).

Merigar: June 19th - 21st, 2003, during the period of the retreat of our Master, every day there will be one round lasting 3 hours. It will be played in the afternoon or evening (depending on the program of Merigar).

Merigar: August 15th - 17th, 2003 during the period of the retreat of our Master, every day there will be one round lasting 3 hours. It is played in the afternoon or evening (depending on the program of Merigar).

3. Responsible persons:

Michel Bricaire will be responsible for the organization of the tournaments in Merigar and Igor Berkhin in Kunsangar.

4. Way of playing and to find the finalists:

4.1. First Round:

On the first day of each tournament there will be played the First Round for 3 hours. Every player has to pay a starting fee of 20 Euro in Merigar and 10 Euro in Kunsangar. In Merigar the first 2 players of each table will come in the next round, in Kunsangar 8 players will come into the next round (the 1st of each table plus the first three best players).

4.2. Second Round:

On the second day 8 players in Kunsangar and 20 players in Merigar can play the Second Round. In order to do so they must pay again 20 Euro in Merigar and 10 Euro in Kunsangar. After having played again for 3 hours the first 2 players of each table in Kunsangar and 8 players from Merigar can go in the next round.

4.3. Third Round:

On the third day 4 players in Kunsangar and 8 players in Merigar can play the Third Round. In order to do so they must pay again 20 Euro in Merigar and 5 Euro in Kunsangar. After this Third Round Kunsangar finds 2 finalists and Merigar finds 6 finalists. The players should have positive results in the 3rd Round. The finalists will play the Final Rounds, probably on Margarita Island in 2004, but it also could be in another Gar, if people cannot afford the fly to Margarita.

4.4. Everyone who signed up for the tournaments and is out of the game in one of the first 2 days can play a parallel tournament, the tournament to find the "winner of the losers". They don't have to pay anymore but have the chance to win. They also play for 3 hours and find their winners. The "Winner of the Losers" will also get a prize.

4.5. Choosing the seats:

The players cannot choose their seats and tables; their seats will be drawn.

5. Playing the Final Round:

The Final Round will be played in Margarita in 2004 or in another Gar, the precise dates depends on the dates of Rinpoche's retreat, which we don't know precisely at the moment. Each of the 8 finalists will have to pay again 30 Euro in order to have the chance to win (also the people from Kunsangar). It will be played again in 2 Rounds on 2 days.

6. Prizes:

1st prize: 1000 Euro
2nd prize: 400 Euro
3rd prize: 200 Euro

7. Organization and information:

Shang-Shung Institute Austria (Email: ssi.austria@utanet.at)



Michel invites bagchen players!!! O.LEICK

Training for New Translators from Tibetan

The Shang-Shung Institute Austria, a Non-Profit Association for the Preservation of the Tibetan Culture, is happy to announce that the Training for new Tibetan Translators will start this summer.

We started this program in November, 2002. Every person who was interested in participating had to make a test. Twenty-two people from all over the world signed up and we accepted ten people. Some people did not send their test and some failed. The ten people who have this wonderful possibility now come from Russia, Ukraine, Finland, USA, Germany, Estonia, Canada, Italy and Nepal.

The person in charge of this new project is Elio Guarisco; the Shang-Shung Institute Austria is sponsoring it. The first training will be from the 15th of July until the 30th of August, 2003 and will take place in Merigar in Italy. More details: www.ssi-austria.at

Very best wishes,

Oliver F. Leick

Shang-Shung Institute Austria

Email: ssi.austria@utanet.at

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE, ITALY PROGRAM 2003

MILAN: May 23rd-25th
Second course of Dreams and Medicine Second Level
Registration fee: 115 Euro.
Places must be booked before April 15th

AUSTRIA: May 23rd-25th
May 30th-June 1st, 2003
Third and fourth course of Ku Nye Third Level

ROME: June 7th-8th
Fifth course of Ku Nye Second Level

MERIGAR: June 14th-15th
Review of Ku Nye First Level
Registration fee: 100 euro

KARMALING, FRANCE: June 20th-23rd
Complete course of Dreams and Tibetan Medicine

MERIGAR: June 28th-29th
Review of Ku Nye Third Level
Registration fee: 100 euro

TIBET: Unfortunately, the July Teaching trip to Tibet has been postponed to next year due to the current health problems in China. Please see article this issue.

MERIGAR: July 4th-7th
Mantra Healing, First & Second Levels

MERIGAR July 26th-27th
Diet and behavior according to Tibetan medicine in order to prevent disorders and cure imbalances of the Three Humors
Registration fee: 100 euro.

MERIGAR: September 6th-13th
Intensive course of Ku Nye Second Level
Registration fee: 450 euro which includes all teaching material

ROME: September 20th-21st,
Sixth and final course of Ku Nye Second Level

MERIGAR: September 26th-29th,
Complete course of Sa Che (Tibetan geomancy)
Registration fee: 200 euro

AUSTRALIA: October and November,
Courses on Ku Nye and Dreams and Medicine.

AUSTRIA: December 5th-7th,
Final exam and presentation of theses for students completing Ku Nye Third Level

ROME: December 13th-14th
Pregnancy, birth and infant massage
Registration fee: 115 euro

Information and reservations:

Milan:
Elisa Copello
Tel. 0233607505
Email: ecop@ats.it
Cell.: 3387027207

Rome:
Anna Marie Clos
Tel. 065885142
Email: arura@libero.it

Austria:
Oliver Leick
Email: email:oliver.leick@utanet.at

Shang Shung Institute, Merigar office
Rita Renzi, Secretary
Tel.0564966941,
Email: ssinst@tiscali.it

Karma Ling:
Tel.00330479257800
Email: info@karmaling.org or lhundroup@rimay.net

bagchen infomation continued

All details about Bagchen included the updated rules are listed on our new Web site: www.ssi-austria.at

Very best wishes,

Oliver F. Leick

Shang-Shung Institute Austria,

Gschmaier 139,

A-8265 Gr.Steinbach, Austria

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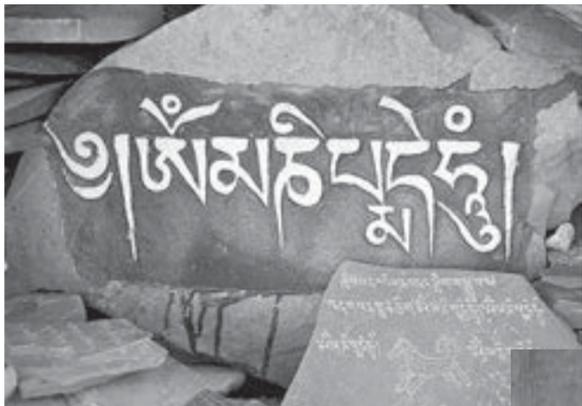
Email: ssi.austria@utanet.at

Web site: www.ssi-austria.at

The Ngakpas, Yogis of Tibet A Show to Benefit Tibet

by David Ruiz

In India the image of a Yogi with matted hair practicing in the streets is quite common. There they are often Hindu and the yogas they do are related to that religion. In Tibet the Yogis are Tantric Buddhists and are known as Ngakpas. In Tibetan Ngak means “mantra” and pa is a masculine suffix. Therefore Ngakpa means “one who chants mantra”. Mantras are a series of sounds known for the potential of their vibratory power. Traditionally, mantras are said to protect the mind from negativities. All Tibetan Buddhists use mantra but not all Tibetan Buddhists are Ngakpas.



Mantra Stones

D. RUIZ

A Ngakpa is a lay Tibetan Buddhist practitioner, who integrates his daily life with the path of Tibetan Buddhism.

The Ngakpa study program has a particular emphasis on Tantra and Dzogchen. Tantra is known as the path of transformation. It involves the use of visualization and chanting of mantras in order to transform the negative aspects of the human mind into its corresponding positive aspects. It also entails doing personal retreats where the yogi remains isolated for long periods of time. This strategy may

seem isolationist, but ultimately realization becomes manifest in order to be able to help others more effectively. Dzogchen is considered the quintessence of all the Tibetan Buddhist paths. In the past it was maintained in strict secrecy but now, even in the West, we have the privilege of being able to study this ancient knowledge with the help of a qualified teacher.

The Ngakpas combine their daily life not only with a strong dedication to intellectual study and reflection but also to personal retreat in order to make what they are studying a vital part of their lives. Ngakpas are known colloquially as the “white sangha”, and monks as the “red sangha”. “Sangha” means “community of practitioners of Buddhism”. In the Dzogchen Community, for example, we are by definition mostly Ngakpa practitioners and therefore a part of the white sangha. Most people have families and follow the idea of integrating their mundane life into their practice.

The most widely known Ngakpa master was Guru Padmasambhava, the founder of the Nyingma lineage. He is also considered by many as the “second Buddha”



Ngakpa in Amdo

D. RUIZ



Stupa at sacred Lake Kokhonoor, over 3,000 meters high

D. RUIZ

due to his extensive influence on all the Buddhist lineages of Tibet. It was Padmasambhava who brought the particular forms of what is now known as Tibetan Tantric Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century from what is now Afghanistan. These teachings, externally similar in appearance to Hindu Polytheism in many ways, were what really took root in Tibet. Tibetans, coming from the Bön tradition, an ancient

shamanic path, preferred the powerful images and magical powers of the Tantric path to the relatively cold intellectual tone of the Indian Buddhist Sutric influence. When Guru Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet by the King, Sutric Buddhism had already lost considerable power after becoming established there a couple of centuries before.

The feminine suffix in Tibetan is “ma”, and so the feminine lay practitioner is known as a “Ngakma”. The feminine equivalent of Ngakpas are also known as “drolmas” or “dakinis”. Dakini means “sky walker” and refers to the special capacity women in the Dzogchen and Tantric lineage are considered to have for working with energy. Poetically speaking, women can control their energy to the point of being able to “walk in the sky”. In contrast to the monastic lineages, who consider that being born a woman is an inferior rebirth, in the lay Tantric and Dzogchen lineages, women have a special, if not to say superior, role. Dakinis are the secret holders of the Dzogchen lineage.

Yeshe Tsogyal for example, who was one of the consorts of Guru Padmasambhava, and a very important teacher in her own right, was a Ngakma. Machig Labdrön, the creator of the Chöd practice, an important practice found in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism, was also an important Ngakma. There have also been many important female teachers who were Ngakmas. The possibilities for study and practice in the Ngakpa tradition are the same for women as for the men.

The charismatic figures of the “Terton”, often leaders in their communities, have always played an important part in the Ngakpa culture. A Terton or “treasure discoverer”, through his or her clarity of vision, discovers teachings hidden sometimes as much as centuries before. The five most important Tertons were called the “five king Tertons” and were the founders of a very long lineage of Tertons in the Nyingma tradition starting in the ninth century. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is also a “Terton”, and has discovered many treasures. The Tantric teachings in the Dzogchen Community have their basis in Nyingmapa Ngakpa lineages and are also “Termas”, or discovered treasures. In this case they come from several masters. These texts, often of visionary origin, are related to the particular realizations of the master who discovers them.

Although the Dzogchen path is beyond any single tradition in the sense that there are great Dzogchen practitioners in every school of Buddhism and of every social class, including monks and nuns, it is in the Ngakpa tradition where the most Dzogchen teachings are presently found. This tradition is an enormous depository of high spiritual knowledge in very pure form, making it a valuable legacy for the human race.

I was fortunate enough to be invited by Dr. Nida Chenagsang to his homeland in Amdo, where he has established the Ngak Mang Institute to preserve the culture of the Ngakpas. Dr. Chenagsang presently collaborates with the Shang-Shung Institute in Italy, a cultural institution under the auspices of the International Dzogchen Community and also dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan culture.

The Ngakpa culture, similar to many indigenous manifestations of culture around the world, is in grave danger of disappearing. It still has a strong historical presence in Amdo province in Northeastern Tibet, and in particular in

Shang -Shung Institute, Italy

The first graduates of Ku Nye (Tibetan massage)

In February, exams were held in both Rome and Milan, Italy, for the final certificate of Ku Nye. The exam was the culmination of three years of study, commitment and practice. Seven students from Rome and ten from Milan had completed the cycle of three levels and presented a final thesis both on the theory and practice of the various techniques they had learned and on the results that can be had through Tibetan massage and external therapies. Many of the theses presented such interesting ideas that Dr. Nida Chenagsang gave the students a year to develop their research further so that their work could be transformed into proper medical treatises. In the future these could be published and translated into Tibetan in order that Tibetan students could read and study them. In fact some of the theses were based on therapies which are extremely old and had almost been lost through the passage of time. Fortunately, through Dr. Nida’s research, they had been rediscovered and spread (for example the ‘stick therapy’). Other methods such as ‘horme’ or ‘Mongolian moxa’, while mentioned in the Four Tibetan Medical Tantras, have never been the object of deeper study.

Recently the Region of Tuscany has approved a project of experimentation on Ku Nye which Dr. Nida and five of the seventeen graduates have been chosen to conduct. This project is part of a larger one on non-conventional medicine in which the Shang-Shung Institute, Italy, is participating and will certainly be an important step towards a greater diffusion and knowledge of this very ancient therapeutic art.

When the Ku Nye courses started about four years ago and the project of creating a Ku Nye school was proposed to Rinpoche (and enthusiastically approved by him), many of the goals seemed very distant and difficult to reach. However, in a short time the manuals of the courses at each level were put together and translated into English while videos of the first and second levels were prepared. The school has also organized courses in Austria where the text books are being translated into German as well as in Australia and intends to start other courses in other countries. The need to train new instructors has arisen because the school cannot expect to continue with a single teacher and in the near future training courses will begin under the direction of the Institute and Dr. Nida. Of course there is still much to be done and improved but by now the school has become a precious reality particularly in view of Rinpoche’s project for a therapy center at Merigar 2. The Institute would like to express its sincerest thanks to Dr. Nida for his active collaboration which has made possible the realization of what, just a few years ago, seemed only a dream. And a heartfelt thanks to all the students who have shown such commitment and goodwill in these years.

Elisa Copello

Ngakpas continued

Rebkung, a region of Amdo. Although my real reason for going to Amdo was to study Tibetan medicine, I was also able to complete a series of photographs that document the Ngakpa culture in this particular area. These photos are the basis for a show produced by the Ngak Mang Institute with the collaboration of A.S.I.A. and Shang-Shung Institute.

The show includes photographs, objects from the Ngakpa culture, videos made in Amdo by RAI (the Italian national television station). It also includes a cycle of conferences by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the head of the International Dzogchen Community and a fully qualified Dzogchen master, Prof. Giacomella Orofino, an eminent Tibetologist, and Dr. Nida Chenagsang, a fully qualified Tibetan doctor and traditional Ngakpa practitioner.

