

THE MIRROR

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Tsegyalgar Dzogchen Padma Nyintig & Longsal Gumpa Ngotrod Retreats September, 2003

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Rinpoche teaching in Tsegyalgar Gonpa at September retreats

NZEITZ

by Janis Page

The leaves were just beginning to burst into the vibrant golds and reds of their autumn ripening when Vajra brothers and sisters from across the continent, from South America, Europe, Australia, Russia and Asia all came together at Tsegyalgar in Conway, Massachusetts, for precious teachings with dear Rinpoche. It was wonderful for people reconnecting with old friends, and meeting and enjoying new friends. The noise and activity of all these meetings came to a quiet focus and presence when Rinpoche gave teachings. First were the five days of teachings on Dzogchen Padma Nyintig, or Upadesha teachings from Padmasambhava - 'this teaching is for developing your practice, you must already have knowledge of Dzogchen....' and indeed, there was much depth of wisdom and substance to these teachings, including discussion of tregchöd and thödgäl. Norbu Rinpoche also generously gave the instructions for yangti.

The second five-day retreat on Longsal Gumpa Ngotrod began the day after the end of the Padma Nyintig. It is always a very special and rare opportunity to receive Longsal teachings from Norbu Rinpoche, as these teachings are received by him in his dreams. These teachings, from Rinpoche's white (v.1) Longsal book, opened with a more personal feeling as Rinpoche spoke about what is possible with dreams and practice of the night.

Around the teachings, the days were filled with the usual fare of Yantra Yoga and beginning and advanced Vajra Dance, a very busy bookstore, and karma yoga, including time at the beautiful land at

Khandroling where we worked on preparing the foundation for the new universal Dance Mandala. Afternoons at the Gonpa, Jim Valby gave excellent additional explanations about the teachings, including explanations of Chöd, Guru Yoga of the White A of Garab Dorje, Shitro, and Ganapuja - we had many Ganapujas! Michael Katz spoke about dream yoga during both retreats and led us through some of the dream yoga exercises. One evening Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo gave a demonstration of Ku Nye massage.

There were two nights with special Community events starting with a special evening of music with Tenzing Tsewang from Namgyalgar in Australia, who delighted everyone with his singing, including Tibetan sub tone chanting and flute playing. Soon the floor was open for many others to share their musical gifts with singing and instrumental offerings. That was also the night of the first of the raffle drawings for the beautiful Goma Devi painting by Glen Eddy, the proceeds of which to go toward building the new Dance Mandala.

The other special evening was a celebration of Tsegyalgar's 25th anniversary. A bit earlier in the day the new Gakyil members were selected. Then a feast of Thai food, with more musical offerings as the food was being served. John Foster narrated a slide show of pictures from Tsegyalgar taken over the years. People from different areas spoke about Community activities in their regions. There were the drawings for the several place prizes for the Baja retreat. When Rinpoche asked if all the raffle tickets had sold and found that many had not, he took care of that in quick order and sold all the rest on the spot! Then the drawing, with

first place going to Jim Smith, who won the retreat and \$500. Further prizes included a week's retreat in Rinpoche's cabin, a set of MP3s of teachings, a bell and dorje, etc., followed by a fund-raising auction with Malcolm Smith serving well as auctioneer. And then more music, singing, dancing and revelry!

After these two retreats many went on their way and some stayed on. Some stayed to take the Santi Maha Sangha Level I exam; five of seven participants took the exam with Jim Valby at the lake during a spontaneous outing to Khandroling with Rinpoche. The SMS level II teachings were then given later that week, followed by advanced teachings for level II Yantra Yoga instruction and Vajra Dance. It was such a rich, wondrous time - we will all be anticipating Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's next visit and teachings at Tsegyalgar!

SCHEDULE CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU 2003 - 2004

2003

ARGENTINA 2003 - 2004

December 26 - January 2 Tashigar retreat
Longsal Gyulus Kyi Man Ngag Retreat (Illusory Body)

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

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 Longsal program: Teaching and Practice of Gomadevi.

April 16 - 20 Easter retreat

May 15 - 19 Longsal program

June 11 - 20 SMS Teacher's Training

July 17 - August 1 Mandarava Chüdlen 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

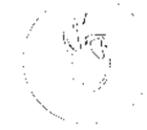
TASHIGAR, ARGENTINA

December 20 Leave for Tashigar South

December 26 - January 2 Tashigar retreat: Teaching and Practice of Gomadevi

C O N T E N T S

- 1 TEACHING CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU, PUTTING THE BUDDHA'S WORDS IN A BOX
- 3 MUSEUM AT MERIGAR, INTERVIEW WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU
- 4 TWENTY YEARS AT TSEGYALGAR
- 7 RINPOCHE'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AT MARGARITA
- 8 LONG DISTANCE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM, ASIA'S SCHOOL PROJECTS IN TIBET
- 10 SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE NEWS
- 14 - 20 COMMUNITY NEWS
- 22 INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL NEWS
- 24 DAILY LIFE IN THE MIRROR: DEATH, LOSS AND GRIEF
- 28 HOW I MET CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU BY DES BARRY



Hello everybody. Here we are at our retreat at Merigar. We are communicating with all people who are interested in Buddhism. I will try to explain a little what Buddhism means. It may be useful for everybody.

People who are interested in Buddhism already know what the term means. However, I think it is very useful and important that we are more mindful of why Buddhism exists, what it means and what it is for. These are very important things because in general when people follow Buddhism they consider it to be only a religious consideration. Of course, it can be an aspect of religion. It can also be an aspect of philosophy or have a more intellectual aspect, but we must remember how and what Buddha taught and why Buddha transmitted that teaching. It doesn't mean that Buddha taught his teaching in order to create a kind of school or religion. That is not the main point. But people who are interested and follow [his teaching], live in the dualistic vision and always have a consideration of the different aspects of view. In this case, some people consider Buddhism a kind of religion. Others consider it to be a kind of philosophy. But in the real sense Buddhism is understanding, essentially understanding the individual, and the real condition of the individual.

First of all you should think about what Buddhism means. We know [the word] Buddha: Buddha means 'enlightened being', dharma means 'all phenomena'. That is the real sense of this word in Sanskrit. But it doesn't mean that we learn what Buddha taught about all phenomena. Even if Buddha taught for many lives in many different ways, it would be impossible to teach about all phenomena because they are all related to circumstances, time, etc. But that, too, is not the main point. The main point is that we discover what the main point of all of this is. That important point is the real condition of the individual.

Of course we know that there are infinite sentient beings and infinite conditions of the individual. There doesn't exist only one point in the universe. Taking myself as an example, I am an individual; I have my individual, essential point. If I have that principle, then other people do too. If we discover our real most important individual point, then we can discover all [of them]. That is particularly like the Dzogchen teaching which I teach. We have special words for this, "Chig she kun drol" (gcig shes kun grol) which means that if we can discover one, we can discover all. That means, for example, that when we discover what the root of all is, then we can discover all the branches, and everything that is related to it. Otherwise, even if we study for many lives in order to have understanding or knowledge of all phenomena, we can never succeed.

That "Chig she kun drol" is just like our eyes. If we close our two eyes, we cannot see anything. But if we open them, depending on our circumstances, there are good things, bad things, big and

small things and we can discover them all. It is the same way if we are in our real nature, in our real essential condition, then there is the possibility to discover all because every individual lives in their own dimension. For example I have my dimension and my friend has his. If there are a hundred people, there are a hundred dimensions, not only one. Also if we



Rinpoche at his home the day of his birthday

F. ANDRICO

world arise from people who want others to be happy". That means that we really know how we feel and how we suffer and we do not put ourselves first but in second place. In the first place we put others. Of course if we consider things in this way, there will always be peace. There will be no conflicts between nations, between people, in the family, etc. So it is very important

Buddha went ahead in a very concrete way. What did he teach in order to be so concrete? The famous Four Noble Truths that we repeat so often. This was the first teaching of the Buddha.

The Four Noble Truths are diffused in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism - in the Hinayana, the Mahayana, in Tantrism, in Dzogchen, in all the teachings that we know, because the teaching of the Buddha, the Buddhism, started with that teaching. But even though this is one of the most important teachings, those of us who follow Buddhism are very limited. How can we understand that we are limited? For example, if you read the biography of the Buddha a little and the way he gave all the Sutra teachings, you find that the Buddha communicated the Sutra teachings every day, every year in a different place. But he never said that he was creating a school. He never said that his tradition was called Buddhism or that it was different from other traditions. Buddha only communicated knowledge, understanding, for discovering our real condition, because Buddha was beyond that kind of limitation.

However, people who follow the Buddha are not yet beyond limitations; they receive the teaching of the Buddha in their limited condition. Even if Buddha said that we should "go beyond limitations", we put his words into a type of 'box'. When we receive the Buddha's teaching we think that the teaching of the Buddha says this and that. This shows that you have put it into a 'box'; you feel that it is the real teaching of the Buddha, but you do not taste the real sense of the teaching. This is the reason why, after the Buddha's Parinirvana or manifestation of death, his students limited [his teaching] and created eighteen different schools of Buddhism. Buddha didn't divide [his teaching] into any schools. And later you know how many different currents of Mahayana developed. All these are manifestations of limitations.

And we still continue to do this. Why do we continue in that way? Because we live in dualistic vision; we always have that kind of limitation. This is why the Buddha, right from the beginning, tried to show us how to go beyond these limitations. It is not sufficient just to say some words, write them down and put them into a 'box' - this is always limited. We should go ahead in a more concrete way.

First of all the Buddha explained the Noble Truth of Suffering. Do you know why Buddha explained suffering, and why that knowledge is noble? Because suffering is not only experienced by human beings, suffering is universal for all sentient beings. For example, when we think about the six different 'lokas' in samsara, there are explanations of the different sufferings of the Devas, the Asuras, humans, animals, etc. We only think about our human condition. In general, in the explanation it says that we have the suffering of birth, getting old, illness and death. This is a very general

continued on next page

Putting the Buddha's Words in a Box

Web Cast Merigar August 14, 2003

become mindful of that situation, then what we call awareness of the situation arises.

For example, every day we say we need peace. In many countries today there are conflicts, wars and problems and people speak a lot about the need for peace. But how can we really have peace? We can only have it if we are aware in our own dimension. In our own dimension we have our feelings that we want to have peace, we want to be happy. In an ordinary way we call this egoism. But even if it is an egoistic situation, it is our condition; we live in that way. So if I understand how my situation or dimension is, of course I can have understanding of the dimensions of others.

From the moment that the Buddha started to teach he said that by taking the example of yourself, then you do not create problems for others, you respect them. It is a very simple and also very important teaching. If someone invades my dimension, I cannot be in my dimension, I am no longer free and I can have many problems. So if I know that, I don't create problems for others. If someone gives me a punch, I don't like it because I feel pain. Since I've had that experience I don't punch others because I know that it is not good.

That is the reason in the Buddhist tradition that we do not kill animals. Why don't we kill them? Not only because it is a rule in Buddhism but because we know that suffering exists. If you stick a needle into your body, how do you feel? You feel pain; you are not happy. It is the same way if you torture an animal, of course they feel suffering. For that reason, taking that example of ourselves, we do not create problems. So that is called having compassion. But in order to have real compassion that is alive, not just an artificial compassion that we are constructing, then we need knowledge, understanding of how we feel ourselves and then we apply that example to others.

In the Mahayana teaching

when we speak of compassion we train our minds in that way. We have a very famous Mahayana teaching called the "Bodhisattvacaryavatara" which is given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in different places. Why? Because it is an important essential teaching of the Buddha. This teaching is based mainly on [the principle that] we take the example of our own experience and apply it to our attitude in daily life. "Caryavatara" means how we apply our attitude. In daily life, the way we apply our attitude in relationship to our many actions is something that is very important.

For example there are some verses which say that all the suffering that exists in the world is created by a single person who wants happiness just for him or herself. That means someone who has never taken the example of themselves: he or she only thinks about their personal benefit. In this case, that person becomes egoistic and what he or she applies is the same. That is a very heavy problem of our human condition. When problems arise, what do we think about them and how do we apply ourselves through our actions? First of all, we ask ourselves who the guilty one is, never considering that it could be us. We look for the one who is guilty and even though some of the fault may be ours, we always protect ourselves, we are always innocent. This is our attitude. It is something we all apply which is the reason why we need to discuss and argue. If someone says, "It is not only my fault, you, too, have part of the fault", even though you know you have some relationship to the fault, you don't accept it. Yesterday we learned what the cause of human beings is and we particularly have that egoistic problem very strongly. That means that we do not take the example of how we feel and how we suffer.

Then in the "Bodhisattvacaryavatara" there is another verse - "All the happiness and benefits that exist in the

that we work on ourselves if we want to have peace. We can understand how this principle is presented in the Buddhism - the essence of Buddhism means that we should observe ourselves and participate.

Many people have the idea that if there are problems, we should change [something]. Not so much changing ourselves but changing the external situation, like having a revolution. When there is misery and problems in a country, we say there is a solution: revolution. But the conclusion of revolution is killing or eliminating half of the population and the situation continues in another way with the same result. That is the reason why things don't work that way.

Buddha explained this principle from the beginning. We know that although Buddha was on the earth in very ancient times, not in modern times, he taught his teaching in a concrete way. But we people who are following the teaching of the Buddha still don't understand this very well. For example, observe a little what the foremost point taught by the Buddha is. Historically we say that the Buddha manifested enlightenment at Bodhgaya and after his enlightenment he started to teach. Where did he teach? He taught at Sarnath near Varanasi to his first five students. This was the first teaching of the Buddha. What did he teach in this case? He didn't speak about the nature of the mind. He didn't teach the Prajnaparamita or Dzogchen or Mahamudra. Buddha went ahead in a very concrete way. If he hadn't gone ahead in a concrete way, people wouldn't have understood and wouldn't have accepted his teaching, because people live in a dualistic vision. Human beings in particular live with a lot of pride in a very egoistic situation. Even if we say that Buddha is an enlightened being, others would have said that they were enlightened too or that they were experts in philosophy and wouldn't have accepted the Buddha's teaching very easily. For that reason the

explanation but in the real sense we can understand it. Even though we may be very happy, it is always associated with suffering.

I'll give you a very nice example. There are two young people who feel happy because they are very young, like a flower which has just opened. Their aspects of body, speech and mind are fantastic! But even though they feel happy, they often have problems. They may live with their family, but there are still small problems with their friends, brothers, sisters, parents, etc. Then one day a boy meets a girl and they fall in love. They think, "Ah, this is wonderful, we can really enjoy ourselves". But after two or three days they start to get jealous and then problems of attachment arise. In the end some

then there is a dead bee inside. That is an example. So even though there are very nice things that we are attached to, they produce suffering.

It is the same with sounds, with our hearing. Sometimes we say that there is some very nice music that we like very much. Many people say that music is a very spiritual thing. That may be if you are a practitioner and you know how to integrate sounds and are not attached to them. It also helps your knowledge to progress. But in general we say that we like music because of our attachment. If you are attached to music, it doesn't have much benefit - you just enjoy it for a few moments. For example, some hunters use music or instruments when they are hunting; they bring their guns and use the music.

When we receive the Buddha's teaching we think that the teaching of the Buddha says this and that. This shows that you have put it into a 'box'; you feel that it is the real teaching of the Buddha, but you do not taste the real sense of the teaching

young people love each other so much that they kill each other. There are many stories like this in our human condition. Why do they kill each other? This is not really love and peace, it is creating suffering. Love is also associated with suffering.

For example, when we have not met our friends for some time, we are happy when we meet again. But after a couple of days of being together and talking then people start to disagree. This is because in the nature of meeting there is also separation. So you see, although many things seem nice and enjoyable in our human condition, they always produce suffering.

There are some examples in the preliminary teachings. In general when we enjoy [something], we enjoy with our five or six senses. We see something very nice and we want to have it, we get attached to it. Then we try to get it and if we do, then it seems that we are satisfied momentarily. But after, we have problems. There is a saying of Patrul Rinpoche, "If you have a goat, then you have a goat problem. If you have a packet of tea, then you also have that problem. If you have a horse, you have even more problems." For example, in a modern situation, we could say that if you have a car then you have the problem of the car. Of course, even if you don't have one, you still have problems. That is how our real situation is; everything is related to problems.

Then when we speak about our senses, if we are attached to nice things, we say it is just like a bee closed inside a flower. That means that one day there is beautiful weather in the summertime and there are many flowers in blossom with a very good smell. The bee flies around and smells that lovely smell, sees the nice color and goes inside the flower to taste the nectar. Suddenly the weather changes and the flower closes. Now the small bee is inside. Then it rains - the weather has changed completely. That is an example of how our circumstances are - there is nothing that is stable because everything is related to time. Now that bee can't breathe and may die there. When the flower opens again,

Animals in the forest such as deer hear the music and get attached to it, concentrating only on the sound. They enjoy it and listen to it again and again. Gradually the music gets closer and closer and when the hunter can see the deer, instead of using the musical instrument, he takes his gun and shoots the animal and it dies. Maybe it dies enjoying [the music] but when someone dies whether they are enjoying or suffering, there is not much difference. Dying is always dying. So this is an example of how we enjoy sounds.

Then an example of [attachment to] the sense of vision is like an insect or moth that flies into a flame. Sometimes when there is a flame there are hundreds and hundreds of insects that come and gradually they burn and die. However, their intention is not to go there and die, they see the light and are attached to it. Sometimes we also create problems that way. We also may be too attached to tastes such as food. That example is like a fish. You see when a fisherman wants to catch a fish, he uses a small insect or worm [as bait] and throws it into the water. The fish discovers that there is food, eats and is captured. Then there is the example of attachment to the sense of touch. In some hot countries there are animals such as elephants which, when they feel very warm, try to find a comfortable cool place. They go into the water, into the mud and rest there, turning and moving until in the end they cannot get out and die there. This means that in general we are very concentrated when there is some slight enjoyment or benefit. However, we do not know whether that enjoyment has complete benefit or not; we enjoy and in the end we create a lot of problems.

It is very similar when people drink too much alcohol. Why do people get drunk? Because when you drink just a glass, you feel a little different from before. You feel a bit happy and you want to develop that feeling more, so you have another glass. If you have the capacity you can have a couple of glasses and you will feel just a little more happy without any problems. But you do not

stop. You have more and more until you get drunk and when you are drunk, you create problems for yourself, for others, for everyone. You see, first there is a little benefit, but then, if we do not know how to use it, it has no benefit at all. For that reason we should learn to be mindful.

Very often there are things that seem to have a slight benefit on the surface, but right from the start there is none, just like people smoking heavy substances. They smoke and feel a little happy, but in the real sense they are charging their energy. When you charge your energy just a little, maybe there are less problems, but you do not have the capacity to control it. Today you charge a little, but tomorrow you need more to get charged up and the next day even more. This situation devel-

ops but it doesn't correspond to your capacity or to the condition of your energy and in the end you explode. Even if you don't explode immediately, you become a slave to the substance, which means that you become passive.

Guru Padmasambhava explained this and negated these kind of drugs. He never said that they were something good because, first of all, you become passive and for the teaching we must be active, not passive. If you don't know what passive means, observe people who use drugs like some Westerners who go to India. You can see them sleeping in the streets and people don't know if they are dead or alive or simply sleeping. That means passive. If you are active, you cannot be that way. And another very negative aspect that Guru Padmasambhava explained is that it diminishes your clarity which is related to your memory. Rather than developing your memory you lose it, and instead of developing your clarity, you lose it. For the teaching we try to purify. Why do we purify? Because it increases our clarity. For that reason, using heavy substances is something completely contrary which is why Guru Padmasambhava negated it.

So if we are practitioners, we must be aware and not use these things. If you have already used them, you still have that trace which is negative.

What you should do is purify that trace because not only do you purify your negative karma, but you also purify your damaged energy. How do you purify it? First of all, with the mantra related to the five elements and visualization. Then there is also some medicine that we have prepared in the Dzogchen Community according to the advice of Guru Padmasambhava. It has the capacity to purify. Of course, you can purify and change your behavior using that medicine and purification. But if you have no desire to do so or do not participate, you cannot purify because the medicine does not have a magic power. You need your own wish [to purify] and your knowledge that the substance is some-

continued on page 7

MUSEUM AT MERIGAR INTERVIEW WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU TSEGYALGAR, SEPTEMBER, 2003



Nomadic family at Thanggan, Tibet

E. SALVADOR

Mirror: Rinpoche, how did the idea of the Museum of Tibetan Culture arise?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Where did it come from? From consciousness, since I am still alive. In general people say ideas come from the head but I say from the heart...

M: Ah, the heart. Was the idea of the museum originally your idea?

ChNN: I think so.

M: Will the museum be at Merigar?

ChNN: Yes, and the museum will house many objects. First of all, when we did the inauguration of Shang-Shung Institute and the Gonpa at Merigar, we invited His Holiness the Dalai Lama and prepared an exhibition in the castle in Arcidosso. It was then that we displayed our Nomad tent and all the Tibetan objects from Merigar; at that time we started to accumulate objects for exhibition. Also, regarding Tibetan Medicine, we have copies of all the medical thankas from Lhasa and organized several exhibitions in Rome some years ago, as well as this year. That means we have collected many things - ASIA, Shang Shung Institute, the Dzogchen Community and me personally - and now we have so many objects of Tibetan culture to exhibit. I have given them many times to different people to organize exhibitions. We have three Tibetan Nomad tents and we open them to display at the exhibitions. When we are not using them we have to store them somewhere and in Merigar there is not enough space; they were getting destroyed and we couldn't use them. I thought it would be better to build a structure where we could store the tents and all the objects so people could see them; something more permanent and concrete and they would be preserved better. This was my first idea. Then I thought if we keep the objects in this way we need someone to look after them and in this case we should build some kind of stable museum. Then I thought if we have a museum we could get some kind of regional support as well as provincial and from the European Union. There are many possibilities especially from the regions and provinces and they would feel very happy as well because they have a museum to house all these special objects and everyone could have access to them. For this reason, we had this idea and I communicated this to Giovanni Boni [an architect in the Italian Community who is very active with the building projects at Merigar], and my idea developed and Giovanni proposed some interesting ideas for the structure. Later we presented this proposal to the local authorities and they were very happy and would like to collaborate.

M: Rinpoche, when do you foresee the museum being ready?

ChNN: We should have the proposal in by December, 2003 and the decision and financial support by April, 2004. We do not know exactly how long it will take to build and prepare.

M: In this museum there will be a permanent exhibition of Tibetan cultural objects, but will there also be information about the teachings since Tibet is a Buddhist culture?

ChNN: Teachings are an integral part of Tibetan culture so, for example, there will be a small temple inside like we presented in the castle in Arcidosso when His Holiness the Dalai Lama visited. The temple will demonstrate Tibetan Buddhist teaching and if people are interested and need more information they can go to Merigar. There will also be sections on medicine, astrology, all aspects of Tibetan culture like the lives of the Nomad people, their situation showing something concrete using all the many objects we have accumulated, ordinary ornaments as well as ritual objects.

We have a projected idea to build a round structure with four stories so you can go around in a circular way and see all the objects. In the center there will be a hallway and some separate sections like the spiritual aspect, medicine and the Nomad tents. This is how we are dividing it.

M: Will there be a space for the history of Merigar?

ChNN: No, I don't think so, because this is a museum of Tibetan culture.

M: Will there be an audio visual aspect to this museum; some museums include films, videos, etc.?

ChNN: Yes there will be videos and people will also be able to listen to music. There will be a kind of general introduction to Tibetan culture using some small half hour films. There will not only be the circular center but also a place for the tents as well as offices, toilets, and a shop for souvenirs. Below the museum (which will be slightly higher than the Gonpa) there will be a large Vajra Dance Mandala Hall.

M: Where will the museum be constructed in Merigar?

ChNN: The entire museum structure will be constructed down below the Cappanone.

M: Will the museum be open to the public every day?

ChNN: Maybe we will close one day a week. It is most important to be open on the weekends. We will prepare everything very well; for example,

continued on page 9

TWENTY YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF TSEGYALGAR

SEPTEMBER 14, 2003

by *Christie Svane*

It was wonderful to see so many practitioners here, and we wish you all could have been with us for Tsegvalgar's 20th Anniversary party with Rinpoche and Rosa here, in Conway, on September 14th, 2003. The party, (for about 200 people from around the world who had come to receive Rinpoche's teachings), included musical performances, poetry, history, a slide presentation, humor, and fantastic Thai food - topped off with good wine and a dance party to live music. The only thing missing was you.

The flurry of preparations subsided as Rinpoche, Rosa and Phuntsog Wangmo entered and were escorted to a their table, elegantly set with silver candlesticks and crystal goblets. Mark Alston-Follansbee, former director of the Gakyil, welcomed everyone and pointed out that what we were really celebrating was Rinpoche's vision, his generosity in teaching us for all these years, and our desire to truly thank him.

The festivities opened with violin duets by Lynn Newdome and Jim Valby, who set the air aflame with their expressiveness. It felt like Lynn and Jim were speaking their hearts to Rinpoche through their instruments. It reminded me of the Dzogchen saying, "The more wood, the brighter the fire." The way Lynn and Jim played, it's a wonder they didn't ignite their wooden violins! Rinpoche looked delighted, his hands now and then dancing to the music. Then a special guest, Gyaltzen Lobsang, a Khampa who now lives near Tsegvalgar, sang songs of the nomads from Rinpoche's homeland of Eastern Tibet. His singing, with a special technique like yodeling, delivered us to the vast Tibetan plains, and I felt like the nomad child I had once seen there, striding alone behind the yaks, comforted by hearing Gyaltzen Lobsang's voice calling in the distance. Gyaltzen sang with such strength and brilliance that we couldn't let him sit down, but kept asking for more. Rinpoche and Rosa, with Phuntsog at their side, beamed with pleasure, and perhaps these songs brought back fond memories of Rinpoche's childhood.

John Foster took us down the long and winding road of Tsegvalgar memories, showing photographs and slides of the members of the Conway community all the way back to the mid-seventies, before they met Rinpoche. They had moved to Conway as a group, studying Gurdjieff's teachings and meditation with Paul Anderson. It was this teacher who told them that an enlightened master had come to the US, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and they should study with him. That group was the nucleus of what became Tsegvalgar in 1982. For ten years they practiced in each other's houses, and the office was Jim Valby's briefcase. It was moving to see how their devotion to Rinpoche inspired them to accomplish so many things over the years, along with the many other students who came to join them: acquiring the sacred land of Khandroling, building the dark retreat cabin, Rinpoche's cabin, the guardians' cabin, buying and renovating the school-house, and now acquiring "Pike's Land," adjacent to Khandroling.

One member of that original group was Barbara Papparazzo, who centered us all in our hearts with the reading of her poem. After John's time-travelling trip through the "family album" even those who didn't know Barbara knew her as their Vajra sister. With her gentle voice and lucid imagery, she opened the space of clarity and integration for us through her poetry (see next page). You could feel the room brighten and sigh.

From the past and the present we turned to the future, which I had been asked

to talk about. (How?!) I told a story: One day I turned on the TV and saw what looked like the inside of a great temple or cathedral, completely empty inside. Suddenly a stream runs into the temple

islands; and Tenzin Tsewang made his invitation to Namgyalgar in Australia so enticing that all obstacles to going there seemed to instantly go up in smoke. It was wonderful to see these Community mem-



Rinpoche, Rosa and Phuntsog enjoying the feast in the Tsegvalgar Gonpa

NZEITZ



Retreatants enjoying the evening in the Gonpa at Tsegvalgar

NZEITZ

through the doorway, filling up the room, and just before it reaches the high, vaulted ceiling, FWOOSH!, the walls collapse like a giant tent. Immediately, they spring back up, and the temple is empty and peaceful again as if nothing had ever happened. It was a movie taken inside a human heart. Thinking of the future of Tsegvalgar made me remember that from years ago, because Tsegvalgar is like that heart. Sometimes it is very quiet, and at retreats the flood comes, to carry the oxygen of the teachings home. But wherever we live, we are connected like one body, with one bloodstream, from the fingertips in Hawaii and Canada to the toes in Baja California and Miami, and every place in between. The sacred land of Khandroling is here for all of us to practice on, and our future will be shaped by the fruit of our practice (or the lack of it). For this reason we are busy building retreat cabins, a bath-house, and a universal-size Dance Mandala on the land to practice together (or alone) on. Everyone is welcome!

Carol Fields spoke about the rather miraculous donation of land in Baja California, Mexico, that will be the new Winter Gar. Steven Gould told us how Dzogchen West Coast had recently ended more than a dozen years of being a group without a center, and opened Dondrup Ling in Berkeley. Judy Daugherty spoke about the practice group she leads in Salem, Oregon, and their need for more contact between old and new practitioners. Julia Diesler filled us in with news from New Mexico; Jim Raschik explained how the Hawaiian Community spans sev-

ers - some of whom I'd only known as a name in *The Mirror*, or an address on email - and to hear what's going on in their various Communities.

Tenzin Tsewang had already won our hearts a couple nights earlier when he performed ancient Tibetan songs he'd learned from Rinpoche, as well as his own songs, on an evening presented by the Shang-Shung Institute. His singing and playing of the dranyen, the three-stringed Tibetan guitar, carries you immediately to the deep blue skies and vast horizons of Tibet. And though your heart aches for what the people have suffered there, the spirit in the songs carries you above the suffering, into joy. Tsewang and Rinpoche had recently collaborated on "Gawala," a CD of songs meaning, "How Happy," on which these songs appear. (see review on page) Tsewang writes about the song, "E-So" ("Victory"):

"The first two verses typify the attitude of the Tibetan feeling that no matter how hard things are, the end will always be victory. Always there is hope and optimism. My throat chokes whenever I sing this song..." After his performance, Tsewang invited anyone who wished to perform a song. My throat choked, too, trying to get through a song I'd written to Rinpoche that ends with "Long life to the Master, and may we all meet again." (* see lyrics next page) Our sweet dakini soul singer Sylvia Nakkach got us all singing with her that night, and collaborated with veteran saxman Jey Clark and our young prodigy drummer Jakob Braverman in a jazz trio for the Anniversary party. They performed

a Latin number with intoxicating flow of feeling, and their sound was as rich and smooth as the best Brunello.

Andrea Sertoli from Chicago spoke about The Shang-Shung Institute's purpose to preserve Tibetan culture, and the need for collaboration from the Community as a whole, to keep SSI growing. Here at Tsegvalgar, Malcolm Smith and Will Shea had taken over Jacqueline Gens' hard work managing the Tibetan Medicine program, which is primarily taught by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, in workshops, lectures, trainings and private sessions. Andrea Nasca, Tsegvalgar's beloved secretary, then spoke about the accomplishments of A.S.I.A. in building schools and hospitals for nomads in Tibet. She expressed the hope that the American branch of A.S.I.A. could become much more active in seeking funding, and invited Community members to get involved.

The evening's grand finale was a "roast" of Jim Valby. It started with Will Shea telling some Jim Valby stories of the recent past and ended with Steve Goodman taking us all the way back to a cold night in a little bar in Saskatchewan with Jim on his knees, throwing up, and Steve saying it's time to find a teacher who can show you the path. And the rest, they say, is history. I'm sure at that moment, though we were all laughing, we were also recalling such turning points in our own lives, that woke us up to the need for a teacher, and led us to Rinpoche, who, astonishingly, accepted us with all our shortcomings. Jim ended the "roast" on his hands and knees, with an apple in his mouth and spouting spastic jibberish. Here was Tsegvalgar's scholar, the most serious amongst us, being the silliest of all. Jim's service to the world Community is tremendous - tirelessly translating, traveling everywhere to teach SMS, and spending hours each day just on answering emails about practices. His willingness to be laughed at and play the fool was a great reminder of the Dzogchen principle of being free from limitations.

At some point in the evening, John Bidleman, (aka Nirvana John, our movie-writing Vajra brother from the oak-dotted hills north of San Francisco Bay), was taking digital photographs and monitoring them through his computer, and took a photo of Rinpoche that was extraordinary. It was so extraordinary, in fact, that after the party, John stayed up all night trying to understand it. In the space around Rinpoche, are more than a dozen thigles of varying sizes, colors, and designs inside of them. In one of them, I clearly saw the triangle we use for the Guruyoga in the practice of the night. In the morning, having exhausted all the other possible rational explanations for the presence of these thigles, John showed the picture to Rinpoche, who simply said, "Yes," and "Good." Faith in the Teacher is an ever-expanding sphere.

After Rinpoche and Rosa went back to Efreem and Marit Marder's house to go to bed, the musicians got a dance party going, and people deepened their practice of wild and spontaneous movement together.

When everyone else's energy waned, the noble volunteers performed the almighty tidy-up. It was a night for remembering, and a night to remember. How immeasurably fortunate we are to have Rinpoche with us on Earth at this time, the time of our own lives. It was a great night, an inspiring night; the only thing missing was you. But then again, you were there, too. For our Community is a global body, and wherever one branch is, the whole tree is present.

TO THE HEALTH OF ALL IDIOTS

"Truth, this is very old science. .science Idiotism."
G.I. Gurdjieff

Late on a winter night as wind rattles shutters
and snow falls across the field and
all the children are in bed upstairs
we sit at a long table, candles burning low
and toast Idiots with Armagnac.

Idiot after Idiot – Ordinary, Super, Arch,
Hopeless, Squirming, Round, Square.
With each toast golden horses thunder
down our throats, flames at their hooves.

We are young and so much about our lives
has not yet been revealed.

We don't know about the light of a dead moon
on a cold stove.

We don't know about lilies in August,
how sorrow pours from their trumpets like fountains.

Tonight we are galloping toward enlightenment,
that bright diamond,
risking self exposure, reckless, riding
the freight train all the way to Valhalla.

In the morning we will rise from the wreckage,
the fire dead, glasses abandoned like cast off
clothes of refugees, and we will stand
on the shores. Ordinary.

by Barbara Paparazzo



Rinpoche stands in center of Universal Manadala site at Khandroling

NZEITZ

Here We Are

I Let me hold in my mind
This feeling of tenderness
Let me hold in my heart
How fast flow the years
May I always remember
Our days of togetherness,
Let me speak softly,
My heart to your ears.

And when I remember
These days in September
May my heart open wide enough
To feel it all
For love's like the sky
It isn't born, doesn't die
But lives outside time
And comes when we call

It's the arms of the sunset
From the path round the
mountain
It's the spiraling eagles
Out over the bay
It's the leaping of whales
Through the mist in the morning
It's the bliss without warning
It's the thing you can't say.

Here we are, all together
Here we are, once again
Long life to the Master
And may we all meet again and
again.

II
Let me hold in my heart

The Song of the Vajra
Let me hold in my mind
The steps of The Dance
May I find you forever
Upon the Mandala
May I always be mindful
How precious this chance

And when I remember
Our days spent together
May my heart break the locks
On the door to its cage
To fly on its wings
Through the sky as it sings
For love knows no boundaries
No time and no age.

It's the breath of the wind
As She blows through the prayer
flags
It's the sound of your voice
Leading us through the night
It's the moon shining down
On the tents of the nomads
It's the faith in the Teacher
It's the way of the Light.

Here we are, all together
Here we are, once again
Long life to the Master
And may we all meet again, and
again.
May we all meet again and
again.

Song by Christina Svane

Welcome Maya Namkhai Ottaviani!

We are happy to announce the birth of Maya Namkhai Ottaviani on November 20, 2003. We greet little Maya with the warmth of our love and give her a great welcome. Congratulations to Yuchen and Luigi and all the family!

THE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL REORGANIZATION OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY.

Some fragmented and somewhat confused information has been circulating about the Project of Economic and Financial Reorganization of the Community. Many people are probably wondering what this project is about and what needs it responds to. People could also have the impression that it is a process that involves merely technical aspects concerning only those people who are occupied in specific jobs or perform certain roles within the Community management.

The Project is actually a process that, beginning with Merigar, the first Gar founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, will gradually extend to the whole International Dzogchen Community and represent huge growth of the organizational and managerial aspects of the Community. We hope this article will clarify the main points concerning the motivation, method and style of this project.

Motivation

Financial and Economic Aspects.

In recent years, practitioners engaged in the running of Merigar, particularly those active in the Gakyil, have met increasing difficulty and a sense of inadequacy when facing the functioning of a structure which has reached a size and complexity that requires increasingly higher professional skills. Moreover, despite efforts and good will, attempts to find alternative financial sources have not had any significant results.

The income from the retreats held by our Master continue to be the main source of income for Merigar and, in fact, represent more than 50% of the yearly budget. This not only means that there is some confusion between the mission of the Community (to diffuse, practice and deepen the Teachings) and the source of financial support (at present the Master's retreats), which is not the best approach. It also means that without the income from the Master's retreats, Merigar and the Community could not survive.

Organizational Aspects.

The awareness of such a reality has pushed the Gakyil to look into ways to optimize human and financial resources, which are potentially high, and bring to fruition the experience accumulated in more than twenty years of life of the Dzogchen Community. During these past twenty years, under Rinpoche's guidance, the Community has developed and overcome the problems which have presented themselves along the way.

Aspects Connected to the Activities.

One of the most pressing needs was that of putting together an efficient and complete data base that could be an efficacious working tool for planning activities. With the intention of seeking advice, Yeshe Namkhai was contacted with the awareness of his knowledge of informatics.

The Method.

Yeshe's proposal went far beyond a simple implementation of the informative system or a mere financial rearrangement, but was rather an articulated project that considered those aspects, as well as aiming to make the Association a more efficient organization to better respond to the members' needs. This project would make the Association more viable relative to the actual social and economic context of the Community by allowing fund raising and assuming partnerships with other associations. In other words, to live and flourish in society.

The Decision.

This proposal, enthusiastically accepted by the Gakyil and fully approved by Rinpoche, both on the occasion of the kick off on June 28th, 2003, and at the Annual General Meeting last August, implies a willingness towards the change that has to start, first of all, in the attitude and mentality of those who will put it into action.

The Approach.

This is certainly a crucial point and is what the Gakyil and the Project Team are currently working upon. It is fundamental to be clear about needs, aims and means for reaching them.

The Project Organization.

Within this Project of economic and financial reorganization of the Dzogchen Community, oriented towards fund raising, the Community is the "customer" and Yeshe, to whom the Gakyil, the Executive Organ of the Association, assigned the role of Project Manager, is the "supplier" of a service to the Dzogchen Community. The Project will be carried out through coordination and strategy, identification of tools and expertise, control and support. Yeshe's consultancy is completely free of charge.

The Project Manager.

The figure of the Project Manager is central within any kind of project. Reaching prearranged objectives within the scheduled time and budget depend on him. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the person who covers this role holds a solid and proven experience in the field of project management. Yeshe Namkhai possesses these characteristics since he is active in the reorganization of medium and large-medium size enterprises, both at a national and international levels. The Gakyil and the President himself have complete trust in him.

Company and Technological Advice.

The realization of the Project (for the aspect connected to competence, not on the operative level) will be carried out by "Ambienti Web Consulting". Yeshe has chosen Yuchen Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani's firm on the basis of previous work experience which has been extremely positive, and also because their offer is very advantageous for the Community. We have already discovered their professional value through the educational seminars they have given and the support they have provided in the field of informatics.

Information on the Project.

It is our firm intention to provide constant information on the evolution of the project to the European and Italian Gakyils and to all members. However, we ask your patience until the current highly important preliminary work, which is under way at the moment, gives, above all in terms of clarity, its fruit.

Style

Our Identity.

We believe it is very important to underline the fact that the reorganization will not in any way affect the spiritual aspect. The Master is the spiritual guide of the Community, who transmits the Teachings and constantly advises and directs all aspects of Community life. Technically, within the Project, the Master is the Project Owner. That is to say, Rinpoche is the one who holds the ultimate authority for fixing long term objectives, defining priorities, approving the project context, the final budget and so on. We think this represents the best possible guarantee for the work we are going to undertake.

Responsibility.

The Gakyil remains the Executive Organ of the Association, with the tasks that have been assigned by Rinpoche from the very beginning of the Community. Gakyil members, on the other hand, will have to increase their knowledge, their professional skill and managerial capacity with adequate training. They will be first in line in the change, ready to learn the new procedures, accept new technical instruments and promote the change in regard to Community members.

Our Mission.

The aim of our Dzogchen Community Cultural Association: to practice, deepen, preserve and diffuse knowledge of the Dzogchen Teachings as transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, diffuse and preserve Tibetan Culture in its profound and universal values, sustain Tibetans in their difficult condition;

continued on page 7

Miami Beach Perfect From the Beginning

October 10-12, 2003

by Ed Hayes

It seems like you can find almost anything on Miami Beach. There are pristine beaches, with warm, clear water as well as endless bars and discos; you can navigate yourself

through some of samsara's most imaginative and spectacular parties. If you keep your eyes open, you will find what you're looking for. As of recently, you can even find Dzogchen teachings in unlikely places.

This October in Miami Beach, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu offered a public talk and Dzogchen retreat to interested people. Well over 200 people came to hear the Master give a



Rinpoche & Dr. Jones blessing the animals PHOTOS/E.HAYES

general talk at Miami University on October 9th. The large auditorium was filled passed capacity – the many students who attended busily took notes for their course on world religion. After the hour long lecture on the different views of Buddhism and Dzogchen, Rinpoche entertained an equally long question and answer session. Students asked many profound questions like: “Why are we alive?” Rinpoche replied in his characteristically simple and direct manner, “Because we are still breathing. When we stop breathing, then we are no longer alive.”

On the following day the weekend retreat began. Rinpoche explained the Dzogchen view and its relation to Sutric and Tantric teachings. With grace and generosity, he introduced the nearly 60 students in attendance of this small retreat to the true nature of mind. He gave transmission of many practices to suit people's various circumstances.

Here, in this seemingly unlikely place, it was especially clear that Dzogchen was a teaching beyond the concepts and limitations of philosophy or religion. Rinpoche was warmly welcomed by Dr. Annette Jones, pastor of the Methodist Church where the retreat was held. Not only did she share her home with Rinpoche and offer her beautiful parish of St. John's By The Lake for the retreat, but she attended the teaching and encouraged interested parishioners to join as well.

The Dzogchen retreat was not

the only sacred event happening that weekend. Annette invited Rinpoche and all the retreaters to

celebrate with her the feast of St. Francis. Many Christians are quite familiar with the renowned St. Francis – patron saint and

protector of animals. On this day, Annette presided over a ceremony for the blessing of children and animals. She gave a sermon on the saint and included that at one point he gave up all material possessions, even his clothes to pursue his spiritual path. During the church service, she announced that we were blessed not only by the special day, but by the presence of Dzogchen Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. And she then called upon him to stand beside her for the individual blessings of a church full of various cats, dogs, weasels, rabbits, and other pets. Without hesitation, Rinpoche joined her and integrated with the experience. He stood there smiling amusedly amidst the procession of animals and chorus of barking dogs, offering his presence as a positive karmic cause.

After the ceremony, I spoke with Annette about her background in Dzogchen. She has been a student of Rinpoche's since the early 90's and met him first at a retreat in Santa Fe, New Mexico in the United States. In the mid 90's, she traveled throughout Tibet and received teachings from several Nyingma Masters. Recalling the sermon on St. Francis she said, “What we did this morning was Sutra. What St. Francis did was renounce things and it was Sutra. But it's not the only way.” I asked her for her thoughts on the relationship between Dzogchen practice and her role as a Pastor of a Methodist Church. She replied, “Christianity and Buddhism are not the same and the differences are important. The conversation between the two takes me to a place I couldn't go alone. I only get there through experience. I don't say that it's right for anyone else but me.” At the end of our conversation, Annette added with great sincerity, “I feel tremendously blessed to have studied with all the Christian and Buddhist teachers I have studied with. I feel incredibly, incredibly, blessed and fortunate.”

The Dzogchen Community of America and in particular of Miami thanks Rinpoche for his sacred presence and precious teachings. In addition we extend our thanks to Dr. Annette Jones for her loving generosity and hospitality as well as everyone else who worked hard to make the retreat possible. May Rinpoche return to bless Miami again!



Rinpoche with some of the retreatants at the end of the retreat

NZEITZ



Rinpoche serenaded by local musicians

NZEITZ

Impressions from the Tashigar Nord Retreat

October 31 – November 4, 2003

by Tom Garnett

A friend asked me to write about “my impressions” of the recent retreat given by Choegyal Namkhai Norbu at Tashigar Nord. Impressions? My first thought was, “Oh no! She probably wants either an objective report on the condition of the Gar or my favorite midnight party story, neither of which would be very relevant. Impressions? I turned the word around and around and thought, after a while, that, yes, this is a good word. In pre-computer and pre-print days, when an understanding was made, it might result in a document that was sealed with melted wax containing the “impression” of the stamp bearing the symbol of he who could authenticate the understanding.

So what does this have to do with sunny weather, swimming in the ocean, relaxing with old and new sangha friends, and seeing the Tashigar Nord Gonpa for the first time? What does it have to do with an extremely well run retreat with help and efficiency amply available? What does it have to do with staying up late watching Rinpoche and Community members playing bagchen? What does this have to do with receiving the teachings? When an understanding is given and received, an impression is made.

Rinpoche taught *The Yoga of Prana for Clarity and Emptiness* from *The Innermost Essence of the Dakinis of the Luminous Clarity of the Universe*. A profound, clear, yet simple teaching of how to work

with prana in daily life and retreat. Though containing many specific practices for specific conditions, it was far more than a series of techniques because Rinpoche taught from the highest view. “Secondary practices for secondary circumstances,” he said but to be understood within the context of naturally occurring instant presence. A transmission associated with *yeshes zangthal* or unimpeded wisdom that he gave emphasized the immense background for these tsalung teachings. Older students also taught the Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, and how to practice the Thun and Ganapuja.

By organizing the retreat and by participating in it, Rinpoche and the Community revealed a mandala that is not drawn on a thanka. While in the ultimate sense the transmission of the teachings is unceasing and beyond time and place, in our clouded relative condition a special situation bounded by time and place may help. That special situation contains intended and unintended elements. From the moment of getting on a flight to Caracas, everything that happened became part of the mandala. These events point to that mandala which is uncreated.