The show is as follows:

Tibet
The Land of the Yogis

Education and Spirituality in the Tradition of the Ngakpas of Amdo

Project curated by the Ngak Mang Institute in collaboration with the Pro-Amdo Italian Cultural Association, the Pro Amdo Italian Cultural Association, the Shang -Shung Institute and A.S.I.A.

National Gallery of Umbria, Perugia, Italy
May 16 - June 17, 2003

Conferences

May 16
Opening and Introduction to Ngakpa Culture
5:00 PM
Dr. Nida Chenagsang

May 22
Ngakpa Culture in Amdo
5:00 PM
Dr. Nida Chenagsang

May 29
Tantric Tibetan Buddhism
5:00 PM
Prof. Giacomella Orofino

June 5
All Day Workshop on Sacred Tibetan Art
Lama Gyurmed
June 12

Spring & Summer Courses 2003 Shang-Shung Institute in America

Kunye Level I

Tibetan Massage, or Kunye, is a traditional bodywork and therapeutic system, part of the 4000 year old Tibetan Medical tradition originally taught by the sage, Tonpa Shenrab.

Kunye I introduces an overview of Tibetan Medicine, a general review of external therapies, introduction to pulse and urine diagnostic techniques, and the basics of Tibetan massage therapeutics.

The intention of the course is to introduce the student to the basic principles and techniques which will permit the student to learn how to diagnose the condition of the patient and apply the corresponding therapy.

Completing Kunye I is a prerequisite to Kunye II and III. On completion of Kunye III and an exam, Shang-Shung Institute will confer a Shang Shung Institute Kunye Practitioner certificate.

This course will be taught by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

Location:

May 23-29, Tsegyalgar, Conway Ma

For registration and accommodation information Contact:

Malcolm Smith

Tel:(413) 369-4928

Email: shangshung@tsegyalgar.org

Web site: www.shangshung-usa.org

June 6-13th

Moxibustion (36 hours)

Tsegyalgar, Conway, Massachusetts

with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

\$300

July 11-17th

Pulse Analysis (36 hours)

Tsegyalgar, Conway, Massachusetts

with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

\$300

July 25-31st

Urinalysis (36 hours)

Tsegyalgar, Conway, Massachusetts

with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

\$300

August 8-22nd

Year 3 Tibetan Medicine Course Part 1**

Tsegyalgar, Conway, Massachusetts

with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

\$600

Lodging at the Gar is \$20 per night: Dorm Accommodations.

** National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine credits available

Faculty:

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo received her advanced degree from the Lhasa University School of Traditional Medicine in 1988 where she also served a two-year residency after completing her five year training program (1983-1990). During that time she studied with the Khenpos Troru Tsenam and Gyaltzen, two of Tibet's foremost doctors who are credited with the revival of Tibetan Medicine within Tibet under the Chinese. Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo had the exceptional opportunity of extensive clinical training under Khenpo Troru Tsenam for four years. Thereafter, she dedicated many years of work as a doctor in Eastern Tibet where she collaborated and directed the implementation of A.S.I.A. the non-profit organization founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

For all programs please contact Malcolm Smith:

Tel: (413) 625-8630

Email: mfe.smith@verizon.net

Ngakpas continued from previous page

Tibetan Medicine and Astrology

5:00 PM

Dr. Nida Chenagtsang

June 16

Traditional Ngakpa Yogi Culture

5:00 PM

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Sponsored by:

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(Perugia)

The Province of Perugia

The Monte Paschi di Siena Bank

The Bank of Umbria

Dear Friends:

Thanks so much to everyone who worked hard once again to make the Web cast possible. They do so much to connect the Sangha in real time, world-wide Having already thanked the contributors to the 108 campaign (and invited the participation of 93 more people, so that we reach the magic 108 number), SSI-USA would also like to take this opportunity to thank the following for their 2003 contributions:

Mark Follansbee
Doris Heur
Nha-Vingh Tran
Anonymous donors

Without your the active participation of your financial support, there would be no foundation for SSI-USA as it seeks to develop projects to further understanding about Tibetan culture. We would also like to acknowledge the financial support from previous donors, including (but not limited to) to the following:

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Cathy Abrams, Diane Ash, Paul Bail, Rod Bull, Becky Castro, Thomas Cramp, Marit Cranmer, Joy Dahl, Judith Daugherty, Nanji Davison, DC Hawaii, Laurie Denyer, Dick Drury, Eliane N'Diaye, Tsegyalgar Dzog. Comm. New Mexico, Dzog. Comm. West Coast, Dzog. Comm. Portland, Glen Eddy Mark Farrington, Kathleen Fekete, Mark Follansbee, Jacqueline Gens, Paul Glavin, Larry Gruber, Ellen Halbert, Jane Herbst, Doris Heur, Michael Katz, Stephen Korns, Bodhi Krause, John LaFrance, Stephanie Scott, Steve Lansberg, Avadhan Larson, Igor Legati, Pamela McCormack, Frank Merewether, Merigar, Namgyalgar, NE School of Acupuncture, Carisa O'Kelly, Clifford Owen, Kevin Owens, Barbara Papparazzo, Tuls Reynolds Rose Marsh Bonfar, Barbara Schoen, Stephanie Scott, Select Italy Travel, Shang Shung Institute Austria, Constance Silver, Christine Svane, Tides Foundation, Nha-Vinh Tran, Toan Tran, John Walker, Sally Warren Margaret Wheatley, Daniel Winkler, Naomi Zeitz & Anonymous donors.

Thank you all again, for your ongoing support.
Sincerely,

The Shang Shung Institute-USA
(P.O. Box 277 Conway MA 01341 USA)

SSI/USA NEW WEB SITE

Please update your web sites to point to
www.shangshung.org

Dear Friends:

The Shang-Shung Institute in America would like to thank the following people who are the first to have stepped forward as members of the 108 pledge group:

The first fifteen are:

Paula Barry, Kathleen Fekete, Steve Gould, Janet Gyatso, Vern Harrington, Savannah Haske, Lawrence Howe, Rieko (Kyu) Kyuno, Barbara Leon, Stephanie Scott, Will Shea, Diane Sievers, Gerry Steinberg, Constance Wilkinson and Marylynn Weinberger

We thank them for undertaking to set aside \$108 a year for SSI-USA, in order to generate a foundation of goodwill and financial support so that Namkhai Norbu's wishes for SSI may come to fruition.

We would like to extend our invitation, once again - having found 15 ongoing sponsors, we are looking to complete the 108.

Please do consider becoming an ongoing sponsor.

Sincerely,

The Shang-Shung Institute Board
The Shang Shung Institute in America
P.O. Box 277 Conway MA 01341 USA

The Shang-Shung Institute in America presents:

Practicing Traditional Tibetan Art

with Glen Eddy

August 15th to 22nd, 2003

At Tsegyalgar, Conway, MA



The class will focus on drawing and painting deity faces. The subjects of deity measurements, proportions, and symbolism will also be covered.

Two three-hour sessions per day - 3 hours in the morning and 3 hours in the afternoon.

Practical instruction will be supplemented with slide shows and other material covering the different types of thankas, schools of painting, and historical information on Tibetan art.

Participants will need to bring basic watercolors, an assortment of brushes, a drawing pad, pencil, eraser, and ruler.

Glen Eddy is an accomplished artist in the Tibetan tradition and has illustrated several Buddhist books including "Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism" and "Myth of Freedom".

Course Fee:

\$300 for whole week, \$150 for weekend only, \$60 per day

For registration and accommodation information contact:

Malcolm Smith

Tel: 413 369-4928

Email: malcolm@shangshung.org

Web site: www.shangshung.org

ANNOUNCEMENT from A.S.I.A. - U.S.A.

It is an exciting time for A.S.I.A. - U.S.A. With the support of A.S.I.A. Onlus in Italy we are taking on the task of raising funds for some specific projects in Tibet. However, at present time, due to the demands of these new projects, we need additional board members and volunteers to serve for a period of one year to help us achieve our funding goals and accomplish the implementation of these projects. We urge all interested people to apply.

This is an opportunity for you to have direct participation and impact within Tibet. For years the efforts of ASIA Onlus in Italy, and now soon ASIA USA, have been promoting the welfare of the Tibetan people through projects in education, healthcare, infrastructure development, and cultural preservation. Much work has already been done, but the need is great and ASIA is continually receiving new aid requests. We urge all concerned people to apply if you have any interest in supporting the people of Tibet in their efforts to preserve their culture and to alleviate the suffering of their people.

Those applying for Board membership please specify the following:

- *Do you have a previous affiliation and /or experience within the Dzogchen Community?
- *Do you have any previous non-profit, fund raising, or management experience?
- *How much time would you be able to dedicate on a monthly basis?
- *What special skills or knowledge do you have that you could offer to ASIA such as computer, accounting, fundraising or grant writing skills, knowledge of law or printing services?

Volunteers, we need the following but not limited to:
 Someone(s) with computer experience to help us
 *set up a database.
 *manage our email list.
 *create and manage our web site.

Also if you have any special skills or contacts that you may be able to offer, even on an "as needed" or casual basis please let us know.

Please submit all applications to:
 asiainfo99@yahoo.com or
 secretary@tsegyalgar.org

If anyone is unable to participate in A.S.I.A. - U.S.A. at this time, but would like to be kept informed of our activities or make a donation, then please also contact the ASIA - USA office at the above email or by calling 413-369-4153.

Thank you very much!

Board of Directors
 A.S.I.A. - U.S.A.
 P.O. Box 277
 Conway, MA 01341, USA
 Tel: 413-369-4153
 Fax: 413-369-4473

book review

Ani Tenzin Palmo. *Reflections on a Mountain Lake: Teachings on Practical Buddhism.*
 Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion, 2002.
 (254 pages; \$16.95)

Reflections on a Mountain Lake a collection of talks by Ani Tenzin Palmo is the follow-up to Vicki MacKenzie's *A Cave In the Snow* which tells the story of Tenzin Palmo's dharma journey and long retreat practice. Much of the book is simply a restatement of basic Buddhist teachings, but Tenzin Palmo approaches it in a very practical fashion. Two chapters in particular summarize a lot of her personal insights and experience: "Women and the Path" and "The Role of the Spiritual Master." She is not timid about giving her opinions, yet they are tempered by a certain spaciousness of view. For example, she acknowledges that women, including nuns, have had second-class status in Tibetan life, and gives numerous examples. Yet she concludes with, "But, it's okay. . . I mean the Dharma is there, and we practice. And we should be grateful that we have a human birth. Male or female is really irrelevant" (p.84).

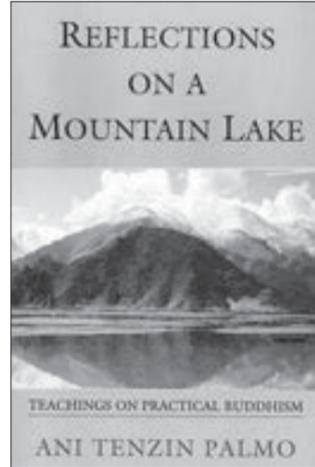
Concerning spiritual masters, only the fortunate will meet the Tse-rab-kyi Lama ("the guru for all your lifetimes") in this birth (p.176). Most of the lamas that one comes into contact with are not on that level. She cautions, "Don't base your whole life on hanging around a guru scene. . . Some gurus become outrageous. Where is the compassion? . . . Some gurus have very nice scenes, but often people's energy gets caught in the dynamics of being around the guru instead of looking within and discovering who they are" (p. 213). Concerning the nervous condition Tibetans call "lung" disease, she says it comes from tension and "trying too hard" to do more and more, and to be absolutely perfect (p.22). Related to this is what she calls "dharma greed": "Every lama who comes to town will tell you

that his particular practice is the most special, the most secret, ultimate, highest, unrevealed treasure that's ever been heard of. And you'll think, "Oh, I've got to have that." Then next week somebody else will come along with another one, and you'll finish up completely confused, completely frustrated. . . The important thing is not to be too ambitious. . . Keep your practice very small and simple, but do it" (p.234-235)

On the importance of receiving the blessings of the lineage, she writes: "The transmission is still there. It's still warm, as they say. It's not that the masters died out, and we found the book, and we're trying to revive the practices they did. They have never died out" (p. 241). Among the lineage practices, Tantric visualizations are particularly powerful: "There are very subtle levels of our psychological makeup which we can access only through enlightened imagery. These meditations, if we really become one with them, open up profound levels of the mind very quickly" (p. 227). However, having the conviction that you are the deity, and that this is your true identity, is much more important than achieving a precise visualization. Instead of thinking "I am the reality and [the deity] is just make-believe," we should think the other way round (p. 239).

The essence of the deity, of course, is Dharmakaya. In this way, Tenzin elegantly summarizes the shift in perception that takes place as the conventional view of experience begins to become informed by spaciousness and wisdom. The book is full of these simple, yet elegant, explanations of traditional teachings, infused with the perspective gained from Tenzin's long period of solitary retreat.

by Paul Bail



LONG AWAITED CHÖD CD IS NOW IN STOCK

Just a note for all of those that have been wanting the Chöd CD, IT IS FINALLY AVAILABLE ONCE AGAIN!!! This great CD has the following:
 The practice of Chöd, The long life practice of Mandarava, & The Song of the Vajra recorded beautifully by Amiata Records. It is now available through the Tsegyalgar bookstore for \$21.50 plus 5.00 shipping.



Thank you,
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 Dzogchen Community in America
 413-369-4473
 tsegyalgarbookstore@yahoo.com

ACCOMMODATION FOR SUMMER RETREATS AT MERIGAR

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WHO INTEND TO COME TO MERIGAR, FOR ONE OR BOTH SUMMER RETREATS and/or SANTI MAHA SANGHA

July and August are high season in Italy and people are already booking their accommodations. At the moment there is still a reasonable choice. Following, please find a few examples of available accommodations:

- a.. hotel rooms in June from Euro 25 per person per day in a double room, including breakfast,
- b.. hotel rooms in August some from Euro 27,50 per person per day in a double including breakfast
- c.. rooms with people from local Dzogchen Community from Euro 42 a double room (few left!)
- d.. houses for 2 to 4 persons for short stays from Euro 60 to 90 per day
- e.. houses for long stays from Euro 1000 per month
- f.. hostel (similar to YMCA) 10 Euro per person per day in 3 to 5 bedded rooms.

Just recently, a booking for a house by Community people had to be cancelled. It's at walking distance from Merigar, in the midst of nature, quiet and with private garden, accommodates 5 to 6 persons, rent is only Euro 2084 for July and August.

Single rooms in local hotels are already fully booked in August, only doubles for single use at 52 Euro per day are available. For more convenience please arrange with fellow practitioners to rent houses with 2 to 3 rooms and kitchen, most with garden and privacy.