Before I arrived at the retreat, I had asked a friend who had been to Margarita before what her impressions were of the Island. She wrote back that it was dirty, dangerous, and corrupt. After the retreat, we discussed our impressions and we agreed that, if it was a little dirty, dangerous and corrupt, it was

wholly self-liberated. So whether hailing a taxi to get to the Gomba or swimming 400 meters out in the ocean with Rinpoche to sing the Song of the Vajra, or stumbling in speaking to locals with my non-existent Spanish, or listening closely to Rinpoche's teachings, or just sitting in the shade, - all this was the mandala of the retreat.

How international it was! I was aware of students from Peru, Argentina, Venezuela, Russia, Portugal, Spain, United States, France, Germany, Italy, England, Austria, Australia, Poland, and Brazil who attended. There were probably several more countries represented. Compared with many retreats I have attended, the food, lodging, payments, transportation, beginners instruction, and general support were very well done. The aloha vera cultivation on the Community land is very successful and several houses are under construction by Community members who have purchased lots. Rinpoche looked in fantastic health and went swimming every day. He was quite accessible to students after each teaching.

But the retreat, as all retreats do, ended. Or did it? The day after the formal close of the retreat was cleaning the tile floor of the room where I had been staying and, while pushing the mop, I could see no boundary to what had been given. As I waited for the taxi to take me to the airport, I could see nowhere outside the Guru's mandala to go. These are my impressions of a few days in November.

Rinpoche's Birthday Celebration December 8, 2003 Margarita Island, Venezuela



Rinpoche at the Mandarava practice later that morning in the Tashigar Nord Gonpa

ALL PHOTOS/ N ZEITZ



Mariachi Band greets Rinpoche outside his house on the morning of his birthday



Singing for Rinpoche inside his home



Rinpoche frees birds he was given for his birthday (note bird flying away on the left)

thing very negative. Even smoking cigarettes is not very positive. If someone wants to stop smoking cigarettes and doesn't succeed, then they can do this purification: it diminishes your wish to smoke and it will be easier to stop.

We have this kind of condition linked to our emotions. Particularly in our daily life, we need to be mindful about food, drink, everything. Many people think that food and drink are for enjoying and sometimes that is true. For example when you have a party maybe you drink a couple of glasses of wine in order to enjoy yourself. There is no problem if you have the capacity to control yourself, but if you lack this capacity, then you should try to observe yourself to understand which kind of capacity you have. If you have no capacity and if it is necessary, you limit yourself.

You see, in the Sutra teaching we have many vows for controlling our existence. For example, if you don't want to drink alcohol but cannot control yourself, you need this kind of vow. In this case, you can take a vow with your teacher or at some important place such as Bodhgaya in India, the place where Buddha Sakyamuni was enlightened. It is a very important place and if you want to do something [special], perhaps you can take a vow - "From today on, I am not going to drink". You can take this vow forever or perhaps only for a year. You maintain this vow easily because you have faith in the Buddha, you consider that Buddha is an enlightened being and that this place is an important place. So tomorrow when you feel like a drink, you remember that you can't drink because you took a vow; it means that you choose between Buddha or drinking a glass of wine. If you are interested in Buddhadharma, then of course Buddha is much more important than a glass of wine, so you don't drink. And next day, next week, next month you have less and less desire to drink. Maybe after a year you can control yourself and if you can do that, it is not negative - you can drink, but in a limited way. Otherwise you will always have that problem.

You remember the biography of Milarepa, a very important Mahasiddha, a realized being, who always sang about his experiences of knowledge. Milarepa spent many years in the mountains only eating a few vegeta-

bles. He didn't have anything else and he certainly didn't have any wine. One day, a Tibetan went to visit Milarepa on the mountain and offered him a 'kapala' of wine and Milarepa was very happy. He didn't say, "Oh, I'm a Mahasiddha, I'm a practitioner living in the mountains and I can't drink alcohol," because he was not a slave of that type of conditioning. He already had that realization, that capacity. So he accepted this kapala of wine and did a Ganapuja, and after the ganapuja he drank the wine. A kapala is not so small and contains two or three small glasses although Tibetan wine is lighter than Western wine, so if you drink two or three glasses you feel nice but you do not get drunk. Milarepa hadn't drunk for a long time so it was a lot of wine for him. But he didn't get really drunk. He had a very nice spiritual feeling and started to sing about the quality of drinking wine, instead of negating it.

In the Sutra teaching, for example, people who have vows like monks and nuns, cannot drink even a drop of wine because they would break their vow. For that reason, Milarepa sang to show that it had benefit, it wasn't just negative. In his songs - in the real sense of the songs - he said that this kapala of wine increased his capacity to practice more than six months of practice. And that is a lot. It doesn't mean that we all have that benefit when we drink because we are not Milarepa. But we can understand that there is that kind of possibility.

So it is very important that we know that food and drink are not only to enjoy but important for maintaining our Vajra body. The Vajra body is indispensable for practitioners. If there is no healthy Vajra body then we cannot do practice; we have to go to the hospital or we continually need the doctor. Even if we try to do our practice, we don't have enough energy and some kinds of illness also diminish our clarity so we have more of a sleepy state instead of increasing our clarity. So it is very important that we are healthy. This is one of the first things in the relative condition. Some practitioners don't want to think much about their health but it is important that we help our condition in daily life. We must be aware and mindful of this situation.

Transcribed and edited by Liz Granger

Economic and Financial Reorg continued from page 5

all these aims will be pursued with even more consistent effort.

Transparence.

As already stated, clarity will be the essential element which will help us to go ahead in this process of change with the fewest problems. Since questions will inevitably arise anyway, we are organizing to collect them and give answers as best as we can. We are thinking about a space on the new Community web site, which is being prepared in these months, as well as other means we will communicate further on.

Collaborating with the Project.

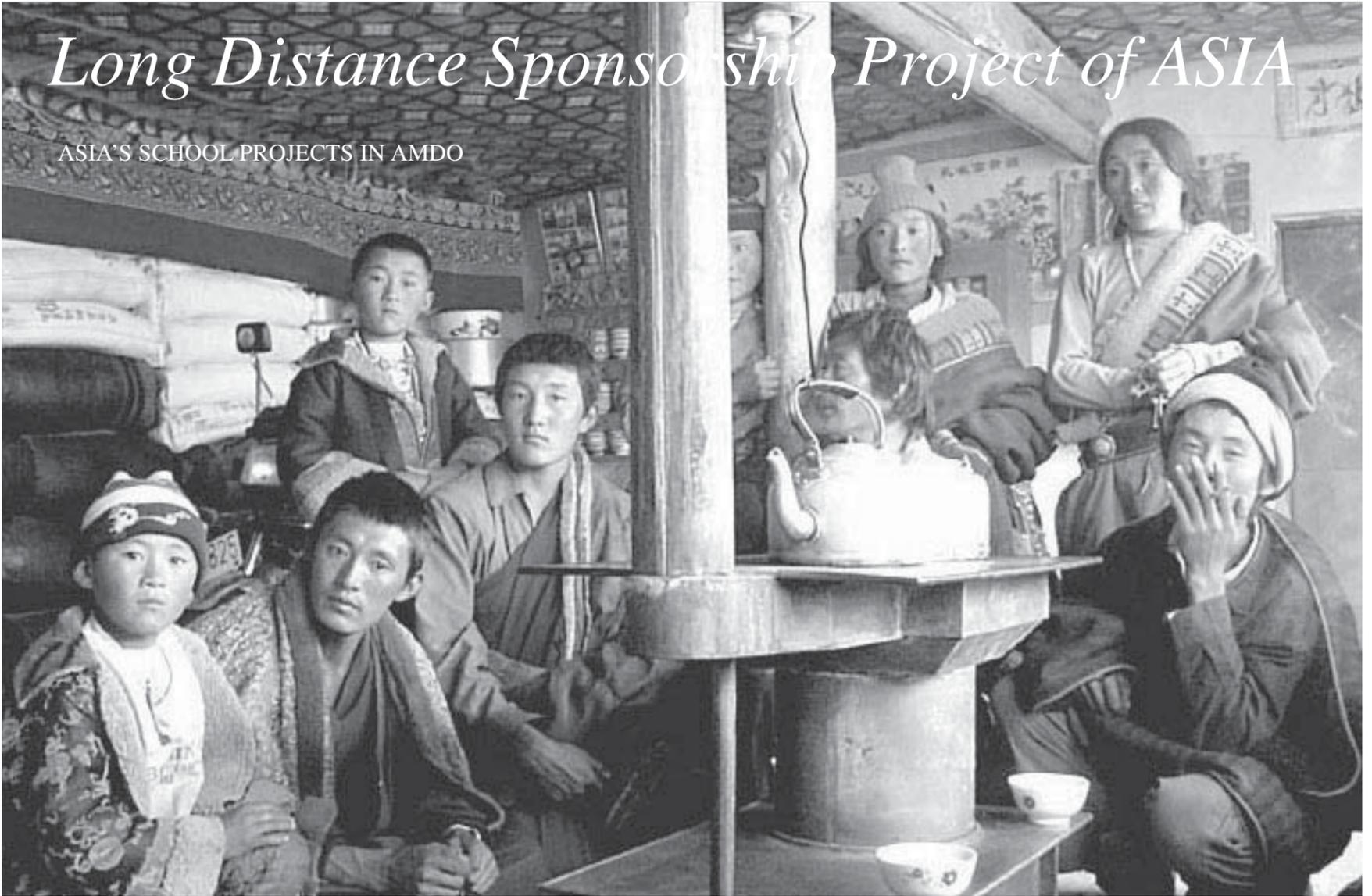
On this occasion we wish to remind everybody that it is possible to actively participate in this project. People who have experience working with a company, at various levels, are very much needed. Whoever wishes to participate can send an email to the Merigar office. The secretary will forward a form to be filled out and sent back to her, describing one's Curriculum Vitae and the conditions for collaborating.

We hope that the essential points are clearer now and we send our greetings.

The Gakyil of Merigar

Long Distance Sponsorship Project of ASIA

ASIA'S SCHOOL PROJECTS IN AMDO



Shala's family during interview

ALL PHOTOS BY E.SALVADOR

DANGCHE, THANGGAN AND GRAZINGLAND

by Linda Fidanzia

My first encounter with Tibet was strong yet incredibly natural. In September I went there with my colleague on a mission to monitor the long-distance sponsorship program of ASIA. The purpose was to supervise the activities of the various schools ASIA supports, to train the local counterparts, to observe the local situation and to improve the program itself.

During the two months we spent in Amdo (Qinghai Province) we were completely plunged into the everyday life of the Tibetans. The breadth of landscapes, the majesty of the mountains and the perfect harmony of the environment filled our days with a sense of bewilderment and lightness.

During our mission we visited various schools - those of Dangche, Thanggan and Grazingland - where ASIA started its long-distance sponsorship program years ago. Placed in three different counties of Hainan Prefecture, they represent different aspects of Tibetan life.

Dangche village is mainly inhabited by farmers living from the products of their land (especially barley and wheat) in an area where three ethnic groups - Chinese, Tibetans and Muslims - live together, not without difficulties. Village life is based on participation. The houses are attached one to another and the people have a concept of privacy and private property that highly differs from ours.

We moved from house to house to interview the families of supported children in order to collect information and verify their social and economic situation. Many times I was followed by a

growing number of neighbors who wanted to play an active role in the interview: It even happened that a neighbor would answer in the place of the child's father, who was busy cultivating his

shepherds (often children and women) are the only living trace for miles and miles. The children, often unclean and barefoot, dressed in clothes that are ragged and too light, always wear a smile

before reaching the wells). When traveling at night, the fire light spreading from the Nomads' tents to the dark mountains is breathtaking. Even the school has no water; ten to twelve children sleep together in rooms that are not heated, sometimes covered with carpets and mats and sometimes completely barren. Like in other elementary and middle schools of Grazingland, the children wake up at 6:30AM, eat breakfast at 7:00AM and follow the lessons at 8:00AM; apart from two hours lunch break and one hour for dinner, they are always busy until 9 at night.

What struck us the most, is the serious commitment with which the children study: They

"What would you like to do when you grow up?", every child, blushing from shyness, opened his dream drawer and answered: doctor, interpreter, scientist and, in the most cases, teacher. I replied, "Why a teacher?" and the answer was, "Because teachers are happy." Harmony and happiness emanates from the teachers who devotedly perform their work at the school.

The area surrounding Grazingland's school looks barren; the advancing desert is progressively taking over the rangeland, rendering the landscape moonlike and unreal.

At the end of the mission we moved to Malho prefecture, where we visited Shala's school. The people here are even further from civilization and have kept an unbelievable innocence. The generosity and solidarity of the village's people, especially that of the school's founders, really puzzled us. A doctor and monk have devoted their lives to the ambitious purpose of giving the children access to basic education.

The first school established with three classes was built by ASIA in the Summer of 2000. In a few years, the enrollment requests jumped from thirty to one hundred and eighty. As the school lacks sleeping accommodation, most of the children walk for more than

two hours to follow the lessons and regularly fall asleep in the class since they are so tired. For those living too far from the village, most local families arranged a way to host five or six children each, being repaid by the children's families with gifts such as sheep, butter and other products. The teachers have organized



Students in their spare time at Grazingland

piece of land.

The school children always gave us a warm welcome. With dances and traditional chants, sometimes hindered by English skits, the children expressed their gratitude to ASIA. They are indeed thankful to be able to study and learn the Tibetan culture and tradition - which is not all that common place, as many of them do not even know how to speak the Tibetan language - together with a foreign language that will let them be in touch with the outside world. Dangche school has become one of the area's best known and highly regarded schools, mainly for the lessons given by English speaking foreign teachers.

Tonde county is a very poor area inhabited by Nomadic shepherds. Located at 3,200 meters high, Thanggan school lays in the mountain rangeland, where the sheep, goats and yaks lead by

on their rosy faces. They belong to the families of nomadic herdsmen and can only meet their relatives once every six months, for they live too far and are too poor to afford the trip.

Here the land is wild and magnificent, almost untouched, and there is no electricity or water (the local women walk for miles

use all their spare time for reviewing, repeating and analyzing the subjects in depth. The mixture of a carefree attitude and maturity, joy and seriousness, makes these children special and also embodies this faraway world where life still follows its natural and simple rhythm. Faced with the question,



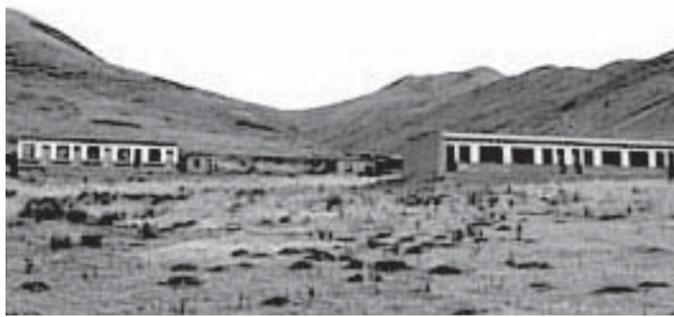
Children attending a class at Grazingland

continued next page

satellite locations to spread education over the widest possible territory and travel hundreds of miles by foot and on horseback. To foster the school and turn it into a suitable place for all the region's children, it is necessary to build new classes, sleeping accommodations, toilets and a kitchen. A square meter costs an average of 120 Euro and ASIA must collect around fifty thousand Euro in order to complete the works. This amount would let us build a building of 287 square meters for the students' and teachers' dormitories and a second building of 123 square meters for the classes and offices. The work will have to start by Spring, 2004, and end before Winter approaches.

Without education, the ancient Tibetan culture of the Nomads of this region, and all Tibet, is destined to face a slow but unstoppable destruction. Only people's donations can prevent this.

Translated from Italian by MS



Shala's school



Traditional Dance at Dongche's school

How to make donations to the Long Distance Sponsorship Project of ASIA:

ASIA promotes the long-distance sponsorship of Tibetan children, monks and elders who live in India and Nepal or attend the schools built by ASIA in Tibet. The long-distance sponsorships give to people with no other means a real opportunity to improve their living conditions and preserve their culture at the same time.

You can make a contribution of only 278.88 Euro per year. You can download the form from our web site or inquire at our office.

Monte dei Paschi di Siena
C/C n. 5622.72 - ABI 01030
- CAB 72160
C/C Postale 78687001

Tel: 0039-06-44.34.00.34
Email: info@asia-onlus.org
Web site: <http://www.asia-onlus.org>

Museum at Merigar continued from page 3

we will prepare a catalogue which will be easy to distribute so people can have some reference when they organize exhibitions.

M: Will people from the outside be able to use the objects from the museum for exhibitions?

ChNN: Yes. The objects move; even to the USA. They will be available to be rented.

M: This all sounds very exciting.

ChNN: Not exciting – that is a relative condition. When there is earth, water, air and we put some seeds, something grows. If there is nothing and you put a seed in the ground, it is difficult that something grows and even growing a small seed needs a lot of effort. With this kind of experience we know how things should work.

M: Rinpoche, can you talk about where the idea for the circular design for the structure came from?

ChNN: It came from the mind. We were looking at which kind of objects would be displayed and the most suitable structure for that, so the shape of the building should be relative to the objects we want to exhibit. There are some permanent objects as well as rotating ones. We decided we wanted a shape like conch shell.

Many years ago I had a dream. I was standing where the Gonpa of Merigar is now and then I was a little below Merigar where there is water, near a tree, and I heard some sung melodies coming from where the Stupa is now, from that direction, and then I went there slowly, slowly and I saw there was a very big building shaped like a conch shell. There was no one controlling the entrance so I went in trying to find the source of the sounds which came out – sounds like Om Ah Hum. The tune was what we now use for the practice of the Purification of Six Lokas. That was the first time I heard this melody; it is not a traditional melody. So I learned the melody. Then I went inside the conch-like structure and no one was there. It was a kind of natural sound and I was walking and walking and singing and could see outside from inside because it was all glass. When I woke up I thought, "This is fantastic, I should remember", so I immediately recorded these sounds. Two weeks later I arrived for the first time in Sydney, Australia and gave a teaching and then went to Mullimbimby where I did the first retreat in Australia and taught the Purification of Six Lokas with Vajrasattva with the visualization of Om Ah Hum and I taught this melody from my dream. Later I came back and taught it in Merigar.

M: Did you teach the same practice before with a different melody?

ChNN: No this was the first time I taught this practice.

When we started to think about the museum Boni said to me, "Maybe there are so many objects we need to be able to walk up and down and be able to see everything." I said, "You mean something like inside a conch shell?", and he said, "More or less it is possible." I told him my dream and he was very interested and said he would prepare a plan.

M: What material will the museum be made of?

ChNN: There will be a lot of glass and windows. The other we are not sure yet.

M: Rinpoche, thank you very much for your time.

BOOK & MUSIC REVIEWS

FEARLESS SIMPLICITY: THE DZOGCHEN WAY OF LIVING FREELY IN A COMPLEX WORLD.

BY TSOKNYI RINPOCHE.

Ranjung Yeshe Publications, 2003. (285 pages, \$22)

The latest book by Tsoknyi Rinpoche is a composite of transcripts from talks he gave between 1998 and 2002, fancifully organized into three main sections: Appetizer, The Main Course, and Dessert, with a Foreword by Sogyal Rinpoche. As Tsoknyi Rinpoche explains, there is no substitute for direct transmission from a living teacher. However, after a student receives transmission, reading texts such as this one can help to further clarify the view.

Tsoknyi Rinpoche is one of the younger sons of the late Tulku Urgyen, a respected Dzogchen Master who was connected with the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa. Rinpoche is one of younger generation of tulkus, widely traveled, and familiar with the cultural peculiarities of the West. This

familiarity with the idioms of the Western mind, combined with the excellent translation by Erik



Pema Kunsang and his wife Marcia, makes the teachings very accessible to American and European students of Dzogchen. The book covers a wide range of subjects, from the foundation of the path, up through the various levels of the teachings, down to practical advice on integrating with daily life. One of the most important sections is where

Tsoknyi Rinpoche explains the different type of meditation that are precursors to Dzogchen. He characterizes them as shamatha with support, and shamatha without support. In both of these there is a focus. In shamatha with support the focus is a specific object. In shamatha without support "something is still held in mind: there is a focus on the present moment. Unsupported shamatha is to be in the nowness" (p. 78). However, this is not to be confused with Dzogchen. He writes, "From the Dzogchen point of view, shamatha itself is already a state of being distracted" (p.75).

To clarify this point he gives the example of a doorman in a hotel. "Practicing shamatha, first with and then without support, is like training a doorman to be excellent. Whoever comes and goes, he is fully alert. All the details are noticed, but he neither follows the guest nor closes the door on anyone" (p. 80). In comparison, in Dzogchen one can dispense with the doorman because "the automatic laser sensor is there" which opens and closes the door automatically (p. 80).

In his teaching terminology he

uses vipashyana as a synonym for Dzogchen. "Shamatha is an act of meditation, so it can be lost, while vipashyana—in the sense of Mahamudra or Dzogchen—is not an act of meditating on something, so there is no risk of it getting lost" (p. 79). It should be noted that he is using the term vipashyana (alternatively spelled as vipassana) in a particular way here, not to be confused with the way the term is used by some other teachers or traditions. Rinpoche is using it to mean being in the state of rigpa. Explaining rigpa, Rinpoche states, "Rigpa is not an explosive that blows away all your concepts. It is much more gentle than that. You could say it is the atmosphere that allows clinging to dissolve" (p. 207).

This book attempts to explain the Dzogchen teachings from many different angles, using both traditional and novel metaphors to illustrate the difficult points. It is a rewarding text to read and ponder.

by Paul Bail

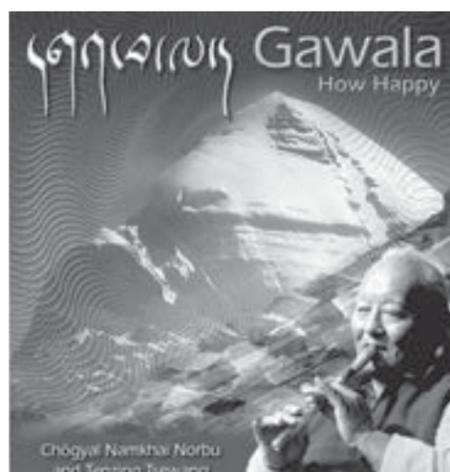
GAWALA (HOW HAPPY) MUSIC CD

BY TENZING TSEWANG

Gawala, a recent music album produced by Tenzing Tsewang, features Chögyal Namkhai Norbu playing traditional wooden flute melodies, as well as vocals in both song and chanting; Tsewang contributes vocals, plays the Dranyen, a traditional Tibetan stringed instrument; and Trish Sperandio performs on guitar and keyboard. The album ranges from a kind of archive of Tibetan folk music to a "Westernized" elaboration of these indigenous melodies with keyboard and guitar accompaniment.

The title song, an ancient folk song of Tibet, contains a simple yet elegant theme. It is a highly evocative phrase—beware! If you are prone to little musical obsessions, don't listen to this tune in the morning or you'll be playing this phrase in your head all day.

This enchanting theme carries the first three songs on the album. Each is a different approach to the core phrase, and they range from a simple vocal to complex instrumentals. I'm left with the impression that with this simple tune, one could wander from central Asia



to China and be welcomed.

Recording these kinds of traditional songs always entails some tension between capturing the raw and unpolished character of the work and a desire to filter the work through our cultural prejudice. For example, Tsewang tells me he was very aware of this tension when the loose tempo of the traditional approach meets the metronomic tempo of trained western musicians. He seems to have

struck a good balance—sometimes the tempo seems to be stretching to hold everything together, but in the end all seems "as it should be."

Included in the album are the songs of Merigar and Namgyalgar. They are beautiful.

The Merigar song is uplifting in both melody and rhythm; it evokes the pleasure of sharing time and working together with close friends. The Namgyalgar song seems mellow but without undue sentiment. Anyone with strong connections to either of these places will surely find a welcome remembrance in these tunes.

On the whole, the album captures a rare convergence in time—unique, and open. It will be a pleasure to return to for many listenings. Those tracks which feature Norbu Rinpoche singing or chanting are truly special—so intimate, one can feel his presence, and the comfort of his familiar voice.

Tsewang includes a web-site (www.tenzintsewang.com) where one can obtain translations of lyrics and pronunciations.

by Woody Paparazzo



ISTITUTO SHANG SHUNG TEACHING PROGRAM 2004 MEDICINE COURSES GIVEN BY DR. NIDA CHENAGTSANG

2004

GERMANY: January 5-15
Mantra Healing.

During Dr. Nida's visit, two courses of Mantra Healing will be organised, one at the Kamalashila Institute. He will also give introductory talks on Tibetan medicine.

MILAN: January 17-18
Diet and Behavior
Registration fee: 120 Euro

ROME: January 24-25
Ku Nye First Level – part 2
(first part December 13-14, 2003)

AUSTRIA: February 5-15
Dreams and Medicine 1st & 2nd levels
Talks on Tibetan medicine will also be organized

POMAIA (PISA) February 21-22
Diet and Behavior
Cost: 120 Euro

ROME: February 28-29
Ku Nye First Level – part 3

KARMALING (FRANCE): March 5-14
Ten day intensive course on **KU NYE** first level

ROME: March 27-28
Ku Nye First Level – part 4

ROME: April 17-18
Ku Nye First Level – part 5

MERIGAR: April 25-May 3
New intensive course of **KU NYE** first level
Cost: 550 Euro including teaching material (text, video and oils)

MERIGAR: May 9-16
First part of the first year of the
**FOUR YEAR COURSE OF TRADITIONAL
TIBETAN MEDICINE**
Cost for the entire first year: 1500 Euro

ROME: May 29-30
Ku Nye First Level – part 6 (final weekend)

MERIGAR: June 5-6
Final exam for students completing the entire cycle of three levels of **KU NYE**
Cost: 50 Euro

MILAN: June 11-14
Mantra Healing - a residential course of first and second level
In a bed & breakfast in Val Staffora (Pavia) with meals included
(7 meals & 3 nights in double or triple rooms)
Cost: 350 Euro

MERIGAR: June 18-19
Final part of second level course
Cost: 100 Euro

MERIGAR: June 20-29
Complete course of **KU NYE** third level
Cost: 550 Euro including teaching material

MERIGAR: June 30-July 6
First intensive training course for instructors of **KU NYE** first level
focused on developing theory in the morning and gaining some clinical practice in the afternoon under the supervision of Dr. Nida. Only students chosen by the teacher and the directors of the Institutewill be admitted to the course. The training program will be presented during the course.
Cost: 500 Euro

TIBET: July 10-28
Teaching trip to Tibet for students who have attended at least the first two levels of Ku Nye and the pre-

ceding courses of medicine. The trip will include two weeks of study and practice at the medical college and the hospital of traditional Tibetan medicine in Xining, Amdo. Further details will be published in the near future. Please contact the Istituto Shang Shung if you wish to participate.

MERIGAR: September 18-24
Second part of the intensive **FOUR YEAR COURSE OF TRADITIONAL TIBETAN MEDICINE**

MERIGAR: September 24-28
Intensive five day course of **DREAMS & MEDICINE**
Cost: 250 Euro

GERMANY: October 1-10
Intensive course of Ku Nye First Level

FLORENCE: October 23-24
Birth and pregnancy according to traditional Tibetan medicine
Cost: 120 Euro
Venue: Lycopodium Studi medici
Tel. 055483463

ENGLAND: October 27-31
Intensive course of **MANTRA HEALING**

ENGLAND: November 2-11
Intensive course of First Level **KU NYE**

ROME: November 13-14
First part of **KU NYE** second level
The course will begin with a theory/practice entrance exam
Cost: 750 Euro for the entire course of six weekends including teaching material (sticks, cups, moxa, text-book, etc.)

NAPLES: November 26-28
First part of **KU NYE** first level
Cost: 720 Euro for the entire course including teaching material (text, oils, video)

**DECEMBER 2004 & JANUARY 2005:
TOUR IN AUSTRALIA**

N.B. Any changes in the calendar will be communicated as soon as possible.

Information and reservations:

Milan:
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Tel. 0233607505, Mobile 3387027207
Email: ecop@ats.it,

Rome:
Anna Marie Clos:
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News about the Merigar Museum

(see interview page 3)

by Elisa Copello

After Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's announcement during a meeting with local authorities at Merigar at the end of August, the project for the construction of a permanent museum in the area below the library is going ahead thanks to the untiring energy of Giovanni Boni, the project manager who is mainly in charge of the project. Contact with the local authorities for the necessary permissions has begun and precise estimates are being studied in order to define the time and costs. A global project is being drawn up to present to individual sponsors in the hope of being able to obtain a large part of the funds necessary in order to start work.

In the meantime, we have thought about creating a virtual catalogue that would also serve as a presentation of the museum project and could be shown to local organisations, foundations and all those organizations which might be interested in donating funds for making the project concrete. The catalogue will contain

descriptions and photos of all the objects that will be exhibited, in particular the material coming from the exhibitions which have been organized in the past by ASIA and the Shang-Shung Institute, as well as some objects that have been generously offered by Rinpoche from his personal collection.

The museum will have different areas for exhibits dedicated to art, medicine, the culture of the Nomads, the spiritual tradition, archaeology, multimedia exhibits, etc.

In order to enrich the collection, taking into consideration the vastness of the proposed themes, we are making an appeal to all the collectors in the Community to offer some of their objects to the museum either permanently or temporarily in the case of future exhibitions. We ask them to send photos of the objects, digital if possible, to insert in the catalogue.

All those who would like to generously participate in this initiative are requested to contact the Shang-Shung Institute, Italy, which, at the moment, is working on coordinating the collection of photos of objects which will be exhibited in the museum.

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE, ITALY, PRESENTS THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY VIDEO JOURNAL

(SEE NEXT PAGE DZOGCHEN VIDEO "ALMOST BORN")

Dear Friends,

The Shang Shung Institute of Italy, with the warm approval and encouragement of our Master, is happy to announce the start of the "Dzogchen Community Video Journal". As the name suggests, this will be a journal covering the travels and teachings of our Master and the rich life of our worldwide Dzogchen community, in the form of video.

We hope this Video Journal will be useful to many practitioners who would like to feel somehow more in touch with the Community and see developments in the various Gars with their own eyes, but cannot travel much. Through the video, it will be a little like being there! The Video Journal will be published quarterly (every three months) and will be offered by subscription. Each issue will be in the form of a VHS-PAL video cassette and have a duration of 2 and a half to 3 hours. It will cover recent events up to three months before.

For instance, the first issue, which will be published in December, (see top left, next page) will cover events related mainly to the intense summer season in Merigar up to September. Subsequent issues will cover events at all the places where Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was present, like the USA, Baja California, Margarita, etc., according to the Master's schedule.

A substantial part will of course be on the Dzogchen teachings given by our Master, but there

will be informal talks as well (which will be subtitled in English if in another language), then special features, interviews, contributions, travels, clips from courses and seminars, etc. according to circumstances. Each issue will also contain some video from the past, taken from the SSI Archives.

Subscribers living in countries where the TV system is NTSC and not PAL (like USA, Japan or Venezuela) will have the possibility to receive the Video Journal in the form of two Mpeg-4 CD-ROMs of 90 minutes each, viewable on any recent computer. DVD format will also be available on request.

The subscriptions to the Video Journal are open now to all members of the Dzogchen Community. A one-year subscription, or 4 issues, (up to 12 hours of video), is 100Euros inclusive of air mail postage anywhere in the world.

Subscriptions can be made now by contacting the secretary at SSI Italy, <ssinst@tiscali.it>. A secure online subscription form, with the possibility of credit card payment, is now available on the Web. Interested people are invited to contact the SSI secretary <ssinst@tiscali.it> for more information or read the following page for payment instructions.

For more information about video formats and standards, to check whether your VCR or computer will be capable to play back Video Journal available formats, contact:

Maurizio Mingotti
maurizio.mingotti@iol.it

Shang Shung Institute in America Tibetan Medicine Program / Winter/Spring Schedule, 2004

with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

Feb 6-8

Introduction to Tibetan Medicine \$150 [Conway]

Feb 20-21

Introduction to Tibetan Diagnostics \$150 [Conway]

March 12-14

Healing Points on the Human Body [Conway]

March 26-28

Ku Nye I (Tibetan Massage) \$150 [Conway]

April 2-4

Metsa (Tibetan Moxabustion) \$150 [Conway]

April 16-18

Introduction to Tibetan Medicine \$150 [Bristol VT]

April 30-May 2

Women's Health [WH] \$150 [Bristol VT]

May 21-23

Mental Illness and Neurological Disorders \$150 [Conway]

June 11-25

Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine Year 1, Part One \$800 (National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine credits available)

July 9-15

Ku Nye II (Tibetan Massage) Bristol, VT] \$350

Lodging at the Gar is \$20 per night: Dormitory Accommodations. Schedule subject to change

For more information contact:

Malcolm Smith
Shang Shung Institute in America
Tel: (413) 369-4928
Email: malcolm@shangshung.org
Web site: www.shangshung.org

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.

SSI ITALY
DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY VIDEO JOURNAL
"ALMOST BORN"

The first issue of the Dzogchen Community Video Journal is about to be born. It will be available by the end of December and it is going to be a particularly rich issue that covers the whole length of the year 2003.

Three main sections compose each issue of the Video Journal. One contains extracts from teachings that our Master has given during the year in different locations, while another section is dedicated to showing materials preserved in the Community Archives.

The third section covers events in the various Gars, as well as informal talks by our Master, travels, etc. Thanks to the tireless work of Fabio Andrico, in this issue we will virtually find ourselves next to Rinpoche on the beautiful land of Australia, then in Japan, among the woods of Kunsangar and in Italy.

The Merigar summer was literally packed with events: from Yuchen and Luigi's wedding party to the concert offered by ASIA where Rinpoche and Tsewang delighted us with Tibetan music, to the visit of His Holiness Sakya Trizin — only to mention a few.

This section ends with Rinpoche's first visit to

COURSE OF SPOKEN AND LITERARY TIBETAN
TEACHER: ELIO GUARISCO
MERIGAR: AUGUST 13-27 2004

The Istituto Shang Shung, within the sphere of its activities of diffusing knowledge and preserving various aspects of the Tibetan culture, is organizing a course of spoken and literary Tibetan. The course is open to all those who wish to learn Tibetan, both scholars and non-scholars. The course will provide a basis for being able to express oneself in Tibetan or read ancient and modern texts.

We know that Tibet possesses a treasury of knowledge which is traditionally articulated in five main disciplines and five lesser, among which are: art, medicine, spirituality, astrology, crafts, music, poetry, etc. Many of these disciplines are known in the West but others, such as medicine, spirituality and art have features that are unique to Tibetan culture and are able, without doubt, to enrich our knowledge and our way of life. Each aspect of Tibetan culture is founded on the principles that govern the forces of nature and on a profound knowledge of the real condition of the individual, beyond culture and time. These aspects were discovered and transmitted in the isolation and peace of the "roof of the world" by ancient sages.

Due to centuries of isolation, the greater part of this treasure has remained unexplored and hidden within a language which is complex but at the same time fascinating. Tibetann is a language we can learn in order to rediscover the treasures of Tibet.

The course will take place in the new reading room of the library at Merigar and will be given by Elio

Baja California and his arrival in Margarita.

The video is subtitled in English where necessary. The sound track across the Journal has benefited from the precious help of Costantino Albini.

As you all can imagine, producing the Video Journal requires a huge amount of work and sustaining this effort will be possible only with a fair amount of subscribers. We invite all Gars and Gakyils to make this message available to all Community members as many don't have access to Norbunet, but could be interested in subscribing to the Video Journal.

The yearly subscription costs 100 Euros (including air mailing anywhere in the world) for 4 issues of 2/3 hours each. You can choose whether to receive your copy as a VHS cassette (PAL only), DVD or CD. Subscribers living in countries where the TV system is NTSC should order the DVD or CD version unless they have a multi-system VCR. Video CD's can be viewed on computers, as well as on some DVD players of the latest generation.

Subscriptions can be made online by Credit Card through the SSI-Archives secure web site (<https://ssi.dzogchen.ru>). For technical help please write to maurizio.mingotti@iol.it.

We thank you for your support and we wish you a wonderful holiday season.

The Shang Shung Institute Video Department

Guarisco and Tibetan assistants.

FIRST WEEK: SPOKEN TIBETAN

- Studying the alphabet
 - Practicing reading
 - Practicing writing
 - Conjugating verbs
 - Syntax
 - Elementary vocabulary
 - Formulating simple phrases
 - Practicing conversation
- Timetable: 10am-1pm. 3pm-6pm

SECOND WEEK: SPOKEN AND LITERARY TIBETAN

- Studying the rules of grammar
 - Reading and interpretation of short original Tibetan texts
 - Reading and interpretation of short Tibetan texts translated from Sanskrit
 - Elementary vocabulary of the classical language
 - Overview of Tibetan literature
- Timetable: 10am-1pm. 3pm-6pm

This initiative by the Istituto Shang Shung is the first step in an ambitious program of study of the Tibetan language which will continue for several years and which aims to create specialists in the language as well as Tibetologists.

Cost: 750 Euro

Note: The course will not take place if there are less than 12 participants. Therefore we urge you to inform the Istituto if you wish to participate BEFORE JUNE 15, 2004.

Shang-Shung Institute Austria presents: International Training for Translators from Tibetan Summer 2004

Margarita Island, Venezuela

General information

The INTERNATIONAL TRAINING FOR TRANSLATORS FROM TIBETAN was initiated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and in the Summer of 2003 we started the first training at the Shang-Shung Institute in Merigar in Italy. Fourteen people from nine different countries met in Merigar from July 15 until August 31, 2003, and participated in the first training under the guidance of the Tibetologist and translator Elio Guarisco. They worked on the translation of the new book of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on Tibetan Medicine, "On Birth, Life and Death". The text has been translated and will soon be available in English and Italian and later in German, Russian, French, Finnish and Spanish. The aim of this International Training for Translators is to train translators from Tibetan to become qualified for translating texts from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other Tibetan masters into a Western language. In August, 2003, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said that in order to become a qualified translator one has to put much effort and train oneself for many years and only in that way is it more or less guaranteed that the translations will become very precise and correct. One of the main aspects of this training is to make the translators understand the real, and very often also secret meaning, of the original texts and to bring this meaning into another language as precisely as possible. For that reason Elio Guarisco will not teach basic Tibetan grammar and language as everybody participating should have already gained these qualifications. The whole training will last for a couple of years, and each year the group will meet in one place and work together for 4 to 6 weeks. During the rest of the year the translators should study on their own in order to improve their understanding and capacity of translating. They will also get some texts to translate.

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Place and date of the next training in Summer, 2004

The International Training for Translators from Tibetan will continue in 2004. It will take place in Tashigar Norte on Isla Margarita in Venezuela and will be placed in between the retreats of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It will last for 6 weeks and will be divided into 2 parts: the first part will be from May 20 until June 10, 2004, and the second part from June 24 until July 15, 2004. It is very much recommended that participants take part in both parts of the training. In that way they will be able to attend the Longsal Teachings from May 15 - 19 and also the Santi Maha Sangha Teachers Training from June 11 - 20, 2004.

Who can participate and how to apply for the next training

This training will be open also for translators who could not participate in our first training. In order to take part in this training all new translators who want to join our training

- must write a letter of application
- must send their Curriculum Vitae
- and must make a written test in order to check their capacity of translating. After you have sent your letter of application and your CV to the Shang-Shung Institute, Austria. We will send you 2 pages in Tibetan which you will have to translate. After your test was checked you will get an answer saying if you are accepted to take part in the training or not.

Costs of the training

As the Shang-Shung Institute, Austria is the sponsor of the whole project, the participants will not have to pay for this training. Each participant has to cover his or her own expenses for travel and for lodging, but there is no fee to be paid for the training. The participants have to be members of the Institute and preferably also members of the Dzogchen Community. According to the financial situation of the participants the Institute might even grant a scholarship.

Food and lodging during the training

It is planned that the entire group of translators will get good local food every day which will be specially prepared for them. The Shang-Shung Institute, Austria will also try to find good, comfortable and nice places for the translators to stay during the period of the training. According to our calculations the costs for food and lodging for the participants of the translator training should not be more than 15 Euro per day. As we are still looking for the best possibilities for all participants we cannot give more details now. Those who apply for the training will get all further information as soon as possible.

Scholarship for the training

In order to receive a scholarship the following points must be taken into consideration:

- one must apply for a scholarship
- one must be in financial need
- and one must attend each class of the training. ONLY if one fulfills these three requirements will a scholarship of 15 Euro per day be granted.

How can one support this project?

All the money which is needed for this project and all the other projects of the Institute comes entirely from donations. Everybody who feels that the translation of the original Tibetan texts is something useful and valuable can contribute to this project. In this way access to extraordinary texts of Tibetan wisdom will be guaranteed in easy understandable language in the future. The donors will be listed in each of these new publications. For more details please contact our Institute.

Contact address

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Web site: www.ssi-austria.at

Further information can be found on our web site.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIET AND BEHAVIOR IN TRADITIONAL TIBETAN MEDICINE

by Elisa Copello

(Taken from a course held by Dr. Nida Chenagsang in September 2002 at Merigar and Dr. Thubten Phuntsog in 1999 at Merigar)

In the Four Tantras of traditional Tibetan medicine, the entire 'material medica' is represented by three trees. The first tree has two branches which symbolize respectively the natural condition of balance of the individual at the level of body, energy and mind and the pathological condition which comes about when this balance is altered due to various factors. The second tree illustrates the main diagnostic methods, while the third the therapeutic methods which are four in number: behavior, diet, taking medicine and external therapies which are mainly Ku Nye, moxa, blood-letting, balneotherapy and the use of hot and cold compresses. The order in which the various therapeutic approaches are mentioned is not by chance because if possible changes to behavior are not sufficient to re-establish balance, diet is used, and in case this is not successful, the doctor will resort to administering medicine and finally applying external treatment.

At times diet is considered to be the first therapeutic approach, however, in any case, diet and behavior constitute the first fundamental curative methods or rather the ways to maintain good health, to prevent disease from arising and to intervene in case of disturbances.

Behavior (CHO LAM in Tibetan, CHOL means 'use' and LAM means 'path' or 'method', thus 'knowing how to make use of one's own body') should be in perfect harmony with nature and follow its rhythms. Thus there are general rules of behavior and rules which refer to the daily cycle as well as the course of the seasons. Regarding the first aspect, the main aim is to ensure longevity, good health and happiness and to that end it is common procedure to wear jewelry, precious pills and amulets in order to send away negative energy and impede positive energy from leaving. Moreover, it is advisable not to visit negative places and to keep oneself away from dangers of every type. The daily cycle gives advice and precise rules on habitual daily behavior such as sleep, sexual activity, physical exercise, rules to follow in order to maintain good functioning of the sense organs, ethical and spiritual behavior which should be in harmony with the principles of the dharma with which Tibetan medicine is strictly linked.

We will briefly try to examine the various aspects:

Sleep: it is important to maintain a regular rhythm of sleeping. Protracted insomnia actually provokes an imbalance of the 'rlung' in which case it is advisable to try to recuperate the hours of sleep that have been lost by sleeping during the day on an empty stomach.

The hours of sleep depend on the different typologies, but in general the length of sleep may vary from five to eight hours. 'Phlegm' personalities need less sleep, 'rlung' types need more while 'bile' types tend to be average. Under normal conditions, it is not advisable to sleep during the day since daytime sleep causes an excess of 'phlegm' with a consequent increase in swelling, laziness, mental obtuseness and other side-effects that are typical of this humour. In cases of weakness, convalescence, exhaustion and advanced age, however, sleeping in the daytime may restore and give greater balance. In the case of persistent insomnia, it is best to follow a 'heavy' diet in order to suppress the excess of 'rlung' which is responsible for this disturbance. Thus, it is advisable:

To drink milk or yogurt in the evening

Take meat broth

Massage some specific points on the crown of the head and place a few drops of hot sesame in the auricle. If one wakes up frequently during the first hours of sleep, about two or three o'clock in the morning, this indicates an imbalance of 'bile' in which case an infusion of saffron or dandelion should be taken.

Sexual behaviour: sexual activity is strictly linked to the circulation of energy and therefore, if it is correct, stimulates the flow of energy, while an excess blocks it. Tibetan medicine provides precise rules of behaviour which influence sexual energy in the best possible way without risks for the organism. In Autumn and Spring, sexual intercourse is advised every two days, in Summer every 15 days, while in Winter there are no limits since the physical body has accumulated sufficient heat and energy during the summer months and so there is no risk of dispersing it with more intense sexual activity. Intercourse is not recommended during pregnancy, particularly after the third month when the fetus is more exposed to external sensation and during the menstrual period.

Behavior (CHO LAM in Tibetan, CHOL means 'use' and LAM means 'path' or 'method', thus 'knowing how to make use of one's own body') should be in perfect harmony with nature and follow its rhythms.

Physical activity: in this case, too, behavior varies according to the typology of the individual.

PHLEGM PERSONALITY: needs a lot of movement due to the robust build and the slowness which distinguishes it and so there is benefit from every type of sport, gymnastics and yoga. After physical exercise, sweat should be absorbed with a cloth or removed with chickpea flour or a similar substance. The use of chickpea flour invigorates the epidermis and improves the mobility of the joints.

BILE PERSONALITY: should not overdo physical exercise and should avoid heavy work that could bring about an accumulation of heat and cause changes in the 'bile' humour with consequent disturbances in the liver and gall bladder. After any type of physical activity, it is good to take a cool shower.

RLUNG PERSONALITY: due to the 'rlung' constitution, sports and intense physical activity are not suitable. Yoga may be practiced after having massaged the body with sesame oil to which nutmeg, ginger and anise seeds have been added, however, in any case, exercises should be very calibrated in order to avoid excesses of 'rlung'.

In general, showers and baths should not be cold for 'rlung' and 'phlegm' typologies and all types should be warned about not using overly hot water for washing the head and vice versa, not use cold water to wash the extremities. Frequent showers and baths must be avoided in the case of meteorism, diarrhoea, influenza, inflammation of the eyes and ears.

SENSE ORGANS AND BEHAVIOR

THE EYES

To keep the eyes in good health, it is good to prepare a decoction of CRISPINO, using only the inner bark. Once a week a few drops of the preparation are placed directly in the eyes which, according to Tibetan medicine, are related to the 'bile' humor. The decoction refreshes and reduces inflammation.