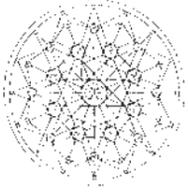
For more information you can call or mail to Christina at Merigar accommodation service: (speaking English, French, German and Italian)

Christina Tomshinsky
 Email: merigar-reservations@libero.it





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merigar

LOSAR 2003 at Merigar

by Elisa Copello

Although Losar fell on Monday, the practice sessions and festivities started on Saturday with four sessions of the Purification of Six Lokas practice. In the evening, the Merigar Gakyil offered an excellent dinner to everyone there in the warm and welcoming atmosphere of the refectory where old and new practitioners passed a joyful evening culminating in several keenly disputed games of Bagchen under the watchful eyes of Michel Bricaire!

On Sunday there were another two sessions of Purification of the Six Lokas practice and, in the evening, a short Ganapuja during which we practiced the naggon for some time in the hope of leaving behind us negativities and obstacles. During the morning, many practitioners gathered in the Mandala room to watch a video filmed at Namgyalgar in which Rinpoche gives precious advice about how the community should proceed and continue its activities in the future. A Gakyil meeting was held on the veranda.

At 6.30 on Monday morning under a gray foggy sky we met in the Gonpa for the Guru Amitayus Long life practice. When we left the Gonpa the air was biting and there were a few snow flakes which seemed to many of us an auspicious sign. This was confirmed a few hours later when a luminous and majestic rainbow manifested in the sky after the Ganapuja at midday during which we authenticated some namkha and the prayer flags.



Serkhang under construction

P. MOSCATELLI

The Restructuring Project for Serkhang, the Golden House, Merigar

By Liz Granger

Over the last two years, a gradual transformation of Serkhang has been taking place which becomes more evident each year. The changes are part of a complete restructuring project for the building drawn up by architect Patrizia Moscatelli and approved by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2000. The project involves a general restructuring; both of the interior and exterior of the house - in particular the hygienic facilities, the entrance hall and the veranda.

Work began in the spring of 2001 when the roof of Serkhang was redone in order to insulate and waterproof it; skylights were replaced and a traditionally tiled roof put in that is aesthetically pleasing to the eye. This was the first major building work that was completed in time for the summer retreats.

Last Autumn Patrizia had planned to start work on the veranda, however, when the boiler for the heating system broke down she decided that this Winter's work should begin with the room for the boiler, which is located at the rear of the building and proceed from there. When work started at the beginning of November 2002, the room for the boiler was extended and the boiler replaced. Moving around to the side of the building that faces onto the outside dining area, construction of a portico or covered terrace began, running the length of the building. The portico is really a wonderful addition to Serkhang, built in a traditional way using traditional materials such as terracotta tiles and red and yellow bricks which are so typical of Tuscan farmhouses. The portico links that part of the upper floor which is mainly reserved for honored guests with a bathroom which has been completely rebuilt, the roof and floor raised and beautifully finished in terracotta tiles. Before the start of Summer, the portico will have windows thus giving more privacy to those using it. One of the greatest advantages of this addition is that it will give guests independent entry to the upper floor from the rear of the house where the driveway passes. In this way their privacy will be respected and it will no longer be necessary for them to pass through the entire house in order to reach their quarters.

New Developments at Merigar A short report on the building work

by Liz Granger

Merigar's Great Flower, Dukhang Thongdrol Chenmo, or the meeting hall which gives great liberation through seeing, has been undergoing a gradual transformation during the long hard Tuscan winter. Last year, the yurt shaped dome of the Gonpa was extended into a Dorje Legpa type of hat to provide more shade and sitting space for the many practitioners who gather there for the summer teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. This year the focus of activity has been on the area outside and leading up to the building.

The large area at the side of the Gonpa which is usually shaded in the Summer for people to sit outside while following the teachings, has now been covered in flagstone sliced out of local rock. A drainage system to carry away precipitation has been built under the stone pavement, while cables to provide lighting for the outside area have been laid.

At the moment, a number of people under the guidance of Migmar are busy working on the steps that rise up to the main entrance of the building. The whole area has been extended and made much wider with a high stone wall dividing the steps from the driveway that passes around to the small parking zone at the back. Franco Branca has been busy here working with massive pieces of stone fitting and shaping them into the wall. Three large niches have been created in the wall which may be used to house paintings or even prayer wheels, according to the wishes of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. According to Rinpoche's own plan, the stairs have become a series of sixteen steps, divided into four series of four steps followed by a long flat space so that the approach to the Gonpa is now wider,



Gonpa workers

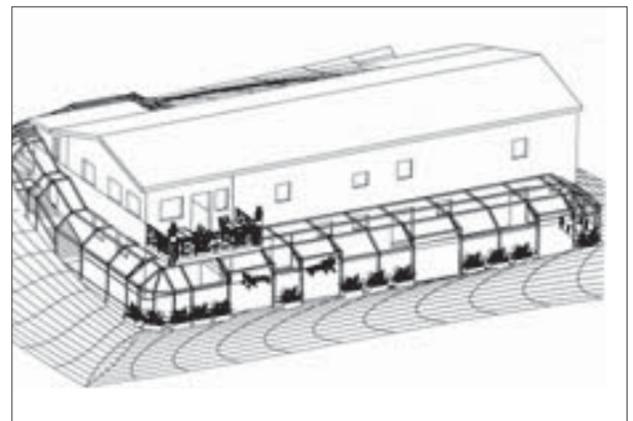
L. GRANGER

longer and more gradual. The step area is also being paved in flagstone, and work is proceeding not only on laying some enormous stones, but also on the delicate yet strenuous task of splitting them with a sledge hammer.

The project for the changes to the outside area surrounding the Great Flower were envisioned by Rinpoche, with the Community's engineer, Giovanni Boni, drawing up the plans in more detail. Merigar's resident Tibetan, Migmar, is in charge of the work. In fact, rather than bringing in an outside firm to carry out the work,

Migmar felt that it would be more beneficial for all to use the skill and knowledge of local Community people to get the work done so the faces of those working there are all familiar - Robin, Nicola, Piero, Angelo, Keith, Enzo, Luca, Claudio and many others. The next major work to be started is painting the wood beams around the extended roof. The outer beams of the original structure were painted with mantras and Tibetan letters beautifully and painstakingly executed in splashes of bright colors. The new work will be similar and will require at least four people to paint and mix colors. In fact, Migmar is appealing to all those in the Community who already know a little about the Tibetan style of painted decorations or those who would like to learn to offer their services to complete this task. It will be a detailed and time consuming work (as well as a way of accumulating merit) and Migmar asks that those who wish to participate be ready to dedicate themselves to a full day's work. If you are interested, please get in touch with Migmar through Merigar, his telephone number is 39 0564 966837 or email at merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it.

Throughout the Winter, work has also been steadily going ahead at the Yukhang or Turquoise house, the lower one at Merigar Two where the dormitory is currently located. According to Rinpoche's plans to transform the complex of buildings into a health center with traditional Tibetan medicinal baths, work has proceeded on major structural changes to the building. In the lower part of the building, the old floors have been removed and a considerable amount of earth has been excavated in order to put in drains and create an empty area below the floor that will give insulation against rising damp. Massive new chestnuts beams (weighing more than 700 kilos each!) have replaced those supporting the ceiling that were rotten and the entire ceiling of the lower floor has been sandblasted to bring it back to its natural brick and wood beauty. The next work to be done includes plastering, putting in the sanitary fixtures, windows and doors in the lower part of the building which will



Design for Merigar Due

G. BONI

Restructuring Serkhang

New Developments continued on next page

This outside work was closely linked to work on the refectory, which is directly below the guest quarters. Here the restructuring involved creating a new lighting system and work on the walls so that electric wires and heating pipes were concealed. A dividing wall was erected near the entrance to the refectory with a sliding door within the wall, to divide the refectory from the main entrance corridor which gives more privacy to the eating area. The small entrance to the refectory contains a small storeroom. The old bathrooms which were just off the refectory at the front of the house have been totally restructured and are now four toilet compartments with a luminous area for washing so that queues to use the facilities should be drastically reduced this summer. In the future a toilet for the disabled will be built at the side of the current parking lot.

At the back of the house behind the lawn and leading off the kitchen, an additional bathroom and changing room has been created for the cooks entirely in accordance with the Italian law on food hygiene which is necessary since food is served at Merigar.

The main entrance to Serkhang has been rebuilt in the traditional style used for the portico with a paved square in front and a ramp up to the main door for the disabled. This square will now allow for more people to sit and meet and has given the house an entirely traditional look. In fact, the restructuring has been done meticulously with utmost attention to detail and given the building the charming aspect of a typical Tuscan farmhouse, which is what it was originally. Without doubt, the restructuring has added greatly to the value of the property, both financially and aesthetically, as well as making the building more functional.

Next year's work will involve work on the veranda in the same style, plus reorganization

continued on next page



Restructuring Sekhang continued from previous page

of the office space and entrance hall directly below. Patrizia would like to take this opportunity to extend her sincere thanks to Rinpoche and Rosa for the faith they have placed in her to carry out this work and to her Vajra brothers and sisters for their patience and collaboration during the work. For our part on behalf of the Community we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Patrizia for her perseverance, patience, vision and generosity over many, many months of hard work.

New Developments Merigar, continued from previous page

house two large rooms for medicinal baths, a cloakroom and bathroom, as well as an office and waiting room. The upstairs terrace will be transformed into a small restaurant and kitchen, flanked by bedrooms and bathrooms for visitors.

New German Gakyil

Yellow

Christian Storch
StorchChris@aol.com

Konstantin Jucknat
kjucknat@immoplus-gmbh.de

Helga Betz (our former secretary!)
dzogdus@aol.com

Red

Vilma Eiden
eidenvilma@gmx.de

Regine Zettler
regine-125@gmx.net

Rolf Papst
PabstRolf@t-online.de

Blue

Svetlana Riecke (our secretary, now)
dzogcheninfo@aol.com

Christine Kreyer
christine@netzradio.de

Barbara Schwesig (director)
B.schwesig@office-concept.de

The Swiss Dzogchen Community now has its own Homepage:

<http://www.dzogchen.ch>

If you would like to add our page to your link page and have us do the same, let us know. If you should have any comments and suggestions of how to improve our pages we would be happy to receive an email from your side to: <mailto:info@dzogchen.ch>

Thank you for your contributions!

Kind regards,
Charles Sarasin
Dzogchen Community Switzerland
Yellow Gakyil

Yantra Yoga in Vienna, Austria June 5-8, 2003

The Dzogchen Community Vienna/Austria is happy to announce a Yantra Yoga course for beginners and advanced from June 5th to 8th, 2003 in Vienna. The course will be held by Walter Camerloher and supervised by Laura Evangelisti.

This course shall provide deeper knowledge for those who are already practicing Yantrayoga and gives the opportunity for new people to learn the Yantrayoga of the Dzogchen Community with the presence of one of the Communities international Yantra Yoga teachers.

The retreat costs 125.- euro for all 4 days
20% discount for members = 100.- Euro
60% discount for members with very little money = 50.- Euro

There will be the possibility to stay for free in the place where the course is held.

For registration (number of participants limited to 15), further information and accomodation please contact
Elisha Kopp.(ensteiner)
Email: elishanana@hotmail.com

VAJRA DANCE, PART 2 MERIGAR, ITALY

Dance of the Song of the Vajra Course, Second Part

with Prima Mai

September 5 – 10, 2003

For more information contact Merigar:
Tel: 39 0 564 966837
Fax: 39 0 564 968110
Email: merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it

e u r o p e

A Past Recall Event from the Hungarian Dzogchen Memory

A Hungarian Yantra Yoga Course with Fabio Andrico in the year 2002

By Andrea Toth - Zsolt Somogyvari

According to a Tibetan saying "It is not easy to wake up a Buddha". We can all experience the truth that lies in it, but we would not have thought that it could be so difficult to organize a Yantra Yoga course.

After about one and a half years of trying to find a suitable time we proved successful in inviting Fabio to do a Yantra Yoga course in Budapest, the Hungarian capital.

The setting up of the Hungarian Dzogchen Community and our contact with Rinpoche all started with our meeting and practice of Yantra Yoga. In this process we got a lot of help from Oliver Leick and the Styrian Dzogchen Community. In the last two years Oliver came to Hungary three times and was teaching yoga in Budapest and at the same time the Dzogchen Community of Styria gave our practitioners the possibility to join their SMS Base Level Practice Group from time to time.

After these antecedents, Fabio accepted our invitation and arrived in Budapest. His visit had another purpose; as a member of the International Gakyil he checked those places which were important concerning our precious master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's September visit. He checked the location where the teachings were to be, and the spas they could visit here. Fabio did this last task with special attention and self-sacrifice: he was sweating in the saunas, suffering in steam-baths, was drifting in the experience-baths and was steeping thoroughly in the medical waters. Some of us had the opportunity to accompany him on this difficult and highly responsible tour...

Between June 18-30, 2002, a beginners' and an advanced Yantra Yoga course was organized in Budapest. Twenty-five people came to learn the eight movements and got a general introduction into the practice of Yantra Yoga in the beginners' course; ten of whom were 'older' practitioners. We hope that the Hungarian version of the video cassette called Eight Movements and the published booklet will give much help for the home practice of the beginners. The video cassette came out about one month before the yoga course.

On the course for the more 'advanced' yogins and yoginis Fabio revised those exercises with us which belong to the first group of Yantra Yoga. He concentrated on the details and was correcting and correcting us. He tried to make us be precise, always calling our attention to accuracy and awareness, saying how important it was to follow the tradition correctly and not escape any detail. The movements which had been taught us before faded and became obscure so this intensive polishing did very good to them.

Fabio called our attention to two basic points during the course: to consult the Yantra Yoga manual regularly and to exactly and carefully read what is written down there and that during our common practice we should make an effort and do the exercises as precisely as we can. We must not give in to our laziness, negligence and carelessness. Keeping the purity of the Yantra Yoga tradition depends on us, too, here and now. He emphasized to us several times that if we are not able to do something it is only because of the obstacles made by ourselves, and that we must wish and want to overcome them, practice persistently and then we will be able to succeed in every thing.

Seeing the many things corrected the 'older' practitioners glanced at their mate shocked (he normally leads the common weekly practice sessions) who answered "That's why we have invited Fabio, haven't we? It would have been unnecessary if Fabio had come and said nothing and corrected nothing."

So we were happy, we tried to correct ourselves and made things more and more precisely. Anyone who has ever participated at a course with Fabio knows his style and knows that he loves jokes. So practicing was done in a jolly good atmosphere and we were enriched by a lot of new and important experience.

Fabio arrived on June 26 and left on July 4, and during his stay all the members of the Hungarian Dzogchen Community tried to do their best to assist in the tasks concerning his stay. Doing this we soon realized how much better things go if the members of the Community share duties and co-operate. So anyone who so far had had any doubts about the importance and necessity of the Community could now realize how essential and vital the friendly, responsible communication and co-operation were.