THE NOSE

Once a week the nostrils are cleaned by bringing salted water to the boil and inhaling the vapor.

THE EARS

Drops of hot sesame oil are placed inside the auricle and the tragus is massaged once a week.

THE SKIN

Once a week the skin is massaged with oil which varies according to the typology of the person: sesame oil for 'rlung' and 'Phlegm' individuals and sunflower or sandalwood oil for 'Bile' types.

HAIR

The scalp should be massaged with walnut oil once a week or more often in case of hair loss.

MORAL BEHAVIOR

In the Four Tantras, there is a very detailed list of rules of behavior to be followed in order to be a person who is positive, generous, trustworthy, wise and correct, prudent in action yet bold, sincere, patient and tolerant, peaceful but decisive, well-liked and respectful, modest and ready to recognize his or her own errors through awareness

that the real basis of knowledge is in maintaining correct behavior.

BEHAVIOR WHICH IS IN HARMONY WITH THE DHARMA

Every sentient being is searching for happiness, but to leave suffering behind, he or she has to approach the dharma by meeting a Master of knowledge who shows the path to be followed. In general, in the Four Tantras it says that one must abstain from the ten non-virtuous actions and practice the virtuous ones; in particular one is advised to help the sick and the poor, love all beings like oneself and have indiscriminating compassion for both friends and enemies.

BEHAVIOR ACCORDING TO THE SEASONS

THE BEGINNING OF THE WINTER

The temperature is cold and since the pores of the skin are closed, the metabolic heat is very strong and digestion takes place quickly. If one does not want to lose weight, the diet should be based on red meat, butter and cheese. If, on the other hand, one wishes to lose weight, this is the most opportune moment to start following a diet. In order not to disperse heat, it is good to apply hot compresses (hot stones and compresses) to the kidneys and stomach and expose oneself to the fire or the sun, but without overdoing it.

THE END OF THE WINTER

The external cold has increased and so the advice for the beginning of the Winter should be followed with greater care, in particular the application of hot compresses in order to combat the accumulation of phlegm which is typical of the Winter.

THE BEGINNING OF THE SPRING

The weather improves and the inner heat starts to diminish with the opening of the pores. In order to avoid an excess of phlegm, it is beneficial to have food which is bitter tasting, spicy, astringent and it is advisable to drink hot water with ginger to assist the digestion since the digestive heat tends to diminish. It is good to take long walks and to always dry off the sweat when physical exercise ends. One should expose

oneself with prudence to the sun.

THE END OF SPRING

The sun is stronger and may take away our energy so it is good to consume food that is sweet, oily and refreshing. Food to be avoided is salty, spicy and acid. One should not expose oneself to the sun but needs to take cool showers every day.

THE SUMMER

The energy of the water increases due to the rainy season and the metabolic heat feels the effect of it so it is advisable to consume food that is potentially hot. This is the season in which the bile accumulates and thus one should choose food with sweet, bitter and astringent tastes. It is advisable to sprinkle one's clothes and the interior of one's home with water perfumed with the essence of sandalwood.

THE NATURAL FUNCTIONS OF THE ORGANISM

In traditional Tibetan medicine, it says that the stimuli or the natural functions of the organism should be neither repressed and suffocated - which at times the "polite" rules of behavior impose on us - nor forced. In both cases there can be effects which, in the long run, may even turn into illnesses and disturbances of different natures. These functions are: hunger, thirst, vomiting, sneezing, yawning, emitting intestinal gas, ejaculation, sleepiness, panting, crying, defecation, urination and spitting

For each of the natural functions, there are detailed explanations: for example, repressing hunger leads to weakness and loss of body weight and to remedy this one should consume food that is light, oily and warming in a gradual way. Suppressing a sneeze or a yawn leads to loss of perceptive clarity, headache, paralysis of the facial nerves, breathing and cardiac problems and in both cases the remedy is the treatment indicated for 'rlung' disturbances. To suffer from thirst may cause cardiac and mental problems and thus to restore balance, one should not only drink but stay in contact with the water element taking long showers and baths.

Repressing vomiting provokes loss of appetite and so one should have small meals and try to relax. Not sleeping intentionally causes frequent yawning, heaviness in the head and body, disturbances to the vision and the digestive system. This can be remedied by having meat broth, hot milk and massage. Repressing expectoration from the mouth and mucus coming out of the nose causes disturbances to the lungs and the breathing, hiccups, cardiac problems, headaches and loss of appetite. It can be remedied by taking sugar cane molasses to which ginger and piper lungum has been added.

Repressing breathlessness after tiring activities can cause tumors, cardiac disturbances and loss of memory. In this case all the therapies for an excess of 'rlung' are advised. If one impedes the emission of intestinal gas, the feces become dry and one can suffer from constipation. Intestinal tumors and problems of eyes and heat may also arise. Blocking the stimulus to defecate may cause headache, muscular pains and the same disturbances brought about by repressing intestinal meteorism. Repressing the need to urinate may cause kidney stones and malfunction of the sexual organs. The therapy which is advised in general is Ku Nye massage and the application of hot compresses on the kidney area.

Finally, to keep back ejaculation may cause a renal block, impotence and orgasmic malfunction. In this case it is suggested to take hot baths, make use of smoke therapy and have a diet based on sesame oil, milk, free-range chicken and good quality alcoholic drinks to be taken in moderation.

Translation by L. Granger

SSI Digital Archives Web Site

Merigar, October 31, 2003

Dear Vajra brothers and sisters, The Shang-Shung Institute, Italy, is pleased to announce the opening of the SSI Digital Archives web site to all members of the Dzogchen Community

What will you find in this on-line archive? SSI Archives are dedicated to Tibetan culture in general and to the unique Dzogchen Teaching of our Master in particular. Data-entry work is constantly going on, so new contents are being added every day. The number of records will eventually amount to many thousands. Presently you will find records related to audio and video materials; images, books and transcriptions will follow. Records can be browsed sequentially, or filtered by date, country, content type, media type (audio or video), etc.; for more complex searches one can use a built-in search engine, entering one or more words.

Access to this archive is restricted to Community members only; to access the site, members have to register with name, e-mail address, name of their Gar, and membership card number. The line is secure: all data travel through the Internet in encrypted form. This makes the site safe also for on-line payments, and in fact an order form is provided through which one can send credit card orders for copies of archive materials, subscription to the new Dzogchen Community Video Journal, donations etc.

Here are some basic instructions on how to access and use the SSI Archives site; a more detailed Help page will be added to the site very soon. E-mail links to

How to access and use the SSI Digital Archives Web Site
The address (URL) of the site is:
<https://ssi.dzogchen.ru>
(if you type this address, pay attention to the 's' in 'https').

send feedback and ask questions related to the site are provided in the pages of the site itself.

When you go there, first some message about protection/security/certificates will appear; do not worry if your Internet Explorer browser issues a warning saying that the site certificate is not recognized, that is normal due to the way our site has been designed. Security is actually very solid. Click 'ok' or 'continue' to all. Then you'll be in front of the 'door' of the SSI Digital Archives site.

You'll have to register to enter the site, so keep your Dzogchen Community membership card ready.

Click 'Enter' leaving the user as 'guest' and the password field blank. You'll be presented with the registration form. Fill it, click 'submit' and you'll receive a confirmation message with a password in your email in minutes. So open your e-mail program and check your mail. Note down the password assigned to you.

Go back to the SSI login page, fill the user field with the user name you have chosen during registration, and the password field with the password sent auto-

matically in your e-mail by our program. Click 'Enter' and you're in.

Please follow this registration procedure with patience. Of course registration needs to be done only the first time: with your username and password you'll be able to access the SSI Archives site always in the future.

You'll first enter the Home page. From there you can directly search the archives using the search field, or go to the Archive Browser page. Some links in the Home page (like Downloads or others) are not yet active, but will be activated soon.

In the 'search' field you can enter one or more words, in any order; then hit 'enter' in your keyboard and a results page will open, showing the links to the records matching your search. Click on any link and the card of that record will be shown. Archive cards have a scrollable text field where you can read an index of the contents if available, and/or other notes.

In the archive cards there are also links for audio/video on-line preview: this capability is there, but not activated for the moment. Preview is limited to a still picture and the notes/index text.

The Archive Browser page presents you with a screen with a menu on top, then an in-line display below showing the preview of one record (the first time you access the page the in-line preview is chosen randomly by the program; if you click on the line of any record below, the preview for that line will be displayed.

The list of records shown in the Browser page is limited by default to 12 items: these items can be scrolled down by clicking the dots at the bottom of the list. If you want to see more than 12 items, just change the number in the 'Limit by' field.

In the Browser page you can also sort/filter records by date,

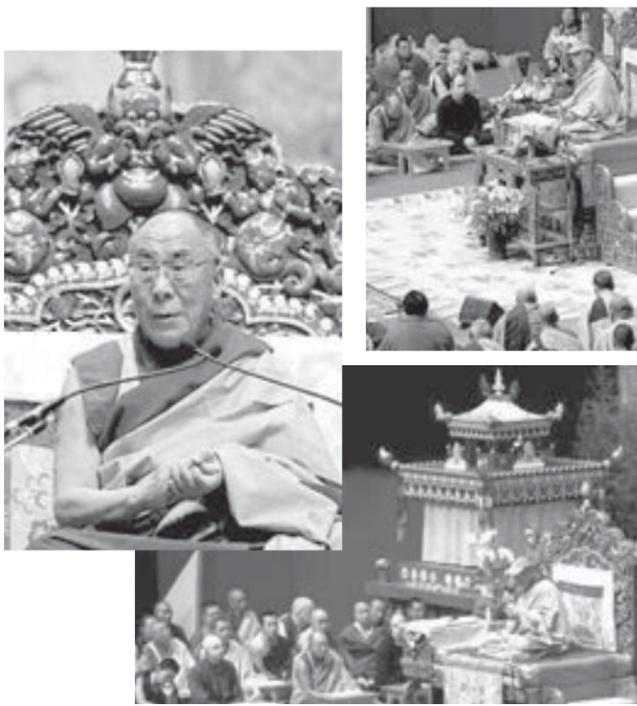
country, inventory number, content types (i.e. if you write 'sms' in the 'Filter by' field, you'll see only records related to Santi Maha Sangha; if you write 'teaching' in the same field you'll see only general teachings; if you write 'interview' or 'documentary' you'll see only those, etc.).

Media types can be filtered by clicking on 'AT' (audio tapes) 'AD' (audio disks) 'VT' (video tapes) and 'VD' (video disks). Default is 'ALL'.

Remember to click 'Log out' when you are done, to log out of the site. This will take you to the Logout 'bye bye' page. You can log in again from there, by clicking on the SSI logo.

These instructions are very basic, but if you pause with the mouse on links and fields in the pages, more help tips will appear. Experiment, have fun, and let us know your suggestions to make the site more useful and user-friendly.

The Shang Shung Institute Digital Archives Staff



(Above photos) His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave teachings from the October 11th to 17th, 2003, in Palais Omnisport Paris, Bercy, France. 13,000 people attended the weekend teaching on the Awakened Mind and Bodhichitta. During the week, His Holiness explained the profound nature of the texts of Nagarjuna. The teachings closed with a transmission of Akhsobya and more than 10,000 people took the Bodhisattva commitments with His Holiness.

A Bodhisattva Passing Through the Land of Tea The Dalai Lama Teaches in Darjeeling, India

by Elio Guarisco

"We are in the 21st century! You need to have modern education. This is important if you want to function in this society. You must study modern subjects to live in a modern world. But you must not forget your culture, your roots. Modern education is indispensable but it is not all. It is not sufficient. Remember that in your culture there is something precious: the teaching of the Buddha. This will give meaning to your life. That teaching can be considered three subjects together: philosophy, science and religion. The children remaining in Tibet maintain their hope because they know that other Tibetans are abroad supporting them. Eventually we will gain freedom. China is not our enemy. China will also be useful to us. Remember your culture and the struggle for freedom. I am only the one who has shown you the way. I trust and hope that you children of today will be the people who follow and continue on this path in the future."

These were words spoken by the Dalai Lama to a group of children in a foggy and humid little village at the outskirts of Darjeeling, India. These words were not said at the four days of teaching on emptiness and compassion; teachings which almost lead me to burst into tears.

With the weight of his 70 years, moving slowly but with the patience and courage of a bodhisattva, the Dalai Lama talked to the children while standing outside the monastery of the late Kalu Rinpoche, under a yellow umbrella and surrounded by policemen ready to follow his steps with complete equanimity.

That was the morning of his last day in Darjeeling, that began in the early hours during a "pilgrimage" to various small monasteries and temples situated along the way down to the plains where His Holiness boarded his flight to Delhi. Visibly tired from the busy days of teachings, encounters with personalities, visits to institutions, nonetheless the Dalai Lama satisfied the wishes all various ethnic groups, stopping at one monastery to another, from

one temple to another, giving words of encouragement to maintain the Himalayan culture and words of warning of keeping it in a proper way.

It was a visit that left a big impression in my mind; an impression that I have not experienced for a while. His Holiness reminded me forcefully how conduct is an integral part of practice. Conduct, which in order to be part of the practice, needs to be meaningful.

From December 3rd to 8th, 2003, His Holiness gave teachings on the grounds of Saint Joseph School in Darjeeling, India, on Kamalashila's Middle Stages of Meditation, Togme Zangpo's Thirty Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva and the Eight Verses of Mind Training. At times, His Holiness went into detailed discussions of emptiness, reminiscent of his Gelugpa philosophical training. These discussions left the public extraniated to itself, but His Holiness did not forget references to more direct approaches such of Mahamudra and Dzogchen as plausible ways.

Sometimes His Holiness gave more practical advice on living and took pains to help people understand the basic meaning of refuge in the Three Jewels: the Master, the Teaching, and those who have realized it. His Holiness introduced the two principles that underlie the Mahayana path: unreality and compassion. His Holiness said that people who have only thought of themselves and cheating others, create good cause by taking the commitment of the altruistic mind of awakening. The Dalai Lama also conducted the ceremony of taking the precepts of a lay Buddhist.

Though there are a few rare, fine masters still living in the Himalayas, the Dalai Lama is the only one who can evoke mass interest and inspire great gatherings of common people. To me, this is what makes his role invaluable, to awaken the minds of Himalayan Buddhists and help prevent them from drifting away from the essence of the teaching into a more and more appealing and overwhelming, yet unfulfilling, material world.

The people slowly gathered in the thousands, hoping to get a token of blessing, until the last day when more than 50,000 people gathered to receive a couple of initiations: the Thousand Armed Avalokitesvara and a Long Life White Tara initiation. Before getting the Dalai Lama's blessing, first there was a scolding: "Tibetans and others, feeling that they are unable to understand the teaching, come in great numbers when I am giving an initiation thinking that they will get something very important. This is actually a sign of not understanding the principle of the teaching and a sign of being a little stupid. Don't misunderstand me, I am not putting you down. I also the so called Gyalwa Rinpoche, I don't know very much, so there is no fault of a stupid calling another stupid."

The morning and afternoon sessions of teaching were opened by the singing of young people dressed in the colorful garb of the various Himalayan races, such as the Lepcha, Tamang, Sherpa, Buthanese, Buthia, and Sikkimese.

With his usual vigor, the Dalai Lama tirelessly taught for many hours and a relaxed audience listened. Even the security service of Indian policeman must have felt different than their usual job of serving as security personal for common politicians. They seemed very respectful of the event and even wore red bandanas during the initiation. The last day, hordes of the Himalaya devotees screamed, hustled and rushed to get something concrete to hold on to as a blessing; a protection cord, a long life pill, a sip of purifying water, all below the benevolent eyes and the laughter of the Dalai Lama.

The passing of His Holiness through the 'land of tea' left a wave of joy in those who met him, a sign of the so called "liberation through seeing": "How fortunate we are. We have never seen him so close.", were the words heard spoken by simple people with a sense of their lives having become a little more meaningful.



merigar

**MERIGAR CALENDAR
2004**

Long life practice at 7 am

WINTER PROGRAM

February 28-29
Mandarava Long life Retreat

December 27, 2003 - January 2, 2004

MARCH 2004

March 6
Worldwide Transmission Day
Anniversary of Garab Dorje
Practice at 4 am. explanation on
Friday, March 5 at 4 pm

Intensive Santi Maha Sangha
Practice Retreat
with Costantino Albini
Yantra Yoga with Laura
Evangelisti

March 6-7-
The Hardest Job Around:
On Parenting, an Experiential
Seminar with Gino Vitiello
Cost. 60 Euro with discounts for
members

(Reserved for those already
studying SMS). It is necessary to
have already completed a basic
Yantra Yoga course
Cost: 150 Euro with discounts for
members

March 20-21
Karma Yoga Practice Retreat with
Chöd practice

JANUARY 2004

January 4-7
Vajra Dance Course – Dance of
the Liberation of the Six Lokas
Cost: 75 Euro with discounts for
members

March 27-28
Course on how to read the
Tibetan calendar
with Rita Leti
Cost: 60 Euro with discounts for
members

January 15-18
A course of "Deepening one's
knowledge of the Vajra Dance"
with Adriana Dal Borgo

APRIL 2004

April 3-4
Vajra Dance Practice Retreat
Dance of the Song of the Vajra

January 24-25
25 Spaces of Samantabhadra
practice retreat

April 9-12
Green Tara Practice Retreat
with Yuchen Namkhai
Cost: 120 Euro with discounts for
members

January 31 - February 1
Yantra Yoga for beginners practice
retreat

For further information, contact
the Merigar Office:

FEBRUARY 2004

February 7-8
The Psychology of Pleasure
and Creativity
An experiential seminar
with Barrie Simmons
Cost: 60 Euro with discounts for
members

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February 14-15
Vajrasattva Purification Retreat
from the Longsal Cycle

February 21
Losar – Tibetan New Year

News from the Merigar Gakyil

New Director: Sergio Quaranta
New Vice Director: Pia Barilli

**Zhenphenling
Dzogchen Community of Rome - Italy**

Collective practices
are organized at Zhenphenling, according to the Tibetan calendar.

Vajra Dance

is usually practiced before Ganapujas, as well as on specific days.
Course: Dance of the Song of the Vajra with Adriana dal Borgo
10-11 January 2004, 31 January – 1 February, 21-22 February, 6-7
March

Yantra Yoga

Courses: weekly courses for beginners and advanced
with Sergio Quaranta,
Yantra Yoga for beginners with Laura Evangelisti
October 18-19, November 15-16, December 6-7, January 17-18
2004

The Rome Dzogchen Community will be happy to welcome practitioners from other cities.
For information call 0039-06-57300346 or email
to:zhenphenling@tiscali.it
Address: Zhenphenling, Via G. Miani 5, 00154 Rome, Italy (Metro
Piramide)

**DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP
2004**

by the Merigar Yellow Gakyil

Dear members and friends,

In this issue of The Mirror and the Merigar Letter Europe, we are publishing information that will help you to renew your membership in 2004 or to become a new member.

We would like to thank all the people who have answered our appeals so promptly in the past and we hope that in 2004 the number of members will continue to increase in order to support the whole Dzogchen Community.

Rinpoche has often emphasized the value of Community membership as a symbol of our commitment towards the teaching. To support the Community is a personal act of responsibility and respect towards the Precious Teachings that we have been receiving for so many years. It is a way to guarantee that the very generous commitment of Our Beloved Master, in his infinite patience and compassion, so Rinpoche can continue in time and space for the benefit and realization of all human beings.

Therefore it is very important to renew Community membership every year. It is a moment of participation and a way of giving one's support to the evolution of the Community.

People with financial problems and find difficulty in paying their membership can contact their local Gakyil (letter, email, phone, etc.) to find a possible solution. However, it is important that all people truly interested in the Teaching should become members.

Payment can be made in installments to help people on a low income but with a real commitment. There are also special membership fees for seniors and students who may have financial difficulties. Seniors and students who do not have financial problems should not apply for this special membership because the principle is to give according to each person's resources rather than their status. We suggest that you always contact your local Gakyil for any problems, even temporary ones, which you may have in order to pay your membership.

The Gakyil will help you to write a letter to the Master explaining the reason why you are not able to pay for membership and ask for facilities. This is the option the Community offers to people going through great hardships; the point is not to have a set rule for all the problems, but resolving each case depending on the circumstances and on the awareness of the person.

Membership
Basic member per year 185 Euro
Sustaining member per year 390 Euro
Student/senior member per year 52 Euro
Good Service member per year 2,000 US\$

**The Cycle of Knowledge
of the Santi Maha Sangha**

An interview with Costantino
Albini and Laura Evangelisti

From December 27 until January 2, 2004, there will be an intensive practice retreat of the Santi Maha Sangha at Merigar with Costantino Albini and Laura Evangelisti. The Merigar Letter (the Merigar monthly newsletter) asked Costantino to explain a little about what the Santi Maha Sangha consists of.

Costantino: The Santi Maha Sangha is a great systematic explanation of the entire teaching of the Buddha in the light of specific knowledge of Dzogchen. Our Master has drawn up an extremely complete and profound synthesis of the teachings, from the Hinayana gradually through all the higher levels up to Dzogchen, and organized it so that it is a cycle of knowledge.

However, since this cycle of knowledge is not limited to a context which is simply cultural but partakes closely of the essence of the teaching itself, it is divided into two levels: the level of concepts, or of knowledge that can be learned from books and from reflection, and that of direct knowledge based on experience, which one obtains through the practice. Thus it is a complete system which has its gradualness – the term 'gradual' is not meant in the traditional sense but generically (the gradual systems are those of the Tibetan schools which derive from the Indian schools in which one cannot have access to the teaching of the higher levels if one has not completed the lower ones and where the real teaching is given only at the end, when the obligatory gradual purifications have been completed. So, to put it in a better and more precise way, the Santi Maha Sangha is a progressive, non-

gradual system because right from the first level, the base level, we are already in the most pure Dzogchen teaching. The Master has the capacity to present the Buddha's teaching at all its levels starting with the Hinayana, and transmit it to us through the knowledge and language of Dzogchen. Those who have been to a retreat with the Master and received his transmission will find it very easy to learn and, most of all, to understand all the levels of Buddhism, even the most tiresome and gradual. The special factor that determines this is the transmission – as the flow of wisdom characteristic of the Dzogchen lineage is called, thanks to which, whether we are conscious of it or not, we receive complete knowledge right from the beginning directly from the Master. That which is 'progressive' is our understanding of the teaching, which becomes deeper and deeper and helps each of us to integrate his or her daily life

Discount for a second relative and senior: 30 %

Basic membership with 30% discount per year
130 Euro
Sustaining member per year
270 Euro

Membership payments can be made at one time or divided into installments:

- monthly
- quarterly
- six-monthly

Payment can be made as follows:

- 1) Postal money order to
Comunita Dzogchen, I 58031 Arcidosso GR Italy
Please, remember to specify the reason of payment
- 2) Bank draft to the following bank:
Monte dei Paschi di Siena, PS,
Arcidosso branch,
58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy
Account number: 3120.29 Comunita Dzogchen
European bank coordinates: IBAN IT 64 N
0103072160 000000312029
BIC/SWIFT: PASCITMMGRO
Please, remember to specify the reason of payment
- 3) Postal transfer to:
Post office account number: 10445583, Comunita
Dzogchen. Please, remember to specify the reason of
payment
- 4) By cash or check to your local yellow Gakyil or
Merigar.

Discounts for members:

- Basic member -
20 % discount on retreats and seminars.
- Santi Maha Sangha, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga
training are not included.
- Sustaining member -
40 % discount on retreats and seminars.
- Santi Maha Sangha, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga
training are not included.
- Student/senior member - 50% discount on retreats
and seminars.
- Santi Maha Sangha, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga
training are not included.
- Good Service member -100% discount

continued on next page



interview continued from previous page

into this knowledge. This, we know, is the aim of each Dzogchen practitioner.

Merigar Letter: What is the difference between simply following the Master's retreats and devoting oneself to the study of the Santi Maha Sangha?

Costantino: The Santi Maha Sangha is an extremely efficient instrument which provides a system, a method, for cultivating our capacity to understand. If we start to study the base of the SMS – and studying doesn't mean only learning by heart but making it our own, taking each teaching into our own lives – then right from the beginning we learn how the life of a Dzogchen practitioner should be. The mechanism of a retreat produces an very strong and spontaneous feeling of involvement, but often, when we go back home, we fall back into our usual habits, and even though we have received fundamental instructions from the Master on how to behave, it is very easy that we gradually forget them and fall back into distraction. So, in order not to get distracted from the aim of a Dzogchen practitioner – which is precisely that of practicing Dzogchen, or transforming the entire day into a Dzogchen practice – the powerful method of the SMS which has been given to us with great compassion by the Master, it is without doubt the best. It is a method that he has given to his Western disciples; it is not a system that was created in Tibet hundreds or years ago and imported into the West. It was made to measure for us and for the problems that are characteristic of our mind and our era. It is system for learning how to really integrate daily life into the teaching.

Merigar Letter: What does the Christmas retreat consist of?

Costantino: Principally it will a practice retreat. That doesn't mean that it won't be possible to have question and answer sessions on more varied topics. But fundamentally I am interested in clarifying some of the base practices which many people do not know very well or do not know how to do. These practice are the secret Rushen and the Seventh Lojong. What I intend to do is point out the function of Yantra Yoga for those who wish to practice kumbhaka since some of the practices such as the Seventh Lojong are founded precisely on this.

Merigar Letter: Is this retreat

only for those who are already studying the SMS base or can people who know nothing about it participate?

Costantino: It would be better if the people who wish to participate, even if they are not yet studying the base, had at least a serious intention to start, and that once they have learned this type of practice, commit themselves to putting it into practice instead of leaving it in their notebooks. These exercises and practices are very important for inducing particular experiences which help our understanding. It is important that when we have these experiences that we do not limit or condition ourselves but that we are able to govern them.

There are two practices I want to concentrate sessions of practice on: one is the rushen that belongs to the first testament of Garab Dorje, to the direct introduction; and the seventh lojong for not remaining in doubt which, like the Semdzin, is a practice for inducing experiences – and this leads us to the second testament of Garab Dorje.

I would like to emphasize that Yantra Yoga is not a system for physical well-being – like the Indian yoga which has been brought to the West – but a system strictly linked to the teaching and with which it shares a common aim, realization. Thus even if those who practice Yantra have better health and a more flexible body, the most important effects of this practice are control of the prana and the experiences linked to it with the aim of integrating them with knowledge. Yantra Yoga is part of the Dzogchen teaching.

Merigar Letter: Will there be explanations about what practices are required for the Base of the SMS during the retreat?

Costantino: I can certainly give those explanations as well. Of course, we have to consider how to organise our schedule. I intend to do four Thuns of practice a day, starting in the morning at eight o'clock.

Merigar Letter: Now we would like to ask Laura Evangelisti to tell us about the relationship between the SMS and Yantra Yoga.

Laura: Yantra Yoga is an integral part of the SMS base. First of all because we work with body, voice and mind in order to arrive at a condition of coordinating the energy and relaxation, conditions which are indispensable for finding the state of contemplation.

Secondly, Yantra is the only method for having knowledge of kumbhaka which is essential in order to do many of the practices of the SMS.

Merigar Letter: Can you explain briefly what kumbhaka consists of?

Laura: Kumbhaka is a term which literally means 'vase holding' and is a technique or method which consists of holding the breath, pushing it downwards and 'closing' it below the navel, thus allowing us to concentrate the prana to the utmost. Many practitioners have a kind of fantasy about kumbhaka. They hear people speak about it and think that it is something fantastic that should be learned as soon as possible. They think that it is possible to do this without having knowledge of the base of Yantra Yoga. Actually the function of Yantra Yoga is really to arrive at having control over all aspects of the breathing. I think it is very difficult to know how to apply kumbhaka without having mastery over all the different phases of breathing or without knowing how to perfectly coordinate inhaling and exhaling, let alone having experience of the various types of holding the breath. Kumbhaka is actually something very complex which should be learned gradually and with great precision.

Merigar Letter: So should those people who participate in the retreat already have good knowledge of Yantra Yoga?

Laura: We have requested that people who wish to participate should have followed a course of the base of Yantra Yoga or that they know at least the eight movements. In fact the lungsang (the eight movements) are useful for having experience of all the aspects of the breathing – or the different ways of inhaling, exhaling and holding the breath – combined with movement. This experience of the base should then be investigated thoroughly and this is what we will try to do during the retreat, practising also the rhythmic breathing which is necessary to develop our capacity of holding the breath.

Merigar Letter: We give our best wishes for a successful retreat and thank Laura and Costantino for the patience and care with which they have transmitted their precious knowledge.

Lucia Antonelli for the Merigar Letter

Translated by Liz Granger.

NEW GAKYILS IN AUSTRIA

New Gakyil Styria/Tirol

Blue: Siegi Schwaiger
Email: siegi.schwaiger@utanet.at

Red: Gabi Leik
No email yet

Yellow: Oliver Gstöttner
Email: oliver.gstoettner@chello.at

New Gakyil Vienna

Email: dzogchen.wien@gmx.at

Blue - Ursula Kogler - kogler.dr@chello.at

Red - Sabine Böhm - sabiboe@hotmail.com

Yellow - Hannes Binder - hannesbinder@hotmail.com

Yellow assistant - Peter Sochor - p.sochor@gmx.at

europe

VAJRA DANCE COURSE in VENICE with PRIMA MAI

We are pleased to give you the opportunity to begin the New Year 2004, with a Vajra Dance Course with Prima Mai in Venice, Italy. January 1st will be a collective practice and the course will start January 2nd, in the afternoon at 4:00PM and end January 6th, at 18:00PM. The course will be a review for the new movements of the Three Vajra Dance, Dance of the Purification of Six Lokas and the Vajra Dance of the Song of Vajra. The cost is 100 Euro. We have a flat with 6 beds for practitioners. The special price for Venice in this period is Euro 18 per night and you can also use the kitchen and there is nearby a supermarket. You can have a look at the flat on web site <www.venexiahome.com>. The apartment design is Zattere.

*For information please contact:
Giuliana Giromella: giuligiro@libero.it
Tel 0422331241; cell 3401473878
Lucia Boschetto: lucia.boschetto@venexiahome.com
Tel: 0412759126; cell 3355291565*

Vajra Dance Courses & Retreats in France January - February, 2004 with Stoffelina Verdonk & Adriana dal Borgo

JANUARY 2 - 7, 2004

Course of the Dance of SONG OF VAJRA
First part with Stoffelina Verdonk
Dejamling (DC's center in the South France)
Course Cost: 192 Euro with - 30% for DC's members

FEBRUARY 3 - 9, 2004

Course of the Dance of SONG OF VAJRA
Part 2 with Stoffelina Verdonk & Adriana dal Borgo (supervision)
Dejamling

February 10 - Day of the Dance of Song of Vajra practice

Course Cost: 224 Euro with - 30% for DC's members

Vajra Dance Beginners' Course in Wales UK, Easter 2004 with Stoffelina Verdonk

The UK Dzogchen community is pleased to announce that Stoffelina Verdonk will be teaching the first part of the Dance of the Vajra on our new Mandala at Kunselling, Brecon, Wales.

The course lasts seven full days (six days of teaching, 2 sessions per day, plus one day of practice followed by Ganapuja) from Friday, April 9 to Thursday, April 15, 2004.

Cost: 220 Euros or 176 Euros for Dzogchen Community members (£150 or £120)

Registration: Please send non-refundable deposit of 40 Euros (£27) to:

Rowan Wylie, 29 Almoners Avenue, Cambridge, CB1 8NZ, UK
Cheques should be made payable to: Dzogchen Community UK
Places are limited to twenty: ten learning the female and ten the male part.

Any queries please refer to rowanwylie@hotmail.com or call 0044 (0)1223 473 528

NEW GAKYIL Lithuania

Blue - Mantrimas Danielius,
Email: man333@takas.lt
Mob.ph. +370 688 51906

Red - Algis Lukosevicius
Email: lundazz@centras.lt
Mob.ph. +370 614 18056

Yellow - Solveiga Marcinkeviciute
Email: solveiga.m@centras.lt
Mob.ph. +370 610 02625

Erika Miskeleviciute
Email: miserika@hotmail.com

kunsangar

New Yellow Gakyil Member in Kunsangar:

Igor Magafuroff



Kunselling Mountain Retreat Center in the UK

by Catriona Mundle

Kunselling, the place of total luminosity, is the UK's retreat center in Wales. Situated in a mountainous secluded region, it adjoins thousands of acres of common land and enjoys magnificent views. Our beloved Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, visited it in 1998 and stayed in the farmhouse. Since that time we have been working on the design and development of the barn and outbuildings.

After so many years, at last this project is virtually complete. At the end of August, we held a party in the barn at Kunselling to celebrate the completion of the building work. The builders were officially leaving, and the architect, builders and all who had been involved in the project were invited to join with our wonderful neighbors and ourselves to celebrate in the converted barn which will be our Gonpa. A spectacular double rainbow formed in the evening sunlight as we ate, talked and listened to relaxing tapes of Rinpoche's music. Later as it grew dark, with Francis Vine as Frankie de Vine the DJ, the dancing began. Outside under the stars others gathered around a bonfire. There was a real sense of affection and warmth amongst all present, combined with pride for what we had achieved.

Our much loved farmhouse, which has been used for individual retreats and collective practices, remains unchanged, apart from the mud and dust which had accumulated during the year when it was adjoining a building site. Nothing that a good spring clean and some practice did not disperse. In the courtyard, what had once been an uneven sloping patch of weeds and nettles enclosed by a derelict barn, our former coal shed, and disused outhouses, is now an imposing curved stone wall, with a ramp spiraling around it to a courtyard containing the Mandala (still to be painted). Mountains of earth have been moved to sculpture this plateau. The Mandala lies at the heart of the design and forms a natural courtyard which traps the sun's heat in

summer. From here, and the new large French windows of the barn we have a new experience of the surrounding landscape -

at which, it seemed - one had never really looked or seen before. Above and parallel to the line of the house below are four retreat cabins (one for dark retreat), with a covered walkway like cloisters. Though

they are not large, they seem and feel surprisingly spacious with large rear windows framing our magnificent beech tree.

We are extremely fortunate in our neighbors, the Davies family who farm down the road. They are like our protectors; always kind to us and come and help when things break down. They could and would warn us if anything untoward happened. We drive through their courtyard to get to Kunselling, taking care not to run down their ancient over-welcoming dogs. During the foot and mouth epidemic the elderly couple, Ted and Grace, held prayer meetings every day; their farm remained clear. The Welsh name of their son's farmhouse translates as 'under the rainbow'. So it was especially nice that the children and grandchildren came and enjoyed our party, and that more of us got to know each other by name.

However things do not run on euphoria alone. There is still work to be done. We undertook to do the decorating and finishing ourselves to save on costs, and are organizing karma yoga weekends for this. There are still some hitches and glitches to be rectified: the Land Committee have kindly agreed to extend their period of responsibility until the end of the twelve month 'snagging period' during which time defects can be corrected. Meanwhile the painting is almost complete, the luxurious under floor heating system is working, and

the wooden floors will be laid in mid-December.

We are ordering an inflatable dome for the Mandala to protect dancers from the wind and weather and look forward to a Vajra Dance Retreat with Stoffelina Verdonk next Easter. The Mandala has already been initiated in a sense, for some enthusiastic dancers

chalked it out during a weekend and danced ecstatically. Its construction stage was marked by doubts and difficulty as engineers procrastinated and changed their recipes for avoiding future cracking caused by settlement and subsidence. The Welsh builders working on it were observed to be unusually happy, and sang a lot.

Next spring, landscaping will continue with sowing wildflower seeds on the earth which has been moved, for effect and to bind it. Over the winter we will do some tree planting. We need to finalize fencing arrangements in such a way that our neighbors can continue to enjoy grazing rights in our meadow, without their sheep eating our lovely wildflowers and kitchen herbs. (It is true actually that sheep have memories for faces: I felt very friendly towards them once when I was retreating there on my own, and the next time I visited a few months later they ran up towards me and followed me around, rather than running away as is normal.) A team is already working on planting the area around the Mandala and besides the new meditation Gonpa.

We have a caravan in an upper field for people who like greater isolation, complete with heating, which we plan to shield with a surrounding hedge. There is also a new raised landscaped mound by the gate with wonderful views of the Black Mountains, ideal for camping or for a yurt. The chil-



dren built a play house like a 'bender' (a skeletal tent made of bent twigs). Standing here gives a very strong feeling of heaven and earth, and naked elements. This patch of still naked-earth is hardly an eagle's nest, but is a vantage point which is an addition to the landscape.

We owe a great deal not only to the Land Committee, who have spent years on this project, but to all the people who have and still are giving their time and practical skills and have masterminded the project. Not a few people have felt deterred by the difficulty of running the coal burning boiler in the house. Welsh cottages are always centered around such a stove, but as that lifestyle is not familiar to most city people it will be changed sooner or later to a more modern central heating system. Thanks to those who have already made donations towards items such as the central heating fund, the Mandala dome, a new cooker, tree surgery and wild flower seeds..

Indeed we still need to raise more money. The retreat cabins need beds and blinds. The farmhouse needs a new cooker, gas central heating and a conservatory to accommodate larger numbers for dining. We would therefore appreciate any help or support you could give us to complete this work. Please contact the Yellow Gakyil (see web site address below)

We are now planning in earnest for 2004. A Vajra Dance course with Stoffelina Verdonk is scheduled for Easter with a follow-up course later in the year. John Renshaw will run a Yantra Yoga course in May, and there is a Ku Nye course with Dr. Nida in November. We can also look forward to gathering at Kunselling for future video transmissions, collective practice sessions with the greater possibility for individual retreats, including dark retreats and karma yoga periods. Wonderful!

Of course we all hope that Rinpoche will visit and bless our new Gonpa. This will be the Great Completion.

{for further details see our web site: www.redsandstonehill.net/dzogchen/}

t s e g y a l g a r e a s t & w e s t

Practice Weekends & Gakyil Meetings at Tsegylgar

Next one: January 16-18, 2004

If you would like to lead a practice weekend, please let us know.

Tsegylgar, The Dzogchen Community in America
P.O. Box 277, Conway, MA 01341
Tel: 413-369-4153 | Fax: 413-369-4473
email: secretary@tsegylgar.org
bluegakyil@tsegylgar.org

Visit us at: <http://www.tsegylgar.org>

NEW BLUES AT TSEGYALGAR

TWO New Blue Gakyil members are Paola Zamperini and Neil Murray.

Tsegylgar Email Addresses Update Please note

This is a reminder to everyone that you should use the following email address ONLY for the Tsegylgar office: secretary@tsegylgar.org.
*Please discontinue to send email via dzogchenusa@compuserve.com.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING NEW EMAIL ADDRESSES:

Tsegylgar Gakyil: gakyil@tsegylgar.org
Blue Gakyil: bluegakyil@tsegylgar.org
Red Gakyil: redgakyil@tsegylgar.org
Yellow Gakyil: yellowgakyil@tsegylgar.org
Bookstore: bookstore@tsegylgar.org
Gekös: geko@tsegylgar.org

Thanks very much,
Andrea Nasca
Secretary, Tsegylgar

INTERVIEW WITH JIM VALBY OCTOBER 6, 2003, TSEGYALGAR

by Christina Svane for *The Mirror*

Mirror: Good Morning, Jim. We have heard very exciting plans for doing a month-long intensive SMS Base retreat with you, including Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance in Merigar in the Summer of 2004. Will you tell us about it?
Jim: Yes. In Austria, in October 2002, primarily Igor Legati, Anna Pucci and I were talking about the financial situation at Merigar and other Gars. How the Gars can go ahead with a good financial base when our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is not present every year. Gars sometimes invite other masters, but then not so many practitioners participate. Maybe that can be useful for some practitioners, but it is not really the best way to maintain a strong financial base. Our discussions did not reach any conclusions.

The next morning I was still thinking about our situation. We have three special video transmission days each year but in many places it is not taken seriously. Many practitioners are not suffi-

ciently prepared to seriously participate in the transmission. We know that here at Tsegylgar a few months ago two practitioners attended the explanations about one week before the transmission day. On the night of the video transmission about five or six additional new people attended, but they did not know anything about mudras, mantras and visualization. This is not serious. This is a joke.

Rinpoche asks that interested people seriously prepare by learning the mudras, mantras and visualizations so they know what is going on. It is impossible to force people to be serious. They say they are interested, but they are only curious and pretend to receive transmission. They do not know what is going on and they just sit and watch a video. I receive email from different Gakyils where many new people are just curious and not serious. I also receive email from Gakyils where the more experienced practitioners really help new people seriously prepare for weeks before the video transmission.

Anyway, I thought that we can use these three special video transmission days for new and old practitioners who are really serious about connecting and working with Dzogchen trans-

mission. The master may not be physically present, but we can prepare for a week or ten days before the transmission. Then new and old practitioners know what to do, so there is a possibility that we really connect and work with transmission.

In addition, I thought it would be nice for a group of practitioners who received transmission to stay together for more days to learn some Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, Santi Maha Sangha Base, and collective practices. Igor and Anna asked me to write such a proposal to the Merigar Gakyil. The Merigar Gakyil asked Rinpoche for his advice and he said OK.

So now we are going to try this program from July 16 to August 12, 2004 at Merigar. Each day there will be two sessions of SMS, one session of Yantra Yoga, and one session of Vajra Dance. There will be two groups for Yantra and two groups for Dance. One group will be mostly beginners and the other group will be more experienced. For this first experiment we will limit participation to 24 practitioners so that each practitioner receives personal attention.

We will prepare for the July 27 video transmission and conclude with a Ganapuja on August 12.

continued on next page



Interview with Jim Valby continued from previous page

There will be time for two Dance retreats, two Yantra retreats, and the complete SMS Base. Maybe we can eat a meal together each day to get to know each other. The cost of the retreat is 1500 Euros. This retreat helps to continue our Dzogchen transmission, sustain the financial viability of our Community, and help support our Community instructors.

If this retreat format works well, and if there are interested practitioners, each Gar could do something similar one, two or three times each year. Each Gar could invite foreign or local instructors with Rinpoche's permission.

Mirror: It sounds fantastic. I would hope you could do one of these retreats in Tsegyalgar, after you see how it goes this Summer. If someone wanted to do it again, would there be different levels of the Santi Maha Sangha teachings?

Jim: That may be a possibility in the future.

Mirror: How many people have signed up so far?

Jim: I don't know the exact numbers but it is fully booked. There is a waiting list. Merigar asked me to consider offering a similar retreat for the following video transmissions in November 2004 and March 2005, but I said, "No thank you." , because it is useful for other instructors to participate. Maybe the Merigar Gakyil can make plans by inviting other Dance, Yantra and SMS teachers. Some people may have questions about the exclusivity of this retreat for only 24 fortunate practitioners. Maybe in a subsequent video transmission retreat we could have 48 practitioners with two Dance Mandalas, two Dance instructors, etc. Also there are already many other retreat formats offered by the Dzogchen Community. Maybe some business person with family can plan 18 months ahead of time to par-

ticipate in a month-long intensive retreat like this.

Mirror: I have heard comments here and there from people who have heard of this idea that there would not be any work study or special considerations for people who do not have enough money, and they were worried that this could mean the future of our Gars would be only for people with a lot of money. What would you say to that?

Jim: Already our Community offers many other retreat possibilities to participate in Dance, Yantra and SMS which often include the option of work/study for practitioners with little money. This retreat is just a special way for a limited number of people who have that money and time to intensively study and practice. It is not the only future of our Community. In some places, some practitioners do work study and the cost of courses is less. It depends on the economic situation of the particular countries. This retreat format is not the only way our Community will go ahead.

We are really fortunate to have these video transmissions. Rinpoche promised he will do these transmissions at these three special times every year so that new and old practitioners can work together with the Dzogchen transmission. We really have Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Some people get interested in Dzogchen teaching and think that the teaching is wonderful, but they do not care so much about the Master or Sangha because they think teaching is just some kind of technique. Some people think the Master and teachings are wonderful but do not like the Dzogchen Community Sangha. They think that many Community members are stupid, emotional, nasty, intellectual and crazy. But during these retreats practitioners in our Sangha can really help

each other work with the Dzogchen transmission.

Gakyils in all Gars need to work with their circumstances to maintain our Dzogchen transmission. This type of limited retreat around a video transmission day is one possibility. It is not a replacement for something else. It is the addition of something extra and special. I hope it goes well.

Mirror: I hope it goes well, too. It sounds wonderful. Thank you for explaining it to us, and we hope you have a wonderful retreat with those people. Before you go, would you tell us what else you're working on?

Jim: Yes, I have received invitations from 42 Gakyils asking me to lead practice retreats. I usually respond, "No, I am sorry but it is not possible now. I look forward to our study and practice in a future time." But a few times each year I enjoy working with Rinpoche's Dzogchen transmission by explaining and practicing rushen, semdzin, etc., with Vajra brothers and sisters in different countries.

I am working on translations of ancient Dzogchen teachings retransmitted by Garab Dorje. Jigmed Lingpa and Longchenpa are a little modern for me. I hope to begin publishing some translations soon. I am very interested in Rinpoche's SMS program, and I spend an hour or two each day answering SMS email questions. And I try to do my personal study and practice.

Each practitioner is responsible for the transmission. We need to develop our capacity to be in that knowledge and can really help each other develop our capacities. If we do not get familiar with transmission, it will be difficult to maintain these precious teachings for future practitioners.

Mirror: Thank you, Jim.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Talks about the Sacred Buckland Land Khandroling September, 2003 Khandroling

"Once when we had a retreat here [on the Buckland land] and we had many problems. The neighbors were opposed to us coming here and made demonstrations against us. Many Community people had the idea it would be better to sell the land and there would be less problems, but I said we can't do that because it is sacred land related to the Dance of the Vajra. In any case, we had to go to court and make many sacrifices and struggled for many years. Now we have no problem. I said, "Everything is relative. One day we will build retreat cabins. Now they don't allow, but slowly, slowly, with patience, we can realize everything."