We had the impression that Fabio is a very interesting person, who is very well-informed about the happenings and events of life and with whom we had a really pleasant stay, although the unbearable sufferings of samsara in the sauna-baths, the hands of the professional masseurs, or the strained moments of waiting for our food in the restaurants were sometimes hard moments for him to cope with.

To close this writing, let me quote Fabio, who to the request to tell us his opinion about the Hungarian Yantra Yoga practitioners' knowledge gave a very edifying answer: "It's not my task to judge. I am here to help."

We are trying to carry on with our practice in this spirit, and first of all we are all very grateful to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to have made and constantly is making it possible for all of us to get hold of this precious tradition and also we are really thankful to his disciples who help and support us. May they all have long lives and be active for all our benefit!

Yantra Yoga in Germany with Laura Evangelisti May 28th - June 1st, 2003

The GERMAN DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY would like to announce the following YANTRA YOGA COURSE with Laura Evangelisti in Germany.

We will focus on the 3rd & 4th group of Yantras
Hoefen, Germany

For more info please contact:
Regine Zettler
Tel: 0049-(0)89-74298244
Email: Regine-125@gmx.net



New French Gakyil

Yellow : Ermanno Lagana, Bernard Bodineau
Blue : Marie-Helene Foa, Laurent Stemmler, Francois Calmes
Red : Jean-Francois Daireaux, Jean-Francois Ayme

The Danish Dzogchen group has elected a new Blue Gakyil member:

Lidia Sablone
Küchlersgade 51
1774 Copenhagen V
Tel: + 45 33 22 66 41

k u n s a n g a r

Retreat & Santi Maha Sangha in Kunsangar

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Santi Maha Sangha
May 27th-29th Santi Maha Sangha 2nd Level Exam
May 30th-June 3rd Santi Maha Sangha 3rd Level
Training

June 5th-9th Kunsangar Retreat Teaching:
Longsal Tsalung
Contact:
Kunsangar Office
Email: kunsang@gar.legko.ru

Lama Wangdor to Visit Tsegylgar Spring, 2003

We are happy to inform you that Lama Wangdor Rinpoche will give teachings at Tsegylgar again:

June 14 & 15, 2003

For more information:
Tsegylgar
PO Box 277
Conway, MA 01341
USA

Tel: 413 369 4153
Fax: 413 369 4473
Email:
secretary@tsegylgar.org



FOR THE FIRST TIME IN TSEGYALGAR!!!

KUMAR KUMARI
September 15-16
with Laura Evangelisti

This course is for Yantra Yoga teachers and adult practitioners. To participate in this course, transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is required (in person or from participating in one of the 3 Guruyoga anniversary practices).

Kumar Kumari is a system of Yantra Yoga developed by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for children. The course is designed to train adult practitioners of Yantra Yoga to teach children Kumar Kumari.

For more information contact Tsegylgar:
Tel: 413 369 4153
Fax: 413 369 4473
Email: secretary@tsegylgar.org

Tsegylgar Bookstore is On-line! <www.tsegylgar.org>

As some of you may have already seen, we now have an ON-LINE BOOKSTORE which you can find as one of the main topics on our web site

<www.tsegylgar.org>.

Not only are all the Tsegylgar bookstore items there, but it also looks really beautiful!!!! Everything with nice color photos and clear descriptions. The best thing is that you can get it all using our completely secure connection and pay directly on-line.

The Tsegylgar On-line Bookstore has been up and running for a short time, so it's totally fresh. For that reason, please excuse any imperfections while corrections are still in progress. Also please share your comments with us so we can make it easier and more interesting to use.

Internet Access in Kunsangar

We are happy to announce that Kunsangar is now on permanent leased line connection to the Internet. It has been tested and proved to work reliably and fast.

Permanent Internet access services will be available to everyone coming to May-June retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Providing these services requires a considerable amount of work for network design and deployment, therefore people coming to Kunsangar and wishing to use these services are kindly requested to fill out the following form, that will be used for our estimations of required investment into the local network infrastructure.

Name _____
I will bring my laptop with me
OS on my laptop (Win/Mac/Unix)
I'd like to use a Kunsangar PC
My email account - Webmail
- POP3/IMAP
I'd like to be able to use IP phone calls to/from Kunsangar

The last item means that those who are used to make Internet phone calls using the programs like Microsoft Net-Meeting or Unix GnomeMeeting will be able to call any place and to be called in Kunsangar with PC to PC calls to/from anywhere in the world. This service requires some more testing, so I'd like to get feedback from people who are used to do this to test the local setup for PC to PC calls.

In view of the required investment you are kindly requested to consider the possibility of making a donation that will be used for the deployment of network facilities and access points in Kunsangar buildings.

I'd like to make a donation
The amount of money: _____

Of course, filling out this form is totally optional. If you take time to do it, please send it to my email: mokhin@bog.msu.ru. It will help a lot in our preparations for the retreats with Rinpoche, when we expect more than one thousand people to come.

Best regards,
Grisha Mokhin

tsegylgar, east & west



Pike's Land New Land Acquisition for Tsegylgar East

by Malcolm Smith, Blue Gakyil

In accordance with our Master's wish, Tsegylgar has recently completed the acquisition of the land adjoining ours, which formerly belonged to the Pike Family of Buckland. This beautiful piece of land is a mixture of wood, field and streams, a turn of the century farm house, a barn and 3/4 of a mile of road frontage. There is an old road directly to the land's parking lot that runs past the farmhouse and directly to the parking lot which we will restore as a walking path from the house up to the land.

With the purchase of the Pike's land, we envisage that we will be able to offer retreat accommodations at our cabins [to be built] on a year round basis for the first time. This an exciting moment for Tsegylgar, and we welcome anyone interested to participate this summer and fall in karma yoga to bring our Master's vision of Khandroling as an important retreat center in North America to fruition.

Yantra Yoga for Beginners

Paula Barry, assisted by Naomi Zeitz

Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners

May 31-June 1
Saturday and Sunday,

at Tsegylgar, Conway, MA.

There will be 2 two hour Thuns of practice each day,
10-12 and 4-6.

Please preregister by contacting secretary@tsegylgar.org.
Thank you.



VAJRA DANCE & YANTRA YOGA COURSES at TSEGYALGAR

There are no discounts for courses.

Beginners' Song of the Vajra Dance with Adriana dal'Borgo:

Sept 15-18 First 1/3 of Song of the Vajra Dance

Sept 24-Oct 2 Second 2/3 of the Song of the Vajra Dance

(\$30/day) for all 13 days. \$350.

*To participate in this beginner's course, transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is required (in person or from participating in one of the 3 Guruyoga anniversary practices).

September 15-16

Kumar Kumari with Laura Evangelisti:

*This course is for Yantra Yoga teachers and adult practitioners. To participate in this course, transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is required (in person or from participating in one of the 3 Guruyoga anniversary practices).

TEACHER TRAINING COURSES

*Contact Tsegialgar for prerequisites for these courses.

October 11-19

Second Level Vajra Dance Teacher Training with Prima Mai & Adriana dal'Borgo
September 24-October 2

Second Level Yantra Yoga Teacher Training with Fabio Andrico & Laura Evangelisti

*To register for Yantra Yoga or Vajra Dance Level II Teacher Training Courses, please contact the Tsegialgar office AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BEFORE MAY 31st.

TO REGISTER FOR RETREATS AND/OR COURSES:

Register online with a credit card at Email: www.tsegialgar.org or to pay with credit card by Tel: 413-369-4153, Fax: 413-369-4473.

To register by mail with a check or credit card info:
Dzogchen Community in America (DCA)
P.O. Box 277, Conway, MA 01341

Make checks payable to Dzogchen Community or "DCA."
All dollar amounts in US\$'s.

Discounts/payment plans available for those with disabilities or financial hardship.

CHICAGO PRACTICE SCHEDULE FOR SPRING

COLLECTIVE PRACTICE

Sundays 6:30PM

May 18

Guru Rinpoche Day Ganapuja and Namkha Authentication Ritual

May 25

Dakini Day Ganapuja

VAJRA DANCE PRACTICE

Thursdays 8-10PM

May 22, 29

YANTRA YOGA COURSE-TBA

For location and further information, please contact:

Lynn Sutherland/George Blaha

Tel: 773 784-4168 or email: lynnsuth@aol.com

SPECIAL EVENT:

Shakya Dorje, Doctor of Tibetan Medicine, will return to Chicago this Spring for consultations.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact:



End of SMS retreat with Jim Valby in Berkeley, California

C.O'KELLEY

The Dzogchen Community West Coast needs Email Volunteer

The Dzogchen Community West Coast has a large and active email list, and messages like this one go out to those on the list to keep those who are interested informed about what is going on in the Community.

Sending out emails and retrieving emails sent to the Community and directing them appropriately is an exceedingly valuable function AND WE NEED SOMEONE TO VOLUNTEER who is comfortable with computers and would be willing to do this FROM THEIR HOME.

The person who does this job is one of the first to know about everything that's going on - a great benefit.

If you are interested in volunteering and/or wish to know more about this function, please contact:

Susan Sopcak, sasopcak@attbi.com

or Ann Clarkson, aclarkson@mindspring.com

We are waiting eagerly to hear from you!!!!!!!

VAJRA DANCE OF THE LIBERATION OF THE SIX SPACES HAWAII

with Anastasia McGhee
Level 1, Local Dance Instructor

DATES:

Friday morning, MAY 23 — Sunday evening MAY 25, 2003

LOCATION:

Paleaku Peace Gardens, 83-5401 Painted Church Rd.,
Captain Cook, HI 96704 (Big Island)

Airport: Kona, HI.

LODGING/ACCOMMODATIONS:

contact Barbara DeFranco

Tel: (808)328-8084. or

Email: paleaku@hawaii.rr.com

COST:

\$175.00 for 3 days Instruction, includes lunches. \$100.00
Deposit requested, non refundable after May 15, 2003.

REGISTER: on-line at

www.dzogchenhawaii.com/danceretreat

MORE INFO:

Leilani Sim-Godbehere

Tel: (808)239-1165

Fax: (808)239-1226

Email: simgod@hawaii.rr.com

Yantra Yoga with Jey Clark May 24-25, 2003 Santa Fe, New Mexico

The Dzogchen Community of New Mexico is happy to announce an upcoming beginning level Yantra Yoga course to be taught by Jey Clark, a certified level one Yantra Yoga instructor. This course will be held in Santa Fe, NM on the weekend of May 24th and 25th. There will be two sessions each day, one from 10:00AM-12:30PM and the other from 3:30-6PM.

The course is being held at St John's United Methodist Church. The price for the weekend is \$85.

For questions or more information please call Denise:

Tel: 505-867-3562 or

Email: dcoady@salud.unm.edu

Please RSVP if possible to ensure that we have enough people to offer the Yantra Yoga course.

TWO GAKYIL POSITIONS OPEN

There are two openings on the Dzogchen Community West Coast Gakyil; Yellow (finance) and Red (activity) for Community members who have attended several retreats with Rinpoche and have an eagerness to participate in our many upcoming events - including helping to establish the Winter Gar for North America; putting on the October retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu; hosting Lama Wangdor; planning activities at the Berkeley Center; participating in Community-to-Community North America meetings; and having input to our vision for ourselves as practitioners in Northern California, as members of the North America Community, and as part of the world-wide Dzogchen Community. Gakyil meetings are held once per month, and phone attendance is possible.

All Gakyil members have specific responsibilities to help the Community function well.

The position of TREASURER is also open. Our previous Treasurer has organized our finance system and trained a bookkeeper, which means that the new Treasurer inherits a working system and a helper. The Treasurer is responsible for being liaison with the bookkeeper, for producing a basic inflow and outgo and asset status report for the Gakyil each month; making sure that bills are paid on a timely basis; tracking bank accounts; suggesting improvements for our financial process and tracking necessary tax filings and payments. Since our Community is incorporated as a church, the filing burden is minimal.

Contact Carol Fields at carolfields@aol.com

California Dzogchen Community seeks Rental Coordinator

We have many fine opportunities to rent out our Center space and bring in income for the Community while simultaneously supporting good activities. BUT WE NEED SOMEONE TO COORDINATE OUR RENTALS. We are seeking a volunteer, preferably someone who lives relatively close to the Center.

The Rental Coordinator will contact those on the Gakyil who are appropriately involved in the rental (Blue for Dharma rentals); will interface with those seeking to rent the Center; establish dates and rental fees; have contract signed after obtaining Gakyil approval for the rental; collect fees, and arrange that renters have access to the Center and know what is expected of them in terms of cleanup, lockup etc. If enterprising, the Rental Coordinator may put out some publicity about the Center's availability for appropriate rentals. Working with the Gakyil, the Rental Coordinator will clarify the sequence of steps involved in renting out the Center and make a Rental Guideline sheet.

Please respond to carolmfields@aol.com or call 510-524-0593

namgyalgar & pacific rim

Namgyalgar Gakyil Update Autumn, April, 2003

by Peter Phipps, Namgyalgar Treasurer

It is a truism to say things are always changing in the Dzogchen Community, but now it feels more apparent than ever. The presence of our Master teaching at the Gar and near his home in Queensland inspires the Community to greater activity and action. It is amazingly great fortune and a major responsibility for us to host Rinpoche here in his Victorious Gar, as we try to organize things and care for him so his precious teachings can continue smoothly. His presence makes sure we are awake as we organize and run this series of retreats and trainings including Santi Maha Sangha, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga.

At this busy time in the "retreat cycle", the Namgyalgar Gakyil is also moving through a transition of members. Long-serving, dedicated Gakyil members are retiring after three years (and longer!) in their Gakyil roles, while new roles in the life of the Community are emerging. The teachings have been profound, and the general atmosphere of these retreats has been wonderful. From a Gakyil perspective of organization the amazing gourmet catering, smooth registration system, considerate care for new practitioners and non-stop program stand out as exceptional.

In addition to a Summer and Autumn retreat, SMS exams and training, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance courses at the Gar, we also held a retreat in Caloundra near Rinpoche's home in sunny Queensland. It was great to find a strong regional Community from Brisbane and the local region taking on the huge responsibility for organizing the retreat and doing a magnificent job. The local Queensland and New South Wales practitioners collaborated with the Gakyil, but did most of the work themselves, giving us a strong confirmation that the capacity of the whole Community is increasing and many people are actively rowing the Dzogchen Community Boat in the Namgyalgar region. Everybody at the Caloundra retreat seemed to appreciate the ease of everything, (especially the Namgyalgar Gakyil who didn't have to do anything!) What great collaboration! The retreat was at a beautiful site, which inspired Rinpoche to say we would surely have another retreat there in the future.