Rinpoche in front of "his" tree on the Buckland Land

The only problem here [in this region] is the weather. In the winter it is very cold and there is always snow. Finally we have succeeded in buying the adjacent property and we can construct a road here. Then we can connect the third hill because it is much lower, warmer and has nicer weather. Maybe you don't know this whole land and haven't seen it, but I have walked this entire land five or six times. When I was on retreat here, after I practiced, I would walk all around. Sometimes I was a little afraid of meeting bears because there was no road. I would put sweets on the path to mark the way. One day on my walk I did see a bear in a tree, and I got a little lost and became a little nervous. There is also water at this lower land; it is a nice place, a very nice place. Now we have the beginnings of the Universal Mandala here where I had some dreams and soon we will build retreat cabins."

Transcribed from video footage of Jennifer Fox by Naomi Zeitz.



Rinpoche at the Guardian Cabin



Rinpoche at the Bath House filming PHOTOS/NZEITZ

Khandroling Update Sacred Buckland Land, Tsegyalgar Conway, Massachusetts

by Santo Santoriello

This past season, a good deal of work was accomplished at Khandroling to develop the retreat area. Planning began last winter for a number of projects there. Through the spring and summer, many volunteers helped to remove the old dance Mandala and to level the enlarged pad for the Universal Mandala. Next spring, we plan to finish grading this space and constructing the Dance Mandala of 2X4's and Advantec board. This should take two weeks total, with enough help, and may be spread out so that the materials, volunteers, and good weather are there together.

The bath house went through a number of design changes to reflect evolving ideas of what functions it should serve. At the last minute we found out that the town expected it to be handicapped accessible, and changed the plan again. It has a bathroom with a shower stall and dressing area, a central room for meal preparation, and a unisex handicap bathroom with bath/shower. There will be hot water, but the water will need to be carted to a tank on the hill to supply the bath house by gravity. There is also a front porch for protection in bad weather.

It took a lot of effort to hand dig the holes for the concrete piers, but the construction went fairly quickly. The bath house is now closed in for the winter. Next

spring, we will need to put up the T-111 plywood siding, hang and finish drywall, put up trim and counter tops, and paint the building. Finally, fill will be sloped up to the structure, and topsoil spread over the whole area.

Rinpoche provided details for the four new retreat cabins, and the two-story thöddgal cabin. We hope to construct at least one cabin, and the thöddgal cabin, while also completing the unfinished work from this past year. We may also upgrade the small cabin near the pond to be a handicap accessible retreat cabin. This will go on throughout the spring and summer. Any people interested in helping design the cabins should contact Santo <Cprice@Together.Net > on the Red Gakyil.

We hope to have plans finalized during the winter. Volunteers will be needed to de-limb felled trees and dispose of the branches. Rinpoche also said that he would be pleased to have a garden Mandala created at the site of the original Mandala. This might require some site preparation and grading, and then the planting of the garden. As the forest canopy is opened up by cutting the old pines, we may replant with oak, cherry, maple and walnut to provide a future economic base to help support the retreat center. We may begin a small nursery to start seedlings. These projects will also go on throughout the season.

Santo Santoriello, Red Gakyil, who has experience in the building trades, will be coordinating volunteers on weekdays and there will be a bulletin board with instructions for projects.

MIAMI COURSES :

January 23 - 25, 2004: Introduction to Yantra Yoga Course
with Lynn Sutherland

February: Three Vajra Dance and The Liberation of the Six Lokas with
Anastasia McGhee.

For more information about Miami Winter Courses, please visit:
<http://www.dzogchenmiami.org>

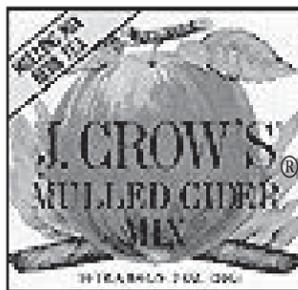
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Santi Maha Sangha 3rd Level Training in Tsegylgar, Autumn, 2003

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Yantra Yoga Advanced and Teacher Training at Tsegylgar, Autumn, 2003

N. ZEITZ

BAJA (MEXICO) AND OUR RETREAT, OCTOBER 3- 5, 2003 A SHAGGY DOG STORY

by Carol Fields

The sense of saga does not abate. We thought that after four or five years of discussion and search for the Winter Gar for North America, that we would come to rest in a cozy little, warm spot where the snowbirds could alight when their extremities began to freeze in the American Northeast during winter. Instead, we caught the tail of the tiger. Or maybe, in Baja terms, we fished for grouper, but pulled in a whale instead. We're still landing it. Or, maybe, it is landing us.

It all started innocently enough, with Rinpoche suggesting that the Dzogchen Community West Coast in California should be responsible for finding and obtaining a property for the North American Winter Gar "in a warm place." We would use the majority of the funds we obtained from the sale of Kyundingar, our ill-fated, though beautiful, property in Cazadero, California. Back in the '80's, Kyundingar encountered resistance from a new neighbor that grew to a firestorm, though we had a perfect retreat there on the land with Rinpoche. But that mountain refuge was not to be, and our decision to leave it led to a long period of waiting and search. From the sale of Kyundingar, we were able to send \$40,000 to Merigar and various

gifts to other Community sites, and save some for a local Center and the Winter Gar.

After a number of forays to southern California looking along the coast, at the inland desert, and close to the Mexican border for the future Winter Gar, we had one of our famous Community-to-Community meetings (C2C) in Joshua Tree (inland of Los

this group energy, we would never have found this land in Baja Sur. Rinpoche encouraged us—"I do not need to see the land," he said, meaning that we could take steps to secure the land when we found it, even while he was traveling elsewhere. He offered to have a retreat "in the new place" in October of 2003—but he also compassionately advised, "If you



Community members meet with Peter Baumann, on the left, the donor of the Baja land, Angeles) at a Vipassana retreat center which was for sale (spring of 2002). We thought that perhaps this was our new Winter Gar. However, most of the group, did not fancy this property and we decided as a group that this spot was not for us.

We formed an expanded search committee and proceeded to search far and wide—Arizona, New Mexico, Southern California, northern Mexico, Baja, Hawaii and Belize. The search committee was an example of what can happen when people have determination. It is my firm conviction, that without

do not find it, don't worry."

At one point in the search, Jey Clark sent out a message about an internet site describing a four million dollar property in Baja Sur (the Baja peninsula extends from California south into Mexico) and said "we can dream about this one." As I looked at the photos on the site, it reminded me strongly of Tassajara Zen Center in the Ventana wilderness in California. I couldn't resist calling the contact number—it turned out to be Jeff Klein, who lived just across the San Francisco Bay from me. We met in a bookstore, and he showed me an amazing perma-



Goma Devi by Glen Eddy

Beautiful thankas
by master painter
Glen Eddy

Goma Devi and a wide
variety of other figures
related to the
Dzogchen lineage
contact Glen at :
goldenvajra@yahoo.com



Vajra Dance Advanced and Teacher Training Conway, Autumn 2003

culture plan for the property, and said there might be a place for us on this land. I suggested that we go to see it, and he agreed. This was not our first trip to Baja but on exploration number four, we hit the jackpot.

Margaret Bradford and I visited the Rancho San Miguel Grande land with Jeff Klein, and it took us two days to explore it. It is only 40 minutes from the Los Cabos airport in Baja (where all the tourists land), and is up 1,500 feet in the mountains (where the weather is pleasant). It is 50 minutes from the most beautiful beaches on the Sea of Cortez. We were impressed with the great white fig trees which wrapped their huge roots around the large boulders; with the 22 unfinished casitas; and with the enormity of the great arroyo streambed which threads through the valley and also through the middle site of this property. Palm trees clustered by the streambed and scattered up the mountain slopes.

It was warm, but not too warm to hike into the middle of the land, which is a totally private valley, separated from the other two sites by ridges. The streambed is 50 yards wide in places with huge, ultra-smooth white granite boulders and pools. A lot of water has flowed here through the eons. We were very touched by this property. We could not imagine that such a spacious place could be ours in which to practice. Individual retreat huts, a campground, staff quarters, and a Gonpa could be completely invisibly developed on the middle site. Jeff said, "the nonprofit could own all of this." We could not comprehend what he meant. We later found that the owner, Peter Baumann, had considered that donation to a worthy community, which would put the land to good use, was something he would entertain.

Many negotiations later, after Peter had revisited the land, where he had a strong experience indicating that a community (OUR COMMUNITY) must own this land, we were headed to Baja

again to have a retreat with Rinpoche. The land was to be ours. All 3,000 acres. This was a donation, to secure which we would contribute an amount up to about \$70,000 for the various transfer costs, including the appraisal, which rated the land as worth \$1,375 million. Only our collective karma with Rinpoche's enduring vision could have produced this result.

We scheduled the October retreat as planned in Baja, even though the land transfer was not yet completed. We engaged the Buena Vista Hotel and Spa on the Sea of Cortez (having one of two conference centers on the coast) as our site. The hotel was ideal with small bungalows, lovely restaurant overlooking the beach and the sea. We planned a public talk on the Pacific side in Todos Santos (the new Santa Fe), invited the local Buddhist Vipassana teachers, and planned a visit to Peter and Alison Baumann's mansion on the tip of the peninsula. Elias Capriles of Venezuela graciously consented to be the retreat translator.

One hundred twenty people or so, including one-fourth of those enrolled coming from Mexico, attended the retreat. You can imagine what it was like trying to coordinate with the hotel in Mexico from California, and register everyone, and make sure they had transportation, etc. But this was only openers because a giant hurricane hit lower Baja one week before the retreat. Wouldn't you know, this was the ONLY time in living memory that two hurricanes have hit Baja in one year!! Christina and a friend who arrived from Italy early for the retreat, had to be escorted from the airport by van over the various flooded arroyos until the last one before the hotel, which was the most gigantic flood of all, and finally put them aboard a boat which took them to the hotel!

I was struck that this was not the Baja I had visited in February and May. Then it was a desert environment. This time, every patch of ground was green with

continued on next page



Baja continued from previous page

hoards of yellow butterflies, and every bush was in full greenery and flower.

The retreat was divine, of course. Rinpoche glowed—in the pool, in the sea, in front of us at the teaching. People were totally silent at the end of his first teaching. Not a word. No one lined up. Just complete silence. Honor. Later, they were told they could line up and ask questions afterwards, and everyone did. Each morning, arriving at the beach at sunrise. Ozer Jenma practice. Mandarava practice. Rinpoche, joking in the water. A big nature all around. Kitzia and Gabriel Howarth attended from the permaculture botanical gardens in La Ribera next door.

We made every effort to take people to the land—we tried twice with Rinpoche, and sat at the bottom of the mountain, with our feet in the cool water coming down the arroyo. We had a picnic Tibetan style, sitting on the road and joking around. But we had to turn back. Only a small party of four students hiked up to the land. * see article The road was completely disrupted by the hurricane, and the government was busy trying to repair the main roads.

One student who hiked up to the land said that he did not wish to leave it—ever. As they walked up they encountered some of the local rural folks who live up there—one man offered his horse for the one woman of our group who was hiking up the road. They asked if we were going to buy the land. Baja is basically a huge natural place with few people, where word travels quickly, as if it were a small town. No secrets. As the New York Times front page recently recounted, “Americans are buying up Baja.” No wonder. It is Southern California without the people.

Rinpoche announced that this was the beginning of the Winter Gar. He met with Peter and

Alison, the owners and donors of the land, as well as with Jeff Klein, our contact and Peter’s long-time colleague in the music business. Peter regaled Rinpoche, Rosa, Jennifer Fox and myself with a gourmet dinner at his home at the tip of Baja, and the topic of conversation was Dharma, from start to finish. A good time was had by all.

To say that we have been overwhelmed by the magnificence of the gift, the land, Baja itself, and by Rinpoche’s unwavering positivity regarding this opportunity, is putting it mildly. I have lived in California, and never seen Baja before, the southernmost extension of California. The Sea of Cortez, on the east shore of Baja, is the most biologically diverse body of water on the planet. Baja is, as Joe Cummings of the Moon Guides, writes, “neither Mexico nor the United States.” It is a dream state. I wish to explore the mountains, the arroyos and pools, and to hear our songs and the arroyo’s own song on this land. It will take some time to comprehend the massive beauty of this place where whales congregate, and the Buddhists are drawn—not just us, but the Spirit Rock group, a Lama associated with Gyaltrul Rinpoche, and others. For the benefit of all.

P.S. We expect the official land transfer to be completed in December, 2003. We have received a second challenge grant of \$20,000 (this December) and if we match it, we will receive more in 2004. Please consider contributing to this stupendous project (there is room enough for all of us). Your contributions are tax-deductible in the U.S. Send to : Dzogchen Community West Coast, Winter Gar Fund, 2748 Adeline, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94703, USA. Thank You.

NEW CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

The Dzogchen Community West Coast has a new Calendar of events and practice. You can access it from the Community’s site at: <http://www.dzogchencommunitywest.org> or access it directly at:

<http://www.herb.com/practice/philicalendar-0.9.4/>

Currently displaying Tibetan days of notice as well as practice schedule and current events, it’s updated and/or corrected daily and the online calendar may be viewed by any computer and printed.

* For Mac computers the following link will install a Tibetan calendar on a Mac (running OS X required) using iCal 1.5.1 (the format to subscribe has slightly changed in this new version of iCal):

<webcal://www.xs4all.nl/~loekjehe/Tibetan.ics>

(copy and paste the above URL in Safari).

Please uncheck the options to remove tasks and warnings, so that you will be notified of future Ganapujas.

For information or postings please contact: john@travel-light.com

NORBUNET NEWS

From October, 2003, Norbunet was transferred to its new email address: norbunet@mail.dzogchen.ru.

To subscribe people can send an email to norbunet-request@mail.dzogchen.ru with the subject-line: ‘subscribe’, or send a message directly to Loek Jehee at loekjehe@xs4all.nl.

Although the list now runs on a server in Russia, Loek Jehee is still the responsible person for its moderation and maintenance. It can happen in certain situations (e.g. when he is on a holiday) that a replacement moderator temporarily takes over Loek’s tasks.

The Mailman program on which the list now runs offers various advantages over the old Majordomo program, such as the possibility to send binary attachments, etc. Subscribers to Norbunet have access to its archives through links in the Norbunet messages.

s o u t h a m e r i c a

Tashigar del Norte Progress Report, November 2003

Much concrete progress has manifested at Tashigar del Norte. So much that has been done that perhaps a simple list and some photos will be the best way to give you some idea of the miracle of Margarita.

Gonpa – Beautiful plans were turned into wonderful reality through the hard work of the Gar! The Gonpa is not totally complete, but still it was a wonderful space for teachings. Also the Gar constructed an attractive toilet and bath-house; and has begun to develop a good camping area for retreat attendees.

Homes – Rinpoche’s house is done and is fantastic! Within the Village, six homes are in various stages of construction. Many more are planned to begin as soon as time permits.

Water – We now have three wells providing good water for irrigation, homes and Gonpa.

Doing Well While Doing Good

by Mark Farrington

October 2003 marked the return of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche to Tashigar Norte, Isla Margarita, the sixth Gar of the International Dzogchen Community, home to the Community-owned company called Proyecto Comunitario Tashigar del Norte, a place of warmth and inspiration. Many students / investors from around the world also returned to Tashigar Norte this past month, receiving another installment of the Longsal Teachings while checking in on the progress of this exceptional project. How does one mix these two concepts fluidly? Which is the more daunting; understanding and application of high level Dzogchen Upadesha or building a Dzogchen Community project that is actually profitable, self-sustaining and separate from the rigorous work of Rinpoche traveling the world around to offer retreats? How is it possible to think of yourself as a student and an investor while practicing a path that teaches impermanence, the illusory nature of physical phenomenon and karmic dangers of worldly attachment? For us the dilemma may seem profound, but I know what Rinpoche would say, “it’s all relative!”

In deed, relative it is. For what we are really trying to do is to Do Well while Doing Good. This is a phrase the Board of Proyecto Cumunitario Tashigar del Norte (PCTN) has embraced by way of introduction from Diane Campbell who encoun-

Sewage – Our own private sewage treatment plant is now on site and soon to begin operation. It’s ecological and produces fresh water that we will pipe back to the “green belts” within the project to keep landscaping green.

Roads – The entry road is gravel and in good condition. In the residential area, (the Village) paved



Rinpoche views Gonpa plans with Carolina, the architect

roads, complete with concrete side gutters are now complete. They were done professionally and with great care in engineering and planning.

Utilities – Underground installations of electrical, water and sewer service are all complete.

Aloe Fields – In the beginning 100,000 plants were purchased

tered it while watching a TV program about another project that had the twin goals of trying to achieve something meaningful in a profit, employment and human advancement sense, while at the same time conducting oneself in a way that benefits all those you come in to contact with along the way. This, of course, is the practice of awareness. It goes without saying that any project sponsored, and owned by the Dzogchen Community should naturally



PCTN General Meeting

and planted. These plants have grown and produced many babies. The babies have been replanted and are growing well. We now have over one MILLION aloe plants in our fields. Irrigation pipes feed fresh water to the aloe, and local workers carry out the daily tasks of caring for the plants themselves, including harvesting and replanting.

The Pig House – This is now a brick-making factory. We manufacture earthen bricks that are then sold to people building houses.

The Comedor – formerly the chicken house – This space now has a working kitchen and is more comfortable for meetings, parties and foodservice. This is one of the Gar’s many successful projects.

None of these words can describe the joy of seeing the project in person. Please come to Margarita soon to see with your own eyes what we can do together with Rinpoche, the application of the Teachings and some happy hard work.

by Diane Campbell

that will build houses and live on this land in an area that comprises about 20% of the overall bloc of land. Agricola Tashigar cultivates approximately 1/3 of the land, with the remainder used by the Gar or left as open natural space. This makes for an interesting challenge of collaboration as these three separate-but-connected entities share a common goal and aim to support and respect each other’s respective purposes.

In the 18 months since PCTN began operation, the Board has learned many lessons that should help us to make better decisions in the future. Initially, the complexity of the project combined with the fluid nature of economic and political reality in Venezuela aggravated our ability to predict the course

of development. Throughout the dynamic process of this first phase of the project we did our best to communicate with investors, plot a logical course and react intelligently to changing opportunities. It may have looked like chaos from time to time, but the hand was always firmly on the wheel. The sea, not the rudder of the ship, caused most of the motion.

As the project enters its second phase, which is much more about building the Aloe Vera business, we are better placed to give an account of some of things we have tried to do along the way that are directed at the “Do Well” part of the equation. The “Do Good” part is hopefully obvious to all. Rinpoche has spoken about it many times to date. The creation of a new Gar, the possibility for many of his students to live and practice with him in the final

continued on next page

phase of his life and the creation of a new revenue source to support the worldwide Dzogchen Community remains the three primary goals of this project. What is clear from having been a part of the local community on this Island for nearly 2 years now, is that in order to Do Well we need to remain very aware of our impact on those outside the Dzogchen Community. The small pueblo of Pedro Gonzales which is just down the road, Playa Zaragosa, which is the nearest beach community to the Land, major suppliers that have received the business from our development, government authorities that have received our many applications for permits and approvals, and finally workers that have been employed to work on our land and build the buildings. All of this contact with those around us has created impressions in people's minds, some favorable, some unfavorable. We are the source of much curiosity and there is little that goes unnoticed. Amid these circumstances we are doing our best to ensure that we are welcomed on this Island, that we are accepted as good and responsible neighbors and that when we interact with others we ensure that it is in a way consistent with the Dzogchen Principles as taught by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The residents of Playa Zaragosa who watch him come to swim daily universally love Rinpoche, bringing along with him a "school" of practitioners. We offer good economy as well as entertainment value. Gilberto Parrella, the President of our company and a member of the Board, is now well known by all of the businesses on Isla Margarita and has succeeded in establishing a very high standard of work on our project. We are getting good prices and good quality for the work we contract, and we are handling our relationships fairly and with integrity.



Women land workers

D.CAMPBELL



Men land workers

D.CAMPBELL

The government is very appreciative of our investment on the Island and is most impressed with the scope of our project. Bringing Aloe Vera farming to the Island has been a government objective for years before we arrived. If we are able to encourage other farmers on the Island to make similar agricultural investments, then it can be an important new industry for Margarita. As an employer we were swift to gain attention in an economy that had been contracting at over -20% per year. Furthermore, unemployment is running at close to 30% on the Island of Margarita. In spite of this excess supply of labor, Gilberto established from the very beginning a policy of paying the highest wages on the Island in order to have a favorable impact on the surrounding communities as well as to attract the most skilled workers. After discussions with local community leaders, we were informed of the difficulty single mothers experience in find work in this area where agriculture is primarily men's work. As a result, we are also now introducing a policy of hiring more women to work for Agricola Tashigar, which should bring immediate positive benefits to the surrounding families. In this way, PCTN is moving ahead with its project to Do Good for the Dzogchen Community, while at the same time trying to Do Well by the people of Isla Margarita, and in particular, our neighbors in Pedro Gonzales and Playa Zaragosa.

There are other ways for PCTN to Do Well while Doing Good. In our interactions with buyers of Aloe plants in Europe we are trying to establish a reputation of being honest and reliable suppliers. Dick Drury, who has been tireless in his commitment to create an Aloe House Plant business for Agricola Tashigar, has led this effort. Through Dick's conscientious handling of our main distributor in Holland we are rapidly developing a market for our "organically" grown Aloe Vera plants. Our beautifully grown plants are already earning the European Market's respect, now we are trying to ensure that Agricola Tashigar, and by relationship, The Dzogchen Community, also earn the Market's respect.

It is also the goal of PCTN to launch an Aloe Vera processed products company to be called Margarita Aloe. In undertaking this project we are committed to creating only positively contributing products that do not harm the environment or exploit our customers. Whether it is Aloe Vera gel for treatment of the skin or Aloe Vera health drinks for interior health, these profits we hope to earn from Margarita Aloe products will be made and sold with awareness.

And then there are the shareholders, the investors. It is a diverse group that makes up the 50 or so investors in PCTN. Many are experienced investors that have committed a small amount of their wealth, while others have committed a large portion of their life savings. All of

continued on next page

ADVICE ON THE FUNCTION OF GAKYIL AND OTHER ENTITIES

Excerpts from a meeting of the Tashigar North Gakyil with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Margarita Island 10/18/03

Recorded, transcribed and edited by Dick Drury and Steven Landsberg.

Rinpoche: I think information is very important for everyone. In this period, everyone in the Dzogchen Community is concentrated on Margarita because I am here and staying a longer time. Therefore, everyone is wondering what is going on. I think it is very useful for people to have more information about what is going on; what our projects are. That way we can also have more support. The work is going very well. Everything is going well. So we continue what is going on. That is very good.

Michel Dubourdieu: The problems we have met in this moment have to do with the function of the several entities that make up our Community. The first one is the shareholders company, which is made up of those who are building houses. The second one is the Aloe vera farming production. Then there is the Community with the Teachings, represented by the Gakyil. When there have been conflicts we did not clearly see the precise function of the Gakyil. So the Gakyil felt a bit limited and did not know how to proceed.

I have two examples. The other day I brought someone new to see the land for the first time, and we were greeted by a guard with a gun. I had two ways to see the same situation. I was shocked to see this man with a gun. We wrote to you [Rinpoche] because the Gakyil was not involved in the decision to have a guard with a gun.