We now find ourselves with people with newly defined responsibilities since the teacher training on Margarita Island and the Yantra Yoga teacher

continued on next page

tashigar north & south

!!!HOLA!!! from the Gakyil of Tashigar del Norte (TDN) and the Board of Directors of Proyecto Comunitario Tashigar del Norte (PCTN)

The international Gar on Margarita is smiling even more sweetly these days. One of our Vajra kin and current chairman of the Board of PCTN, Dick Drury, has secured a deal with the previous owner whereby the land is now totally owned by Dzogchen Community shareholders. HURRAH!! In doing so, Dick has saved us all a considerable amount of money, time and energy that would undoubtedly have been consumed by the ongoing machinations of a relationship wherein the previous landowner was keen to move on. Shareholders who are able to increase their ownership investment potential in the land, have been invited to participate with Dick on the condition that they do not leave themselves "muerte de hambre".*

Several Community members have visited the Gar over the last year and enjoyed the fresh, green growth of aloes generating yellow flowers as well as being with the Sangha there. The land for Rinpoche's house has been cleared and we are delighted that building is already in progress. The road construction for the housing lots has also begun and finalization of lots, drainage and electricity is being carried out by the combined efforts of our infrastructure supervisor, architect Carolina Hernandez, and Board President Gilberto Parrella. Several shareholders who have begun designing their homes have selected Carolina's rustic Caribbean style and others have chosen the ULA architects from Merida.

Communication between the TDN Gakyil and Board of Directors for PCTN is venturing into previously uncharted waters. We are happy to report that relatively smooth sailing has ensued over meals in a variety of restaurants near the Gar. The resulting "Zaragoza Proposal" acknowledges the Gakyil's decision to ensure financial responsibility via income from retreats and membership as well as recognize the members who have donated the land. A spirited collaboration is developing.

A RECENT VISIT TO TASHIGAR DEL NORTE

by Jim Smith

It had been a little more than a year since the end of the Longsal retreat, a time when Rin-

Two Gonpa designs have been presented - one from Carolina and one from the ULA. You can see the chosen Gonpa already in our web site. The Gakyil welcome any donations to the construction of the Gonpa which we would like to have completed by the time of Rinpoche's visit to Margarita in October. Please visit the web site at: www.dzogchenvenezuela.org/gonpa.

Now that the urbanism is underway, the PCTN BoD is beginning to reconsider the issues of aloe cultivation and the processing plant. As we require at least fifty hectares of cultivated aloe to have a really profitable commercial project, there is the future likelihood that we will consider purchasing surrounding land, entering into relationships with or buying aloe leaf from other farms to match the capacity of the processing plant. Therefore, there is a possibility that Margarita Aloe, the company concerned with the processing, packaging and marketing of the Aloe Vera, will open its doors to investment in the future.

*dying of hunger

by Rosemary Friend



Brick factory at the Gar

J.SMITH

island. A totally new Gonpa is being planned perhaps a little farther up the hill and the fundraising has begun. Information concerning this and all the projects of Tashigar del Norte can be found on the Margarita web site.

I was also able to witness the poles for Rinpoche's house being placed in their positions, with the roof soon to follow. All expectations are for it to be completed for his arrival in November. The location of the Master's

house is to the left of the present Gonpa, cut into the hillside with a wonderful vista of the landscape and the sea beyond. In the area where the houses will be built the roads have been cut and lots are located. Sewers are being laid, with electrical to follow. The first house has been started with several others soon to begin. In short, for me it was a wonderful and inspiring visit.

The hospitality of the practitioners there was one of true heartfelt generosity. They are making efforts not only to



Setting the poles for Rinpoche's house

poche gave precious teachings and also talked candidly about his vision concerning Isla Margarita. As one of the people that would like to build a house at this island Gar, I traveled to Margarita again in early May to see how things were progressing and to meet with the people there, including the architect Carolina Hernandez.

For those of you who have been able to visit the Gar, the first sight is truly amazing. The lower flat fields have aloe plants covering nearly every square meter complete with irrigation. The plants looked healthy and full of the moist inner gel. The field to the left of the road has been planted with the new aloe babies that have sprouted at the base of the now two-foot parent plants. There has been keen interest from many local farmers, as well as from the mainland, since this is a new crop for the region and what the Community is doing is being considered a model for the area.

At the end of the entry road, the building used for the teachings awaits a new roof, a more permanent one to replace what has been lost to the strong winds of the



A happy Dick Drury working the land at the Gar

BOTH PHOTOS/ J.SMITH

practice and manifest the teachings, but also to provide a support for the health and long life of the Master and his vision so that others can benefit from Rinpoche's transmission. Being on this island I sensed an energy that was creative, not only personally, but for all of the possibilities that are yet to manifest. This is not a Gar only for those who wish to purchase a lot, but a sacred place for all who wish to experience it. Living can be accomplished with little funds and affords everyone great possibilities.

**New Gakyil, Secretary & Gekös
Tashigar South, Argentina**

Yellow:
Paula de Rademaker.

Blue:
Sergio Oliva, Daniel Simonelli, Zina Gerzenstein.

Red:
Luis Olivera, Gustavo Horully, Delia Dos Santos.

NAMGYALGAR REPORT continued from previous page

training at Namgyalgar. Namgyalgar is very fortunate to have three teachers for the base of SMS: Angie and Lisse living close to the Gar in Australia, and Cheh Goh in Singapore. We also have Jean as a dance teacher and now Jeanie, Amare, Emily and Mathew as newly approved Yantra Yoga teachers. Two of the three monks have arrived from Nepal, coming to train in Santi Maha Sangha at Namgyalgar, learn English and join in the life of our dynamic Community. They are currently living and studying with Rinpoche in Gawaling, where they will stay on after Rinpoche leaves for Japan in May. We will make Tibeto-Aussies of them soon enough!

All these changes mean new ways of doing things, new kinds of relationships with these people, and new things happening in our Community. The Gakyil is doing its best to take all this in and respond with awareness, while we have retreats and building and other activities going on non-stop. We make some mistakes, and will inevitably make some more, but all do our best knowing our master and Vajra brothers and sisters have entrusted us with the responsibility to develop and support the Community and the Gar.

As for changes in the Gakyil, Tony Laurent, who took the huge responsibility of planning and execution of building at Namgyalgar, and all the bureaucracy involved in getting permits and contracts, stepped down from the Gakyil at the summer retreat. Most recently he has been the organizational force behind the construction, and now the interior fit-out of the Gar's first dedicated retreat cabin. This is a great moment in our history! Now he has the plans and site preparation for a dark retreat cabin (generously donated by Namgyalgar members from South-East Asia). We hope to have this cabin finished this year, and look forward to welcoming our Vajra family from all over the world to practice here.

Jan Cornall and Eleanor Loudon (President and Treasurer) stepped down at Easter. They have been known as the "dynamic duo", working extremely closely with one another to keep the Community relationships, decisions and finances flowing even in the quiet times of winter. They have set a very high standard of collaboration and warm affection within the Gakyil, which has seen the working relationships of the Gakyil mature enormously. Jan has been a truly wonderful president, her approachability, intuition, patience, ability for listening, sense of humor and level of practice has been the perfect combination for this role.

Eleanor (Ely) has also been instrumental in establishing the new accounts system so that the Community has a much clearer sense of the state of its present and projected finances at all times. She has also overseen the new system of dual reporting, so the treasurer, secretary and external book-keeper are updated on Community transactions each month, and ask each other about any discrepancies or unexpected expenses. Ely is expecting a baby with her partner Stef very soon, so the timing of her retirement from the Gakyil is the start of a whole new adventure for them.

The other retiring Gakyil warrior is Malcolm Smith who has been co-piloted by Joy Dahl throughout his time as the backbone of the red function. Malcolm has done things for the community no weak-hearted person would consider; like staying on the land in a caravan through a long winter and more, building, fixing and maintaining everything on the Gar from fences up the mountain and over creeks, to starting the generators and checking the solar system yet again and again in sun rain and the dark of the night. Joy has ridden beside him, co-writing red reports, and helping the Gakyil with decision-making processes so we could get over our limitations and on with the job of working for the Community.

All this work seems to be reaching a kind of fruition in terms of the material situation of the Gar! At the summer retreat Rinpoche kindly ran an auction for us, donating many personal items. The community raised over AUD\$35,000, (US\$21,000) enough to pay off the land mortgage and make a start on our next project. So after a few short years Namgyalgar is free of debt, and able to move on in its next stage of development! At the autumn retreat, having told the Gakyil that building a Gekös house should be a priority, Rinpoche ran another auction, this time dedicated to building the Gekös house and raised over AUD\$30,000 again! So we now have enough money to begin that project as soon as possible. Thank you Rinpoche for your kindness and showing us again how material resources can manifest!

This is just a small taste of current life in the Namgyalgar Gakyil. To summarize things very succinctly: the feeling is good, the energy strong and the Community feels mature and growing. With new members stepping in to fill the Gakyil places left vacant, a new Gekös vacancy (applicants welcome), Tibetan monks studying SMS at the Gar, building work on the Gekös house and new retreat hut and other projects to be completed change and development is all around. We will see what changes the rest of the year will bring to the Victorious Gar as a seat of the precious Dzogchen teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

passages



**Died:
Nicola Grimmond**

We remember the passing, on Tuesday, April 7th, 2003, of our beloved Vajra sister Nicola with heartfelt appreciation. She was a lively and playful mother, grandmother, lover, friend and artist who recently completed many artworks. Nicola was known to have a particular love for mantras with all kinds of people and situations in mind. She was very keen on the Vajra dance and our other regular practices together and we enjoyed many special and generous

times in her home. Thank you Nicola for enriching our lives.

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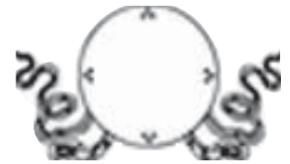
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The Mirror
Newspaper of the
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Dzogchen Community of
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Subscription Rate/
6 Issues:
\$35US available
through
Tsegyalgar
35 Euro
through Merigar
Visa and Master card
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**New Mirror Representative
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A big thanks to Joy Dahl for her invaluable assistance these past few years with The Mirror! Australia has always been very responsive to and supportive of The Mirror and we appreciate it !!!
The new Mirror Rep is Kamalesh Raennon
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2003 Fall Yantra Yoga Courses
Namgyalgar, Australia
by Yoko Morita (Japan)
(translated by E.M.Cooke)

Visiting Namgyalgar after a three year absence, I was greeted by the familiar call of the bell birds. In Japan, whenever I recall Namgyalgar, it is always the song of the bell birds which come to



Yantra Yoga outdoors in Caloundra

S. VORON

mind. Just hearing them makes me feel like I am in a dimension distant from everyday life.

For these several years, I have been practicing Yantra Yoga with several other members of the Japanese Dzogchen Community two or three times a month. We practice while viewing the tapes of Fabio's Yantra teachings in Japan and other tapes available for sale in the Community.

The videos include some taken recently, and some from six, eight or even an Argentine video from ten years ago. When we want to see a kind of shy Fabio teaching, we watch the tape from Argentina, and when we want to practice the currently accepted form of the Eight Movements, we watch the most recent, publicly available tape.

However, to study the most up-to-date understanding of Yantra Yoga, it is necessary to participate in an official Yantra course. Also, in a course conducted by authorized teachers, one can receive detailed explanations that are not available just studying using video tapes. In my case, I am hoping that eventually I will be able to develop as a Yantra Yoga instructor in Japan, for which reason I signed up for the Yantra Yoga teacher training and advanced courses.

Altogether, the courses lasted fifteen days, and about ten students participated in each. Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti provided very detailed and helpful guidance for each individual participant. All the students actively exchanged ideas and questions, and a frank yet

cheerful and relaxed atmosphere prevailed throughout.

In my case, once I finished with my self-introduction, I had just about come to the limit of my English language communication ability, but I knew from past experience that even if I couldn't handle the language, it is still possible to learn much of Yantra Yoga just by observing and doing, so I held my breath and signed up. As expected,

I really couldn't understand much of the English explanation, and unfortunately could hardly follow any of the conversations. Nevertheless, both teachers understood my difficulty and took care to be helpful, and all the other students were very understanding and kind, helping me by explaining slowly during breaks. I am really grateful to them all.

My thanks also go to the helpful friends who so kindly offered to give me a ride between Killarney Cottage and the Gar, normally a one hour walk each way, as well as to the shops and for drives to Mystery Bay and the Bermagui beaches.

At Namgyalgar, practically as soon as one had decided it was going to be a beautiful clear day, sudden rains would fall punctuated by great thunderclaps, and then the blue sky would open up; the rapidly changing weather was truly a wonder. Beautiful natural surroundings, beautiful birds, even encounters with goats and wallabies, everything added up to an idyllic scene of peace and relaxation, which poured over into the Yantra lessons and also the cozy kitchen scene. When Rinpoche returned to the Gar preliminary to do the Santi Maha Sangha training and Easter Retreat, everyone waited to welcome him, filled with excitement. All of these are treasured memories kept with fondness in my heart.

To Rinpoche, to the Yantra instructors, and all my friends at the Gar, thank you!

Surviving SMS without PMS (whatever that is)
A bit of an essay on life at Namgyalgar

by E. M. Cooke, Tokyo

I just returned to Japan from Australia, where I stayed for about two weeks at a rural area near the bustling one-horse town of Central Tilba (next to the one-wallaby town of Tilba Tilba). Arriving with clenched jaws in fearful anticipation of the SMS Base level exam, I departed with a feeling of total relaxation, infused with the liberating teachings of our Master, and with memories of the great beauty of the land and warmth of the people. This was my first visit to Australia, and I can hardly wait to go back. There is a rugged, primitive (geologically primitive) character in the landscape, and the dry air makes everything look like an etching rather than an impressionist oil painting.

Every morning, I woke up at between 3:30 and 4:30 am for no particular reason, probably just because of the extra energy released from the tensions built up in busy Tokyo. Although it was a little cool in the autumn air, I would sit outside on the porch of the (deluxe! microwave and washing machine, etc.) share cabin that four of us rented, to see the stars visible "down under", note the odd meteor, rest in contemplation, and wait for the birds to wake up. They did, at around 5 am or so just before dawn, generally with a seeming panic attack by the local kookaburra populace (so that's where they get those trademark jungle sound effects in every Tarzan movie), with weird electronic music courtesy of the magpies and a Jurassic Park cacophony of other birds. As it gets brighter, the wrathful-sounding birds seem to calm down and more peaceful bird songs prevail, with the addition of the "bell bird", a sort of non-descript olive-colored bird the size of a robin that is well camouflaged, but immediately recognizable because it makes a cute "pink" sound like beer bottles clinking together. They seem to be everywhere, and pull your ear-awareness 360 degrees when you tune into them.

I didn't see much other wildlife, only farm animals, but one fellow saw a wallaby crossing the road near the cabin. Probably the most impressive were the sea eagles spotted on several occasions, and the colorful cockatoos or parrots or whatever they were. A lyrebird was rumored to live near the retreat site, but I didn't have patience to look for it.

My cabin mates during the week of the SMS base exam and level 1 training formed a nice expat-soup: I am an American living in Japan, and Gregory is a Frenchman living in Vietnam, K.C. is a Singaporean living in Bangkok, and Rajah is a Sri Lankan living in Australia. These three fellows, and the other ladies staying at nearby share cabins, really knew the base text, which put me into a bit of a panic, as previous Japanese students had told me the exam was a piece of cake. I pulled a collegiate all-nighter, read the book cover-to-cover again, and wrote and rewrote notes until the few remaining brain cells untarnished by age began to retain some details; and then, when the demon of sleep was about to overwhelm me, I spied a gigantic huntsman spider perched above my head on the wall, thanks, Protectors, for sending the awareness-boosting incentive!

At the exam, the newly certified Base level instructors Angie and Elise proffered a box containing the [in]famous 333 questions, allowing me to pick any 10 (and 2 replacements for botched answers); somehow, with compassionate support from them, I pulled through. I learned that nearly everyone had passed this time, which was a cause of rejoicing and gratitude, and I felt that the students I met had really worked hard and devoted themselves to seriously mastering the book and the practices.

During the following training, Rinpoche gave us the *khrid lung* for the Level 1 text. At first, we were concerned because Rinpoche seemed a bit frail, but each day, Rinpoche's voice and demeanor became stronger and stronger, and by the end of the following Longde retreat, everyone was commenting about our Master's remarkably powerful teaching.

Hearing Rinpoche's explanation of the Level 1 text, I finally understood how useful all the information in the Base text forms a perfect background for the even more extraordinary Level 1 teaching. I could glimpse a little of the vast vision of our Teacher, which he intends to present through nine levels of texts and teachings, and I became more enthusiastic than ever for SMS. Some new practices were introduced as well, and the two local instructors conducted practice sessions in the afternoons.

When we had free time, some of us went to see various beaches in the area. Sturdy landscape designer and barbecue chef Tony graciously guided us to Eurobodalla Park (the euro seems to be everywhere these days), offering profound apologies when we walked the beach and actually ran across other human beings (hmm, no one apologizes for this when we are rammed into morning commuter trains in Tokyo rush hour...). Doris (another SMS anchorite from Chicago) drove several of us to Mystery Bay (really eerie, as though you might suddenly turn around and be startled by Steven Spielberg). It started raining before we could explore much, so we drove on, eventually taking a long route (um, we were lost) to Camel Rock near Bermagui where we encountered more rain, but were able to see a beautiful double rainbow forming an arc over the rock.

Us cabin mates had great intentions for our eating experience, and duly went off to the supermarket to stock up on nutritious and well-balanced food components. We failed to discuss whether anyone actually knew what to do with the food, however, and ended up eating instant noodles (someone knew how to cook boiled water - I acquired a gourmet reputation for suggesting that we toss a raw egg on the dry noodles before pouring in the hot water, which improved the MSG-flavored soup immensely). One other popular item which I could recommend after years of culinary experience was the bread sandwich, with 2 pieces of bread wrapped around another piece of bread (non-purists added pre-sliced cheese). You may sneer at this, but it kept us alive for several days until someone recalled that bananas didn't need excessive preparation, such as we were lavishing on the instant noodles. When I mentioned to Beth, indefatigable backbone of organization of us temporary immigrants, that the policy of housing only men with men and women with women in these share cabins could eventually lead to the extinction of about half the membership of the Community, she wisely and practically recommended that we take our pre-edible foodstuffs and visit some of the cabins with womenfolk, and see if we could work out a compromise. However, sadly, it was already too late: we had come to actually enjoy our monkish cabin lifestyle, and decided to keep on dining on "food for thought", letting the rest go to hell.

Very likely one reason why I am actually able to be writing this humble memoir today is thanks to Joy, a local resident who took us to the public house in Tilba for a decent meal and a brew. Paura, Maori Chöd and Mandarava expert, kept feeding the jukebox and coming up with half-forgotten tunes that epitomized Joy's and my past lifetimes in the U.S. during the heady days of the '60's. Carol King, Lou Reed, et al., the intoxication was stronger than the beer!

The pace of life was refreshingly relaxed, although everyone said that their government and business leaders had caught the American disease, and people were being laid off left and right, full-time employment with benefits was becoming rarer, and politics more draconian. All of that seemed light years away at the Gar, even in the midst of hours of karma yoga helping set up the bookstore with Jan and company for the upcoming Longsal Longde retreat. Everyone felt to be part of a single family, which seems worth mentioning now that I'm back in "the real world", but which is actually the true state of affairs, come to think of it. May the Master's teachings and good will spread to reach all beings in the three worlds!

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Please be patient as we reconstruct our web site for more efficiency and better quality!
Thank you. We hope to be up and running by June 1st.

Tibet or Tilba? 2003 Easter Retreat - Short Diary

by Kazuhisa Tamura (Tokyo)
(translated by E.M.Cooke)

I'm writing this on the way to Namgyalgar, brilliant morning sunlight dancing to the light rhythm of the long-distance bus making time from Sydney. Carrying my personal soundtrack on a mini-disk player (acoustic guitar & piano), I glance out the window to catch a pair of cockatoos with pure red wings fluttering aloft, chirping a smile in greeting. Just like they are in complete sympathy with the spirit of anticipated enjoyment of the trip to Namgyalgar, making memories while we go. Can't wait to see what treasures of memory accumulate on the trip to the Gar.

Early morning, magpies knocking on a log in the wall of my cabin bring in awareness to start my day. Rubbing my eyes, I depart for a walk around Lake Walaga. The surface of the water picks up the burning colors of the morning sky, forming a seamless vista of space sounding the faint lapping of waves; a vision of the light of the elements propagating from the center of a vast thigle. My spirit gently washed by the symphony woven of light and sound, I dwell in guru yoga for a time in the morning mists, then off to the Gar for karma yoga.

I volunteered to clean the Gonpa in the morning as karma yoga during the retreat. In Japanese temples, the day begins with samu, meaning work cleaning within the temple grounds. This means not only the temple and statues and altar in the main shrine building, but also everything from the approach road to the toilets, with everyone associated with the temple pitching in at once to help. This is not simply a chore, but rather an important practice of work for the purpose of fostering the spiritual readiness and intention aiming toward the precious Buddha Dharma, symbolically cleansing oneself of defilements while cleaning the environment. Seeing the log-framed Namgyalgar Gonpa, with the brilliant mandala of the Vajra Dance painted on the floor lighted by the morning sun, I felt that this place was the most excellent location for the practice of samu.

After a quick breakfast in the kitchen tent and completion of the morning Vajra Dance practice, we all waited in anticipation for the start of Rinpoche's talk. For the present topic of Longde in Rinpoche's Longsal cycle of discovered teachings, a total of 220 of our Vajra brothers and sisters attended from around the world, mainly from Australia of course, but also from New Zealand, Singapore, Nepal, and Japan in the Asia-Oceania region, and from Czech Republic, Austria, Spain, France, Poland, and Slovakia in Europe.

Speaking of the characteristics of the Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen teachings in the context of Tibetan

Buddhism, Rinpoche stated on the first day that, "In all teachings of the various traditions of Buddhism, the view is most important. However, the view should not be considered something like simple analysis or some academic topic. The true purpose of the view in Dzogchen is to discover our own fundamental condition through the view. We



Rinpoche teaching at Namgyalgar at Easter

S. VORON

don't use the view as a tool to analyze the objective world." Continuing through the international web cast on the middle day on to the final day, Rinpoche sprinkled the refreshing water of Dharma over us in his vital, sometimes humorous, way. For me, it was especially exciting to be present at the very spot from which Rinpoche broadcast his message to the Community members around the world. Imagining this to be a tremendous offering of Rinpoche's luminous words to be shared by all peoples in every environment around the world filled me with a profound sense of pleasure and fulfillment that eludes expression.

After taking lunch in the kitchen tent following the teaching, each day I would spend the afternoon attending the Yantra Yoga and Longde practice sessions, finding time now and again to enjoy conversation with my Dharma friends new and old, or walking alone to the hill where the container for offering sang stands. Walking downhill along the lone road leading from the Gonpa through the woods, after passing among the temporary tent village populated by retreat attendees, one comes upon a small knoll covered by grass. This hill, which commanded a stunning view of Rinpoche's house located part way up a mountain slope covered by beautiful trees, came to be my favorite spot on the land. A delicate contrast between the blue of the sky and the green of the trees juxtaposed thereupon filled the entire range of vision, while the enchanting plunking sound of bell birds filled all of space; will all senses fully open, not a cloud in the sky, eyes gazing toward the unending blue realm above, the first two lines of the *Rig pa'i Khu byug* (The Six Vajra Verses) came to mind: The true nature of the diverse phenomena is non-dual; Individual phenomena transcend the limits of the mind.

All beings dwell within the manifestations that arise in line with their karma. The forest of skyscrapers in a sea of unending pulsation like some inorganic disco beat that is my usual work and living environment in Tokyo is a world away from the grand scale of harmonious nature in seemingly frozen time before my eyes at Namgyalgar. But as Rinpoche teaches us, there is unlimited poten-

tial in the manifestation of phenomena, which appears in endless variation before us, yet the true nature of which is unchanging.

Absorbed in these thoughts, eyes fixed on the boundless sky, I sat on this small hill uncertain that I was not on a summer highland in Tibet.

During the latter half of the XIX Century, the saint Adzom Drukpa of the Kham region of Eastern Tibet, would hold retreats in both Summer and Winter, Summer surrounded in comforting green, Winter surrounded by snow-decorated mountain peaks, offering teachings in the highland plateau. During the retreats, it is said that hundreds of practitioners from around Eastern Tibet would challenge dangerous mountain passes to assemble on the highland, forming a temporary tent village, which would evaporate when the teachings completed, as if a dream, returning the highland to its original form.

Viewing the Namgyalgar Gonpa garbed in sunshine filtered through the tree leaves, with the tents of our Vajra brothers and sisters assembled to partake of the precious retreat teachings taking place in this narrow space sheltered by a primeval forest ranging beside this beautiful hill, I drifted into the feeling that here we are, in the presence of Adzom Drukpa of the XIX Century, once again. Of course, if it was the XIX Century, I'm not likely to have been able to arrive here from across the ocean by a single leap, one day after finishing work in Japan (chuckle).

All compounded things are impermanent, everything changes. However, I can't stop praying to the Three Jewels and the Three Roots to allow this fortress (Gar) to continue forever, protecting and propagating the teachings throughout this troubled planet earth. I don't know how to express my deep gratitude to all the Dharma friends who so skillfully handled all the organization, planning, and operation of this Easter retreat. May the lustrous and pure Dharma so kindly transmitted by Rinpoche spread throughout the world, like the melodious voice of the cuckoo announcing the coming of the warm season to each locality of Tibet.

Looking back on these memories, while the scenery still paints a limitless canvas of hues of green before me, I leave Namgyalgar wrapped by Autumn winds, returning to Tokyo and the manifestations of my own karma, consoled by the companions of the precious teaching of Rinpoche poured into my heart, and the memory of Namgyalgar's many beautiful scenes.

Finally, regardless of how many words are reeled out and expounded, it is impossible to communicate all one's thoughts and feelings, but I must respectfully express from the bottom of my heart the deep gratitude I feel to Rinpoche, who shows us that compassion, the foundation of our worldwide family the Dzogchen Community, is not simply a word, but life itself, and who unceasingly bestows upon us his rare teachings as if delivered upon waves of compassion.

TEA AND ECSTASY

by Joy Dahl

Even a cup of tea can be a profound teaching if Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is doing the drinking. At the end of one of the teaching mornings at the Caloundra Retreat, long time practitioner Daniel Reid and his wife Snow, who is Chinese/Japanese, approached Rinpoche and requested his permission to perform a traditional Chinese Tea Ceremony developed in Taiwan where it is known as "tea-art" or "old-folk's tea."



S. VORON

Rinpoche's usual "after-teachings work" was almost complete. He had greeted most practitioners waiting to see him, patiently answered all their questions, received the young children's drawings with delighted appreciation, given them little snacks and allowed himself to be photographed by those keen to have an external memento of their connection with their precious teacher. Finally, Rinpoche kindly agreed to accept Snow and Daniel's offer.

Sitting at Rinpoche's feet with a modern electric tea kettle along with a more traditional tray with traditional hand made clay tea pots, cups, cloths and other implements, Snow and Daniel started performing the Tea-Art Ceremony while Rinpoche looked on with bemused interest. He seemed to have something "up his sleeve" which we would only discover as the ceremony progressed.

It was explained, while the tea was being prepared, that savoring the flavor and fragrance of the tea is the most important part of the ceremony and that this was a very special tea. Not only was it a rare High Mountain Oolong - a naturally healing tea which, similar to a fine wine, had its own unique bouquet of flavors depending on the particular mountain on which it was grown, with each year's harvest yielding its own special character. But there was something even more unusual about this particular tea.

After this tea had been gathered and cured, before sundown on a full-moon night, Snow and Daniel had placed the tea in fragrant lotuses growing in their garden. The lotuses closed at sundown and in the morning, when they opened the tea was recovered, having absorbed the lotus fragrance, which enhanced its already subtle flavors.

We knew all about lotuses and their habit of closing on bees seeking the sweetness of lotus blossoms, from our studies of the Seven Mind Trainings of Longchenpa in Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Base Level text, "The Precious Vase." But here, we would discover from Rinpoche's silent communication, that this healing tea could present a very different message from that of the unfortunate bees in the ancient metaphor, who instead of being enhanced by their night in the lotus were, when the petals opened in the morning, found dead.

When the lotus-infused tea had been brewed, the first step in the ceremony was to pour it into a tall slender cup, not for drinking but especially designed to enhance the fragrance which was to be inhaled before the tea was then poured into a tiny cup for drinking. The tall "inhaling" cup was respectfully offered to Rinpoche, who received it with equal respect. Now we began to discover what he had "up his sleeve." Rinpoche performed his own Tea Ceremony. He lifted the tall "inhaling" cup high above his head, as if offering it first (we imagined) to Devas and Dakinis which only he could plainly see. Then Rinpoche carefully inhaled first with one nostril, then the other demonstrating with a blissful look the delightful experience of its fragrance, after which he looked around meaningfully at the small group gathered, as if to make sure we "got it."

For the past couple of days, he had been teaching us about certain practices related to his Mandarava and Longsal transmissions and Yantra Yoga. Practices, new to most of us, which involved breathing first with one nostril and then the other in a certain way with certain visualizations. Practices, which he explained, increased sensation in a way meant to help us discover that all bliss is not found outside, but is just a manifestation of our potentiality. Practices, which allowed us to discover for ourselves, the relationship of clarity, sensation and emptiness.

Now he was using the Tea Ceremony to demonstrate exactly how to practice and integrate all into instant presence. Not only the practices of this week, but he seemed to be explaining again what he has always explained about the important meaning of Ganapuja - to learn how to eat and drink. All without saying a word.

David and Snow offered the smaller cup, for tasting. Again Rinpoche repeated his own Tea Ceremony, offering it to those we could not see, sipping as if performing a Ganapuja, with great awareness and presence. Then with a tiny smile, his twinkling eyes darted around, checking to see if we "got it." He played it so broadly, only a nudge and a wink would have been more obvious.

Of course we all got a chance to participate and practice as small cups of tea were passed all round. Rinpoche gleefully watched us sniff and taste our tea. Always gracious and accommodating the desires of his students, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu also never misses an opportunity to bring more clarity and guidance to us in the most unexpected ways. Let's hope we really did "get it."

Dejam Ling

by Mehdi Benchelah & François Calmès

Dejam Ling's story started with a remark of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who asked the French Community to settle a bit and stop behaving like "gypsies". Actually, at this time, we looked more like a flag without a pole than like a real group of practitioners walking on the hard path of enlightenment. Scattered, quarrelsome, nomadic, the French disciples of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had to change some of their characteristics in order to be a proper sangha. Purchasing a piece of land was a strong step in that direction.

In front of such a clear and strong wish from our Master, the president of the Community at that time, Laurent Maurice, started to look for a place in the south of France. After many adventures, Rinpoche was shown pictures of different locations during the Merigar retreat of Easter, 1998, and chose "Le Devès", the future Dejam Ling. The place is situated in the Cévennes, a wild region south of Massif Central slightly above the town of Nîmes. It overlooks sharp hills covered with trees and bushes that reach to the coastal plain bordering the Mediterranean sea. It is particularly beautiful in autumn when the leaves become yellow, red and brown and the air smells of thyme and rosemary. In spring, the visitor can see the explosion of white flowers in the cherry trees and the green meadows on the "Mont Aigoual" whose silhouette closely match the Amiat.

The region shelters a lot of very colorful old villages and is close to the Roquefort caves where the famous (smelly) white and green cheese is made. There are some very good local recipes to be enjoyed in small restaurants in the neighboring villages as for instance: the duck 'à la cévenole'. To get it go straight up and up in the wood behind the main house, go down a steep little path and you will arrive at the "Mas du Daumet" and the duck is waiting for you (less than 2 km by feet, 50 mn by car). (Good to know if you're alone and your retreat supplies are coming to an end!).

Rinpoche came to Dejam Ling for an official opening in the Fall of 1998 and we participated in a powerful practice with him on that occasion. He blessed the place and give it its name. He also gave to the French Community the manuscript of a short terma from him: the "Namkhai Gyampo" that you'll be able to see, framed, in the main shrine room if you pay Dejam Ling a visit. It feels very warm to have a place which is not only our place, but was chosen by the Master among many others and blessed by his presence.

Dejam Ling is quite isolated and is very comfortable for personal retreats or for a little group. To reach Le Devès (Dejam Ling) take the Michelin map number 80 and look to the left of Alès. Between Ganges et Le Vigan, we find Pont d'Hérault, where we take the direction of Valleraugue (departmental road n° 986). On this road, after few kilometers, in Le Prat, at the right is the Snack-bar "La Reinette de Cluny" visible from the road, then the big building "La Residence du Mas de Cluny". A little bit further on the right, a little road with an old, old, bridge in stone, in the direction of Le Villaret, (only 6 km left), then keep on towards Valbonne. We find a road in the direction of the 'Col de la Tribale', a road still with asphalt but narrow, then again a little bridge. The last Km is only stones paved but suitable for normal vehicles if you drive a bit carefully. Terminus Le Devès / Dejam Ling.

In order to promote personal retreats, it has been recently decided to allow all the members of the French Community to do individual retreats in Dejam Ling at no cost. Offerings are of course welcome. Members of the International Dzogchen Community automatically enjoy the quality of temporary members of the French Community when they visit our country. This give them advantages identical to those of the French members. So if you want to practice SMS or other practices in the South of France or if you don't have a Ling in your own country or if you are tired of the bad weather in Northern Europe, you can always come and practice in a comfortable and cheap retreat place. The only thing is, if you plan a retreat lasting more than 14 days

you need to request the approval of the Gakyil. So, as you can see, Dejam Ling is not the Ling OF the French Community but rather, dear friends from everywhere, the Ling of the entire Community, in France.

To book for a personal retreat and later get the key or some help contact Jean-François Ayme <jf.ayme@tiscali.fr>. Accommodation for a personnel retreat are granted according to the chronological order of demands.

There are also activities happening regularly in the Ling. For example, we celebrate Garab Dorje's birthday and Guru Padmasambhava birthday with a full day of practice following the World Wide Transmission. At one time, I remember being driven in the night in a convoy of cars full of people in the direction of Dejam Ling. Our navigator didn't remember the way very well, so we got lost many times in the narrow roads of Cévennes and when we finally reached Le Devès it was something like three o'clock in the morning. It was a bit embarrassing when we got in the Ling; walking on sleeping bodies, and waking up half of the crew. Finally, after a (short) night in sleeping bags we got up at 5 o'clock for the very inspiring transmission in the main shrine room



Rinpoche relaxing at Dejamling

I remember also an historical Chöd week-end with Zeljka. With a lot of patience, she gave us a very good explanation of the practice and then taught us how to use the damaru and the bell and how to play and even how to make a flute with a tibia bone!!! Afterwards, we all practiced together and sang the melodies. It was, for most of the people present, their first experience of Chöd and some got a strong connection with it. During a break, one of the participants took a brief nap and made an interesting dream of the naga living in the spring a little bit down. "It was very short", tells Nassim Bovet, "I was asleep in the practice room for few minutes after the thun of Chöd. I remember having seen a strange being, half-snake,

half-fish, who was located in the water. (All the dream was in the water). This creature was staring at me with translucent eyes... I remember I felt quite uncomfortable! I woke up just after."

It might be that Mont Aigoual is not just an ordinary mountain. It marks the separation between the water of the Ocean and the Mediterranean sea. It is a powerful place with a very strange climate (although in the South) with sudden et violent changes. It might have been in the past during the time of the Gauls, a place for shamanic practices.

The property is about 20 acres covered with ilexes (evergreen oaks) with also some olive trees and the remains of a little vineyard. There is a main house which has four rooms in the ground floor including a spacious dining hall with a panoramic window and a very old chimney (*see picture with Rinpoche in front*) On the first floor, there is the main dormitory, the shrine room, which can easily accommodate forty people, and the office-library.

The house is built in stone on top of a huge vaulted basement. Quite close to it is a smaller house which is going to be repaired this year to be used as an extra personal retreat place. The general Assembly held in 2003 decided to spend 30,000 Euros to improve Dejam Ling this year. This will include the building of a platform with a Mandala for the dance in a place with a breathtaking view.

When the main house is already full during collective retreats, there is the possibility to rent cheap 'rural gites' in two hamlets nearby (one within walking distance). Dejam Ling is certainly one of the most beautiful, and at same time, comfortable retreat places of the whole community. On May 16-25, 2003, we will have a SMS Base Level Practice Retreat with Jim Valby in Dejam Ling. This is the first time that Jim is going to teach in France and, here, we are all very impatient to enjoy this event both at the level of the teaching and practice and at the level of the joyful gathering it is certainly going to be. You can still register at <cadette@club-internet.fr>.

To be frank, the French Community is sometimes still slightly quarrelsome (although all the last General Assembly decisions were approved by unanimity of voters) but we are maybe less scattered and nomadic. Thanks to Rinpoche who has given us the possibility to unite around this inspiring place!

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BIRTHS

Lhabab Duchen

On October 28, 2002, Lhabab Duchen, a very auspicious day, a son Luka was born to Natasha and Nereo Marussig of Belgrade, Ex Yugoslavia. We are all overjoyed especially since this is the first baby born into our small Belgrade Community!



Masu Fogarty Palmer

Madeleine Fogarty and Andrew Palmer of the Melbourne Dzogchen Community have become parents again. His full name is Carlos Michael Masu Fogarty Palmer, born 3:48AM on Tuesday, December 10, 2002. He weighed 3300 grams at birth. He joins a big happy family including Gabe, Sylvia, Anna, the twins, Alex and Owen, and Lola, the family dog.



Pema Rose Daoud

Born April 7, 2003 (Ekajati Day) at 7:46PM at home in Melbourne, Australia to Kelly Tracey and Bob Daoud. The proud father said, "She choose her name soon after she entered. She looked at Kel and then at me and then turned to a painting of a lotus and stared at that. Oh no, it's started already - the 'my child is so clever' syndrome."



PLEASE CHECK THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CONTACTS LIST FOR ACCURACY AND SEND US ANY CORRECTIONS.
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THANK YOU!
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Illness and the Practitioner

The following topic of "Illness & the Practitioner" inaugurates a new column in The Mirror featuring the every day realities & challenges of daily life and how practitioners experience them. We hope to include the words of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with each featured topic. Please note the next 5 topics to be covered and feel encouraged and welcomed to participate! We also appreciate any feedback.

Thank you.
The Mirror

Illusory Body

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

For one who, like the lord Naropa,
Has realized the knowledge
of the ultimate meaning
of the illusory body
And doesn't only have an intellectual
understanding of it
However severe leukemia might be
There would be no trouble and no fear.
Who has confidence in the knowledge
of the illusory body
But has not yet fully realized it
If leukemia is not treated
I am sure this illusory body which
is like a bubble
Will not remain long.
Illusory body made of flesh and blood
Following after time and circumstance
Sometimes healthy sometimes ill,
As long as its material condition
is not consumed
It can always be afflicted
by any sort of disease:
I have heard this is the nature
of all compound things.
Illusory body of five vital
and six hollow organs
Not only that but also flesh,
bones, blood and skin
The pure substances and the five senses
Based on Air, Bile and Phlegm.
If its condition is merely this
I think it's important to restore the har-
mony of the physical elements.
When the kidneys of this illusory
body of mine
Had completely lost their function,
While modern machinery was cleaning
my blood
I reached the boundary between living
and dying
And it was only through the immense
kindness of Samantabhadra of the basis
That my body has been allowed a chance
to live a little longer.
As the Santi Maha Sangha
is the sole ground
For the Whirl of Joy*
of the Dzogchen teaching
To last long and pure,
If this illusory body doesn't get the chance
To live in good health into its seventies,
Won't it remain only an idea in my mind?
If I load my illusory body
with too much work
Besides not achieving my aim,
problems will arise.
If I don't become like a cow
in the band of robbers
And if all males and females who have
interest in the Dzogchen teaching
Study and practice according
to my understanding
There will be great benefit for us all.
With this illusory body enjoying
temporary health,
Time and place being linked to the wisdom
of energy,
May I have the opportunity of teaching
The authentic state of self-perfection of
Samantabhadra of the basis
To all fortunate beings of the five conti-
nents on this earth
And may we all find happiness,
ALALAHO!
I hope this will come true!

from the book 'Songs from the Hospital and Other Poems' by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, Shang Shung Edizioni, Merigar, 1999

next topics & deadlines

loss, death & grief deadline June 10
love & relationships deadline August 10
working life deadline October 10,
sexuality deadline December 10,
family & parenting deadline February 10, 2004

Guru Dragpur Works! Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on his own Illness

extracted from a talk in Budapest,
2002

"For example, I gave the Garuda practice to many people who have suffered from cancer, tumors, etc., and since that time they have recovered by doing the practice in a perfect way. There are two people, one lives in Russia and the other in Australia. The doctors didn't expect more than six months for either of them, but they did the practice and overcame the disease.

Some years ago, in 1994, I also got a serious illness; leukemia. I was in the United States and I went into the New York Hospital. I saw many

people before who had suffered from this illness and they died very quickly. At first I thought, "No, there is nothing to do, this is the end of my life". Then in the hospital I changed my idea. I thought, "I gave this Garuda practice to people and they recovered by practicing it, so why shouldn't I also try it?"

I really dedicated myself to do the practice and after one month the doctors were so surprised; the illness had completely disappeared. Though I was not ill, they still didn't let me go. They said, "No, we should do chemotherapy to avoid the illness coming back. I did chemotherapy once, and a second and third time. When I did it the second time, many doctors suggested that there was no need for any more. But the doctor who was

responsible for my illness insisted to continue. Since I had been in this hospital with other ill people for a long time, the doctors wanted me to be cured totally. They also asked me to continue. After the third chemotherapy treatment they wanted to start another cure and finally I agreed. Then they wanted to do one more, but this time I said, "That is enough!"; no more was needed. All the treatments needed my signature, so without it they couldn't continue. That is an example. And I am still alive! So you see, if one does the practice in a perfect way it really works. So, this is how Guru Dragpur works."

Transcribed by Zsolt Somogyvari

I am Alive Today as a Direct Result of Buddhist Practice The Story

by Diane Campbell

One day my abdomen hurt - like menstrual cramps. The next day my belly had swollen so huge that I could not begin to zip up my jeans. I looked like I had a basketball living in my belly. I had a fever and hurt like hell. I went to the doctor. He examined me, gave me pain medication and put me directly in hospital. I had Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, peritonitis and a bowel obstruction. It was a critical condition.

I decided that I would deal with the situation by staying in a good mood and allowing the Doctors to do their job. I figured that a bad mind would be counter-productive to healing, and that since this was an infection, a proper course of drugs would do the trick.

Over the course of the coming days things got worse. My belly was larger. I was all tubes and machines. A blood transfusion produced a violent allergic shock reaction that was almost fatal. I was receiving massive doses of antibiotics intravenously, and my veins were collapsing from this. A tube was sewn directly into my arm to give me drugs. Still my infection got worse and large abscesses were everywhere in my abdomen/on my uterus, etc. A tube was installed in my jugular vein for nutrition. I had a tube in my nose running into my stomach and another one that went 8 feet into my intestines. My condition steadily deteriorated. The infection grew. Pain medications stopped working. I began to receive maximum doses of synthetic heroin to try to block the pain.

After twenty days of getting worse a doctor told me that I was "actively dying". He said I would be dead in about 24 hours, and probably would lose consciousness within 8 hours. He advised me to say my good byes and take care of business while I still could.

First I cried - long and hard for maybe two hours. During that time I fell madly, passionately and forever in love with my life - not with "life in general" - but with MINE. I saw the movie of my life and knew that I would not trade places with anybody anywhere any time in the whole universe. I was so grateful and so thrilled with what I had been given that I was bursting with happiness. Then as if the clouds parted I sensed with calm and absolute clarity that the doctor was wrong. I picked up the phone and called my doctor. I told him I had read studies of patients with cancer tumors who had successfully gone into remission with the use of creative visualization. I had taken refuge with Kalu Rinpoche and received Chenrezig initiation - it was my only direct experience with a visualization exercise, but it was something I enjoyed very much. I told my doctor that I was going to work with visualization - to my amazement he thought it was a great idea! He came to my room with pencil and paper - we designed a healing visualization specifically for my condition.

I told my GP that I also I wanted the following:

1. acupuncture
2. polarity therapy
3. reflexology
4. To have him call me every 30 minutes to remind me to visualize.
5. To keep away any person who was negative, frightened or upset by my condition.

He said ok to all except #1 (acupuncture) - said the hospital would not allow it. I visualized like mad. I had polarity and reflexology treatments twice (each) a day.

Three days later my infection was 95% gone, and two days after that my bowels moved again. There were other difficult circumstances after that, including narcotic drug withdrawal. I was down to 96 lbs, and much of my hair had turned gray.

Ten days after the announcement that I was "actively dying" - I left the hospital without any further need for medical treatment.

My personal conclusions - without the antibiotics I would have died - I believe that the infection was much too aggressive for just nutrition, healing hands and meditation. I think that it was the combination of treatments that produced the results and that none of them practiced independently would have been sufficient.

This happened 25 years ago. For along time afterwards I was on a natural high - I reorganized my life in many ways and was more energetic in everything. I also made a personal vow to make "one dream come true" every year for the rest of my life - regardless of cost or inconvenience. I have kept that promise - from tracking wild gorillas in Africa, to trekking the Annapurna Circuit, finding my Guru, and buying land at Tashigar del Norte. I still have gray (white) hair - it is a daily reminder of the ABSOLUTE BEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME.

Diane Campbell met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Los Angeles, California, USA in 1989 and lives in Belize .

“Beautiful Maladies”
(a Song in 9 points)

1. First, I have felt weak, breathless, tired, for some years. i was so breathless, there were even no songs for a while.

2. Then, I have lost my home:
Everything's fine
my Friend
except the world
around me
is collapsing
(Simhamukha retreat, Belgrade, 1995)

3. I was very unhappy, so i decided life wasn't worth living:
Death
My heart is
laughing its head
off.....
pure happiness,
a moment of peace,
a knowledge :
I wish i could die
right here
left now
into the light
never to
come
back

4. With relief, I found out I was sick (a rare bone marrow cancer, called "waldenstrom disease"):
Dying of love
Dying of love
dying of love
The time
of beauty
so perfect
I had to
die
to keep it
intact.
Virgo intacta
the moment
a perfect
virgin.
So
let my body
be eaten
by cancer
Slowly
from the innermost essence
slowly
from the bones

5. I didn't tell anybody, except Rinpoche, until He asked me kindly "how are you?" - then I decided to tell my boyfriend, but nobody else, wanting to live it first, not to deal with the pain my words would provoke in other people who cared for me:
Eggshell
My world shrank to

white eggshell of
a hospital ward
A bed
a lamp
a pen
paper,
Poems to write
love to feel
practice to do
silently
Entering this egg
i took a vow
of silence
Don't ask
i won't tell
eggshell might break
thunder would wake the
sleepy lizard the
quiet firefly
keeping me company in
this infinite
silent
night
(31st July 00)

6. I stayed silent for a year, then i started telling everybody:
Paris
I dreamt I was in Paris
walking the street
meeting happy people
in love
I dreamt I was in Paris
some couples were funny
women half a meter taller
men happily looking up
some the other way round
I walked the streets in Paris
& in my dream I cried
I walked the streets in Paris
& saw my children there
my face wet red swollen
I hid inside a house
to let them pass by
I walked in dream in Paris
nobody saw me there
(Mt de M 2nd March 2001)

7. Then, applying various practices Rinpoche has kindly advised me to do, as well as chemotherapy, Tibetan and homeopathic medicine, I started to feel better, until i was finally able to feel happiness and to enjoy life again. That part took another two years:
samsara is infinite.
it has, they say, and end.
can't see the end.
the end is inconceivable.
that's exactly the point.

8. Now i savor every moment of my precious life, knowing impermanence beyond pretending, spending time with my children,

playing piano, making mosaic, and - most of all - practicing.

The End La Fin Kraj
Infinity
Wild hair
A large straw hat
hand in hand
in the heat
"She walks in beauty, like the Night"
"Tu marches en beaute, comme la Nuit"
Lord Byron

9. then Naomi sent me this message:
Dear Z,
Starting with the next issue we are asking people to write small things about different experiences and the next issue is about illness. Would you like to write something in 500 words or less?
Love, Naomi
and after a while i started to write:
Exchange
I exchange 6 dreams for one wake
I exchange 6 disappointments for an appointment
(MtdM 10th Feb. 2001)

by Zeljka Jovanovic

poem

Sitting by a lake
a moment in contemplation
using the energy
of each moment
one at a time

Singing Stretching Dancing Clapping
Ah! This is the way!
using the energy
of each moment
each at a time

All brothers and sisters
All beautiful peoples
being the energy
of each moment
gone beyond time

by James Tiffen
Australia

Errata

Omission:
The 3 photos in the recent last issue of The Mirror, #63, associated with the article about the Buddhist Library in Poland, were taken by Mr. Jan Surudo. Apologies to Mr Surudo for the omission.
The Mirror

The Heart Makes its Case
or surviving the cure of a wire in the heart

by Naomi Zeitz
March 2003

Crimea. Salsa dancing. Chest pains. Disregard. Bus station, Port Authority, NYC, schlepping luggage on the way back from Europe to Conway. More chest pains. Thought: "Maybe I will die here". Conway: tired, more strange sensations in the chest, strong dreams, confess to some friends, Anna says go to the hospital now, call the doctor, go the hospital immediately, Larry drives me to the hospital, nurses, doctors, machines, nitroglycerine, oxygen, describe symptoms, relief to be cared for, relief from the sensation, understanding it is my heart, everyone skeptical, too young, no history. Paul said, "Don't you feel like you are already dead in the hospital?", you are just an object witnessing. Stuck with needles, tubes injecting, wheeled around, strange costume, cold always cold, plastic wristband with name, body an object to be fixed, like a machine. Seemingly competent, mostly kind, overnight, tests to understand, we found a blood clot in your leg, oh sorry wrong person, Paula visits, next day better, go home with drugs to keep you alive, scheduled for stress test, it's your stomach most likely, they say, I know all the while it is not, I know it is my heart somehow and wish it was not. nurse whispers "women have different heart symptoms". Doctor's visits, strange dimension, tests, fear, curiosity, tell my family?, worry for the mother, finish The Mirror, suspended in time, tell the sisters, support arises, Community rallies & also afraid, maybe mostly afraid, more tests, heart problem confirmed, doctor says, "we made an appointment for Monday morning, we will put a cardiac stent in your right coronary artery which is 90% blocked, you will go home the next day", incredible I think, am I lucky or not?, more fear, email Rinpoche, kind replies, mandarava practice, Monday morning, procedure day arrives, many nitro pills, prayers, hospital with sweet sister Lisa, injection, relax, wheeled to "procedure" room, cold hallways, 4 people waiting, doctor arrives, tv monitor, "good morning naomi", says the doctor, & enters the room like a prize athlete, my heart pumping on tv monitor, there it is says the doctor, "see naomi?, see the blockage", begin procedure, small incision in upper thigh, insert tiny wire, watch on tv screen, no pain, when they arrive near the heart some sensation, watching the balloon blow back the obstacle, back and forth, again and again, enter the stent, put it in a place, "a little tricky spot", dr says, "done", remove wire, "see naomi?", before and after, dr shows me on tv monitor, blood spurts from incision, big pain when sewing me up, "move your hand naomi", dr says, "its ok sweetie" says one male nurse, roll me back to my room, kind sister is waiting, nurses come and push on the wound so I don't bleed to death, more blood, relieved it is over, still alive, flowers arrive, Gerry calls, morphine shot, no worries, more relief, sleep, nurses checking, machines, heart still pumping, poor heart, phone calls, catheter, waiting, still alive, night in the hospital is a no mans land, somehow the morning arrives, Jacqueline comes to take me home, nurses check, can go home, amazing, I think, back to the school, finally call & tell the mother, big fear for her, many phone calls, people worry, rest and more rest, still alive, poor old heart, cardiac rehab, treadmills and bikes, heart rates and blood pressure, strong medications, feel so strange, life has changed, mandarava practice, gratitude, desire to live for more time with Rinpoche and maybe some realization, life becomes more precious & less serious altogether. More mandarava practice & breathe. Now everyday, gym & movement, heart rate up, still alive, diet change, still alive, coldest winter in 50 years, mandarava, still alive, yantra yoga, still alive, simple pleasures, still alive, snow keeps falling, still alive, Ayana is growing, still alive, still alive.....

please drop in from the Snow
Lion/Mirror Ad folder ad the
Quark file here

Stumbling Towards Rinpoche (How I Met Chogyal Namkhai Norbu)

by Jan Cornell (Outgoing President, Namgyalgar)

Someone asked me to write this because they thought I might write something funny. I have to say there was nothing funny about meeting Rinpoche. It was deadly serious. And yet little did I know then, that humor would be the hook that would lead me to the most important relationship of my life.

Let me go back a little. I was in my late 30's in the midst of a spiritual and emotional crisis (meaning: my partner was having an affair, I was stuck at home with the kids, what the hell was I going to do?!, suicide, drugs, or spirituality! Spirituality seemed like less work, (how naïve I was then!) so I took myself off to the Transcendental Meditation Center, learned to meditate, got my mantra and started on my 20 minutes meditation, morning and evening. It helped, but I felt needed something with more substance.

I flipped through the spiritual yellow pages. Raja yoga sounded interesting but they made you stare at someone else's third eye for so long, I went cross-eyed and got a headache. The Japanese mob that chanted for material wealth appealed to me. I needed a new fridge, so I thought I'd give it a go. Maybe I didn't get the pronunciation right. After a week or so chanting day and night the fridge still hadn't materialized, so I borrowed money and bought one. Next day it blew up. That Japanese mob was definitely not for me!

Next I tried Vajrayana. I thought this could be more my style as it had all those tantric connections and if I could learn a few tantric techniques maybe I could save my marriage or at least learn how to give myself a good time. I went to a talk given by a western monk. He used the words "pious" and "virtue" about 20 times in the first ten minutes. I was confused. "What did that have to do with tantrism", I thought as I wandered out into the night.

In desperation I called out to the gods (of what religion I don't know as I still didn't know which team I was on) to give me a sign, something, anything, to show me how to choose the best product in this spiritual supermarket I had found myself wheeling around in.

Two weeks later it came. An ad. in green print in the "What's On About Town" column: "TIBETAN LAMA AT YWCA".

Don't get excited. It wasn't Rinpoche. But at last I'd narrowed it down to Dzogchen!

I turned up to the "Y" to hear Sögyal Rinpoche, jetlagged and in great form, not teaching formally but just telling cosmic jokes all night, and I thought this is it! At last the essential element I had been searching for in a spiritual philosophy; humor!

I went to Sögyal's retreat and there I met Jean MacIntosh and Grit Fair They said, "You like Sögyal? Then you must meet Namkhai Norbu!"

I signed up for Namkhai Norbu's retreat on spec, no weekend teaching, no public talk before hand for a chance to check out what I was getting myself into. Just an 800 Km drive into the depths of Victorian autumn, to Kyneton, near a famous landmark called Hanging Rock. There I was greeted by Naomi, (who lived in Oz at that time, selling futons) Brian Snowdon (a

generous bear of a man), and the usual DZ rabble. But nice rabble, I thought, as I got myself and my four year old daughter Cyd settled into our dorm. These DZ People have something indefinable, something that I want!

Next day I met Rinpoche. He arrived in the hall, sat down and taught for two hours straight; like a steam train at full speed. He wasn't cracking any jokes This was serious stuff. He sat like a mountain, solid as a rock. At times he seemed so large he filled the whole room. I didn't know if I understood what he was talking about but I didn't care. I was past judging, past looking, past comparing, All I could feel was the deep sense of certainty, that, finally I had found my spiritual teacher.

As usual we had a good retreat. I learned the principle of kuntuzangpo: Every thing is already ok! There is no problem! We went walking with Rinpoche to Hanging Rock, where he sat in a small cave and led us in the Song of the Vajra, with tourists strolling by, unperturbed by our singing.

I learned strange new practices including the Chöd. I had a new bunch of crazy friends. I remember being so elated at the final Ganapuja while handing out the salad, I felt like tossing the lettuce leaves in the air.

And of course at some point in the retreat I summoned up the courage to get in the line and speak to Rinpoche.

It was then I experienced what I call; "The Stumbling Towards Rinpoche Syndrome". It's where a normally confident, grown, adult person suddenly becomes a blithering, tongue tied, stumbling, bumbling mess of jelly, with the self consciousness of an awkward teenager on her first date, as she stands there before the teacher, totally exposed as the utter fool she really is!

Somehow I survived this experience when I realized that Rinpoche was my greatest mirror, reflecting back to me not only my inadequacies and foibles, but also my highest potential.

Fourteen years later, I am still astounded by Rinpoche's great generosity and patience with us bunch of stumblers. Shouldn't he have given up on us by now? Shouldn't we give up on ourselves? And yet how can we? If you are like me, you are addicted to this crazy DZ life: to our Teacher, to the practice, to the deep friendships we form, and the fact that any where you travel in the world there's always a bed to sleep in! See you soon! Jan

Jan Cornell is a playwright, screenwriter, performer, DZ auctioneer and single mother of Cydra 19, Louie 15. She lives close to the airport in Sydney, Australia, (where she meets, greets and takes into her home many DZ travelers) and is the outgoing president of the Namgyalgar Gakyil. She met Rinpoche Australia in 1989.

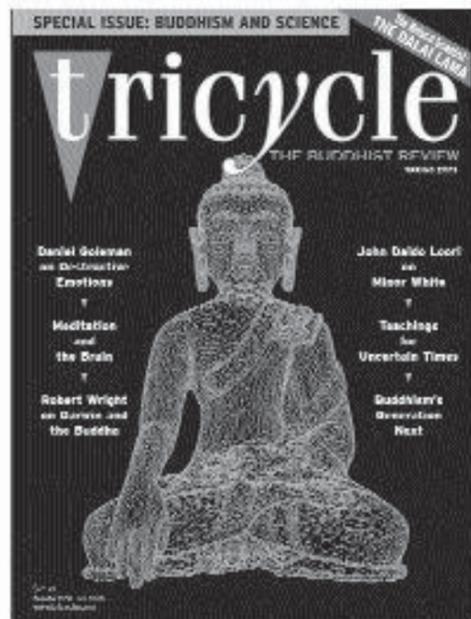


Rinpoche and Jan enjoying the Auction

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