The other example is that the workers with the trade union blockaded the gate. The Gakyil discovered that we need to be responsible to check what is done in the building of the houses.

It is not that I am criticizing, but the way we were interacting with the BoD (Board of Directors) - Gilberto [Parrella] and I are also part of the BoD of this company - and as Gakyil members we did not really know what our role was. Now we are proposing to the Company and to the BoD and the shareholders that they give the Gar a certain area that the Gakyil could administrate. This indicates a kind of division. We know we are all the same Community and we know that each entity has a specific function, but we have difficulty to make the connection between the functions. I think, more or less, that is our problem.

Rinpoche: You see, we have here the production of Aloe vera, and also many houses owned by private Community people. So this is characteristic of this Gar. A Gar like Merigar, for example, is a Dzogchen Community Gar which is more developed and has had more experience. We have many organizations at Merigar. We have Shang-Shung Institute, ASIA, and Shang Shung Editions. Now we are going to build a museum. But when we say Gar, the Gar is the Dzogchen Community Gar. The Gar is not

the private property of someone. The Gar is a Gar and inside the Gar we have different kinds of organizations; each with its own function and precise way of working. Also, the Gakyil is more the official organization of the Dzogchen Community, but the Gakyil cannot coordinate everything. That is impossible. It is necessary to have a way of collaboration. You see, for example, ASIA has its official residence in Merigar, but now there is a big ASIA office in Rome with many people working there. That is an example. We do not think that ASIA does not belong to the Dzogchen Community.

Everything belongs to Dzogchen Community. So when we say Gar, the life of a Gar is the Dzogchen Community. So if we have the Dzogchen Community, then we have a Gakyil. The Gakyil must be like a center for everything; but center does not mean something like the Chinese Government, governing everywhere, or the United Nations, governing all nations - it is not that way. The Gakyil must collaborate and know that everything is a creation in the interest of the Dzogchen Community.

I think everyone has to develop somehow and establish a way of collaborating. I think that is very important. So officially, for a Gar, the Gakyil is most important. Then, if we are looking at how to develop, there are different sections for the organization. The Gakyil cannot do everything. Also in Merigar, they do not work that way.

Gilberto Parrella: The idea from the very beginning with all these entities was that every entity functions in a way to develop the Gar. It means that every entity has to develop an awareness of its common functions, and there is a structure in which you let the other entity do its work. The Gakyil is the center. Nevertheless, there are legal situations with the workers, with the union; if everyone became involved in the problem the only thing you would create is a big conflict and a lot of confusion. So, for example, there is the idea that the BoD will meet with the Gakyil to establish the functions of each entity.

The BoD and Gakyil will have this discussion and then each entity will know what their particular functions are. The word 'limitation' can have a bad connotation or can be based in real needs. So there is an entity that cannot go beyond its function because it will create conflicts.

Dick Drury: Each entity should know what the other is doing and collaborate and give information to each other.

Gilberto Parrella: We are learning also how to create channels of information. For example, if there is a problem with a worker, if the Gakyil or somebody from the Gakyil sees that, that person does not need to run to Rinpoche to say, "Look at what is happening, Rinpoche," or go and write an email and send it to everyone and create a lot of confusion. There should be a channel where that person goes and speaks to somebody and that person discusses it in a group. We all need to know how to collaborate with one another.

Rinpoche: Collaboration is very important. The main thing is to always communicate. If communication is lacking, many problems arise. We have had much experience of this in Merigar; communication is very important. Another thing which is also very important is what we say in the Teaching: working with circumstance. We should work with circumstance because that is our main concrete condition. It's very important. For example, when you say 'guard with a gun' it depends on the situation. If there is really that need - it is necessary according to the situation - of course, why not, there is no problem. Otherwise, people say you have no defense, and then someone comes with a gun, what do you do? That is a concrete situation. But you must understand how the situation of the countryside is and we should work with circumstance. This is something very important. We don't think: "Oh, we are Buddhists, we are Bodhisattvas." Bodhisattvas have nothing to lose. But we have something to lose and then we have problems.

We also need to communicate and try to understand how we can work together more harmoniously. This is a very important point, because if we have a Gar and develop something of interest for everyone, then we need less problems. We do not need to go after one individual's position. Of course, if there are ten people, there are ten different ideas. This is relative and sometimes useful; but sometimes means nothing. If someone is very hard and does not want to collaborate, you let that person have his view, it's not important. But mainly we look at how the situation is and we work that way. It is not so easy to make everybody happy and be in agreement. Even Buddha couldn't do that.

You see, I am doing my best for the Teaching and helping everybody. But many times some people say: "Your Teaching creates a problem for me," instead of saying, "Thank you". Really. That is an example. I don't care if that person is saying that. Then I say to that person, "Don't do it if you don't feel to, if you think my Teaching is creating some problems." Some people say, "I was very peaceful before I began doing a practice like Guru Tragphur. Now I have become very nervous." Sometimes I explain that you are not relaxing and are charging. Your way of doing practice is not correct.

Sometimes people insist and then I tell them, "You should not do the practice, it is better". That is an example. You see, saying you shouldn't do a practice is not good advice, but working with circumstance there is nothing else to say. (Rinpoche laughs). At least for other people I try to do my best. If I think, "Oh, some people told me my Teaching creates some problems", then if I don't teach and don't collaborate, that's a wrong way. That's an example. Sometimes people don't agree and criticize, but I don't care very much. If we work with people, many people particularly, then we need a lot of patience. Otherwise we can't do anything because people always have something to say. It is very, very difficult. That is normal. So we do our best and work with circumstance and communicate. That is very, very

continued on page 27

PERU RETREAT with
CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

February 13, 14 & 15, 2004
Longsal Yeshe Zang Thal

Cost: 100 US\$ including food and lodging We can receive registration via Western Union transfers. Please notify kunzan@hotmail.com when making money transfers.

Contact: Juan Bustamente
Email: kunzan@hotmail.com

YANTRA YOGA at TASHIGAR SUD, MARGARITA ISLAND
Advanced and Teacher Training
with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti
March 4 - March 13, 2004

Contact: Paolo Civile at paolacivile@yahoo.com.

Margarita House
& Land Agency

In the village of Pedro Gonzalez, Margarita, where Tashigar North is situated, an Agency has been set up for the sale and purchase of land and houses in the area, for the benefit and convenience of Dzogchen Community members and local people. It is intended that a fair price will be agreed by this Agency with the owners of property who wish to sell, and that any Community members who wish to buy can do so through this unified approach. Hopefully, this will help to avoid a situation of many people trying to buy houses in an unorganized way, causing an uncontrolled rise in property prices, as well as possible confusion and bad feelings etc.

Therefore, if you are interested in buying a house, or a piece of land to build a house, in the Pedro Gonzalez area, please consider using our Agency. Of course, anyone is free to make a private deal outside the Agency and the properties it handles, but it would be useful inform the Agency about it, to avoid the possibility of more than one approach being made to the owner.

Doing Well continued from previous page

the Gars around the world have invested, as did Rinpoche. The one thing they all have in common is their wish to support the Dzogchen Community and Rinpoche's Teachings by offering the land for the Gar. This, we can already happily declare accomplished! The additional and secondary goal of investors is to create a successful business that will potentially help support them in their retirement at Margarita. For those that do not need the profits from this project to support them in retirement, a new source of revenue obtained through such positive circumstances can potentially offer a new channel for donations to support the Dzogchen Community worldwide. For the Gars that have invested, this new source of profits will add diversification to revenues that to date rely primarily on membership fees and retreats, thereby bringing more stability to their financial circumstances. Satisfying all three of these different goals for investors would certainly be Doing Good for the Community. However, to also Do Well the Board must pay equal respect to all three categories of investor and attempt to make decisions that balance the objectives of all. In some cases there will exist a need to re-invest profits rather than pay out everything in dividends in order to improve the long-term yield from this investment. This sacrifice of short-term investment income for those depending on such income must be approached with care and communicated well to investors. It will be with great care and awareness that the Board approaches these decisions each year.

And so it becomes clear, there is no aspect of this project that does not present an opportunity to practice awareness and to Do Well. There will doubtlessly be moments of distraction, and there will emerge emotional conflicts amongst volunteers working on the project. After all, we are still operating within the human realm. Nevertheless, if we firmly keep our intention to act with awareness on this project so as to Do Well while Doing Good, then hopefully all can trust that we will always return to the correct path, a path where the Dzogchen Community is the main beneficiary and all those who come in contact with it.

Mark Farrington
PCTN Board of Directors

The Agency is operated by Topographer Hector Millan, Architect Inti Briceña, and other staff. Full survey, legal, building and renovation services are available.

Once again, in the interest of avoiding inflation of property prices by the arrival of many Community members looking for houses or land without local experience, please try this option first. In any case, do not consider prices in comparison with those for a similar property in Europe or USA etc, and it is advisable to require price quotes in local currency and convert it yourself to dollars, rather than encourage inflation by asking a seller for the dollar price.

For a presentation of a selection of properties for sale by the agency, go to www.dzogchen-venezuela.org and select "Live in Pedro Gonzales".

Contact Hector and Inti for further inquiries by email (Spanish or simple English) to aguamontaa@yahoo.com.ar.

*Many tashi delegs from Margarita
Dick Drury*

namgyalgar &
pacific rim

Dr Phuntsog Wangmo to teach Tibetan Medicine
Tokyo, Japan
May 2004

Fri May 28, 19:00-21:00, Tibetan Medicine - Sat May 29, Intro to KuNye - Sun May 30, Intro to KuNye - Mon May 31, 19:00-21:00, Tibetan Astrology

Contact:
<Blue-sky@nifty.com> or <aovvaj@yahoo.co.jp>

NAMGYALGAR COMMUNITY NEWS

Another warm summer is beginning at Namgyalgar and the "still new" Gakyil is learning new things, but the energy for doing all this is only sustained through Community members providing much needed support and assistance. Recently Gakyil member Lily Giblin moved from Red into Yellow.

As you can read below, all these projects rely on the ongoing activity of dedicated members. If anyone would like to know how they can collaborate in karma yoga activities please get in touch with the relevant Gakyil member directly, or through Viki the secretary, <namgyal@acr.net.au>, and we'll find something suitable for you to do!

Gekös

Our new Gekös, Michel Bricaire, is from Merigar and has been Namgyalgar Gekös once before. Thanks to Michel for all his care of the Gar, and welcome back to Namgyalgar!

Retreats/Courses

The September Longde retreat at the Gar, lead by Angie Gilbert, had 12 participants.

There was a Tibetan Medicine tour with Dr Nida Chenagtsang from early October until December.

The ongoing retreat program for 2004 has been formulated and details can be accessed on the Namgyalgar website.

August 2004: We have invited Michael Katz to conduct seminars and workshops on "Dream Yoga" in Melbourne, Sydney and the Brisbane/Caloundra region in August next year.

Santi Maha Sangha (SMS)

Courses are being planned at the Gar and study groups are active in local areas. Contact your regional coordinator or Gakyil member (see the website or contact Viki at <namgyal@acr.net.au> for more details of local activities.

Gar Development

Plans for a disabled retreat cabin (which will accommodate the Gekös) are moving ahead with Tony Laurent collaborating with Trevor King, the local designer. Other projects include design work and building quotes for the long-awaited nyingtig retreat cabin which should see some building action early in the new year, analysis of energy needs at the Gar, planning for a Gonpa shrine, storage and use of the end rooms of the Gonpa.

Land Care

It has been suggested that a land care group be formed, and members who want to be involved in this can contact the red Gakyil directly or via the secretary. The Landcare Group would concentrate on weeds, erosion, fire prevention, etc, and have the ability to draw funding from Federal and State grants, as part of the Landcare movement, a recognized and important part of Australian life, rather than it being a land management group which works in isolation as only part of Namgyalgar. Currently there is a lot of information, support and money to help Landcare groups. Hopefully those in the Community with a passion for improving the land would come together for 4 or 5 weekends/weeks of very hard labor each year to achieve our goals.

Transcription/Archive Project

A small but dedicated group in Melbourne continue to work together on this large project. Catherine Thomson is dedicating time over to help bring the backlog of work from this year's retreats up to date. She has also taken on the role of coordinator of the audio-visual group. Jenny Hutcheson is the transcription coordinator.

Bookshop

Jann Darvill will wind down her involvement with the Bookshop. Suzana Dewa, who has been helping Jann every week for a while now, will keep the Bookshop running during Jann's absences through to the end of January, and whilst its future management is decided.

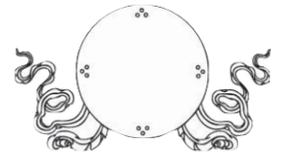
Namgyalgar Retreat Program 2003-04

Vajra Dance Course
Sun Jan 4th -Sat Jan 10th

Easter 2004

Santi Maha Sangha Retreat & Longsal Longde at Gar

June long weekend 2004
Karma Yoga /Practice weekend
(Ati Longsal Nondro) at Gar



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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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THE PURPOSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL

GAKYIL

Interview with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Karin Eisenegger for The Mirror: Rinpoche, what was the original intention when you created an International Gakyil?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: The original idea has to do with the fact that at that time (1998), there already existed many Gakyils of the International Dzogchen Community around the world; we had Gakyils on each continent, in each country. The purpose of the International Gakyil was to facilitate easier communication between them. The idea of the IG was that we have some practitioners who take care of the international Communities' communication. They were not supposed to build another bureaucratic structure and were supposed to work without an office and also without financial funds. Already the Gars of the Dzogchen Community have a difficult economic situation, so it was clear from the beginning that the International Gakyil should not add to these economic difficulties. We have to know how our situation is and then work with it. The original idea of the International Gakyil was really to improve communication in the Community.

M: What are the functions of the different colors in the IG?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: The function of the IG, as I already said, is communication. In each Gakyil we have the characteristics of the different colors so each color takes care of a certain aspect. But this does not mean that each color does only their own work, regarding only their color. A Gakyil has three colors, three persons, who work together on what the more urgent or useful things or projects are at a given moment. It does not mean that all three aspects manifest at once. This is valid not only for the IG, but for every Gakyil anywhere.

M: Have you seen any development of the IG in those years during its existence?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: The development, in this case, depends on how well the communication works. It depends very much on the work that the IG succeeds in doing with the Gakyils of the main Gars. And, of course, there are many more Gakyils in the different countries. If any Gakyil has something to say or to do which needs broader communication, then of course they can deal with the International Gakyil and the other way round – the IG could do work with or for them. It depends of what we need and use in a certain moment.

M: As you already said,

Rinpoche, the IG is working without an office or central location.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: We can not make an office for the International Gakyil; even the Gakyils of the different countries have economic difficulties.

M: Rinpoche, once you told us that the International Gakyil should be like a bridge.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Yes, like a bridge. The bridge here means communication.

M: What do you think, Rinpoche, happens, when you arrive at a bridge and someone has put up a sign, saying: "Danger, do not enter!" or something similar. Then on the other side of the bridge another person arrives and reads: "Better not enter, you might fall." Nobody will use such a bridge. There are some moments when the International Gakyil is a little bit like such a bridge, where different people have put up different signs in front: "Better not enter".

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Of course the IG cannot run after the people. If the International Gakyil would have to run after people to work with them, that would be impossible. That is also not what is needed. If some Gakyils are not interested in the International Gakyil, there is nothing we can do about it. As soon as someone has understood that there is an International Gakyil and that it could be used, they should use this possibility. If someone is interested and you – as the IG – receive communication, in this case the IG should try to do its best. That is, I think, how it should work. Everybody should know how to use the IG.

M: Could you please tell us about any future development of the work of the IG? Do you have any ideas for the work of the IG?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: I have no particular idea about this. It depends very much on the knowledge or the needs of each Gakyil. If there are Gakyils that have ideas or projects and want or need to communicate with other Gakyils, then of course they will discover that there is an International Gakyil. This way they can really do something vital. We could call this the development. If people are ignoring the existence of the International Gakyil, and no one is integrating or communicating with the IG, or also if Gakyils do not know how to use this communication, then we can say that the situation is underdeveloped. This is then the real condition. In our Dzogchen Community we are practitioners of the Dzogchen Teaching and we try to be aware

and do our best, working with the circumstances. That is what we should do.

M: How could the development of the collaboration between the Gars and the International Gakyil be?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: In many Gars we still do not have a real base regarding economic factors. For example, there should be fundraising for maintaining a Gar. If there are some ideas, there needs to be an exchange of these ideas. This exchange can be on the material level or also an exchange of knowledge. If there is a real exchange, then the role of the International Gakyil is easy and will change. It will become a way to communicate and also a way to receive information.

M: There is a project proposal of your son Yeshe Namkhai.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Yes, yes, but first of all we have to see how this program works at Merigar. Afterwards we can see how it can be developed. Still we do not know very much about it.

M: So it is still an experiment, not something to be integrated into the work of the IG?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: For sure this will also become a work to be integrated into the International Gakyil, but not now. Now it is too early (to judge). First we have to experiment with the program, then we will see how it works concretely.

M: Regarding the situation of the Gars, when you, Rinpoche, are not there giving Teachings: Once, after a little Tara Retreat, I was walking and I had this image or idea of a group of practitioners, staying over a longer period of time together in a Gar, making it become really alive by the collective practice they were learning. They could stay there for a month or two, their practice becomes stable and more clear, books are bought, food cooked, rooms rented, etc. It was something like the Retreat Merigar is organizing next summer of 2004 with Jim Valby. (see Mirror issue 64 page & page 16 of this issue, :Interview with Jim Valby)

If every Gar could work out a program like this, it would not only be a project of fundraising, but also of raising our energy in practice.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: When we want to do something for the Dzogchen Community in general, it is not so easy. There are many opinions of many different people. I remember, when I presented the "Fundamental Program of the Dzogchen

Community", many Gars and Gakyils did not agree. Not only Gakyils, but also many people personally disagreed and criticized it. That is only an example. I represent the Teacher of the Dzogchen Community, so if someone is criticizing the Teacher, who can present some programs? This is not so easy. Everybody is living in their ego and limitations. It is not easy at all to develop some programs with many people. We are working with the circumstances and sometimes possibilities arise and maybe something manifests. It is very difficult to make some programs; very difficult. Even if we try to make a program only for one Gar, there will be many people who disagree. So how we can do it internationally?

M: Last summer, at Merigar, there was a meeting of representatives of the different Gars. Merigar presented the different programs they want to start, like for example with Costantino Albini, an "Introduction into Contemplation"; programs where participants do not necessarily need transmission. They plan to share this program with the other international Communities. Could it be a function of the International Gakyil to help disseminate this information to other Communities?

Interview with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Working with Conflicts in the Dzogchen Community

Karin Eisenegger for The Mirror: Rinpoche, I want to ask your advice about how we should work with conflicts between practitioners in the Dzogchen Community.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: You mean in the relationship between people? Well, how you relate to other people is a proof of the practice. That is why I am always teaching we should try and discover our tensions, problems, and ego-manifestations. Do not look for someone who is guilty. First of all, we have to observe ourselves. This is all taught in the Teaching. People pretend they are followers of the Teachings, they say: "I am practicing". But practice is not only doing a Ganapuja or a session of a Thun. Number one is Guruyoga. Practicing Guruyoga means keeping the samaya; the commitments. The teacher and student are related through transmission and samaya, student and student are related through transmission and samaya, and also the students and the Guardians of the Teaching are related through transmission and samaya. If we are present in all this then we can do our best. Of course, everybody makes mistakes; that is normal. But, if one is a practitioner, one understands: "I made a mistake. I will change my idea because I did something wrong." For this reason we also do Ganapujas and

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: When there are more or less similar opinions, when people agree on something, then it is easier. When we say the IG is like a bridge, and the IG meets with representatives of the different Gars and Gakyils at a certain place and they all agree on something, on such a program for example, then we can do something. We have to learn how people think, very precisely and understand, otherwise it is not so easy. If you present some program and say, "This could be interesting, we could do that", then people might say, "Yes, this is interesting", but afterwards this has to be brought into action. Bringing ideas into action means that people have to participate. At that point some people start to criticize and say, "Oh, I do not like this..." or, "This is OK, that is not good...". At that point problems arise. (It is not difficult to present an idea.) For this reason we need the International Gakyil, to improve communication and accumulate different opinions. Then you also need to put things into action. Then you see, if it works, it is fine, if it does not work, forget it. No problem, no?

M: Thank you Rinpoche.

make peace; making peace means letting go of our tensions we otherwise keep inside. Otherwise we do a Ganapuja and the next day the conflicts between people is still there and goes on. If one keeps an ancient object (in their home), that ancient object has value. But if our tensions are passing time and getting ancient, we will have increasingly more problems with our samaya and more problems in our lives. That is the root of all samsara and of all problems. When someone is really following the Teachings they have to notice that, otherwise there is no reason to follow the Teaching. That is the point.

So everybody should reflect on this. In the Sutra Teaching it says that everything is interdependent. If I have some conflict that means that I have something wrong going on.

It cannot be that only one side has a problem. The primary thing is that you are not going to change this other person whom you are having a conflict with or eliminate that persons tensions. Instead you try to observe yourself and try to change your own tensions. That is called evolution. Where there is evolution, there is also peace and collaboration and everything positive arises. Practitioners should observe and work this way.

KE/Mirror: Thank you, Rinpoche.

THE PROJECT “COMPLETE WORKS OF CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU”

This is the annual report regarding the Project “Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu”. In the third year of this project (July 2002-June 2003) we collected about US\$ 23,500 given by the following donors:

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Ugo Cardea

The donations given before and after the period July 2002-June 2003 are not listed here. We apologize for any unintentional errors and omissions.

We are listing below the translation work done by Adriano Clemente in the past year and his future plans for this project:

TRANSLATIONS OF CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU’S WORKS IN 2002- 2003

1. THE PURIFICATION OF THE SIX LOKAS AS PRELIMINARIES OF THE PATH OF ATI (a ti’i lam sngon rigs drug gnas sbyong) published in LONGSAL TEACHINGS VOLUME THREE, SHANG SHUNG 2003.

2. THE UPADESHA ON ALL PENETRATING WISDOM (ye shes zang thal gyi man ngag) published in LONGSAL TEACHINGS VOLUME THREE, SHANG SHUNG 2003.

3. THE MAIN POINTS OF THE VIEW TOTALLY BEYOND THE CONCEPTUAL MIND (lta ba blo ‘das chen po’i gnad byang) published in LONGSAL TEACH-

INGS VOLUME FOUR, SHANG SHUNG 2003.

4. THE UPADESHA OF THE PRIMORDIALLY PURE TREGCHÖD (ka dag khregs chod kyi man ngag), to be published.

5. THE CYCLE OF DAY AND NIGHT AND ITS RELATION TO THE ORIGINAL TEACHING (nyin mtshan ‘khor lo ma gdams khungs dang ji ltar ‘brel tshul bstan pa), SHANG SHUNG 2003

6. AN AMAZING SCENE (ngo mtshar ba’i ltad mo), with the collaboration of Elio Guarisco, in TWENTY YEARS WITH THE MASTER AND HIS WORDS, SHANG SHUNG 2003.

7. THE WAY TO PRACTICE THE SELF-LIBERATION OF THE SIX LOKAS (rgyud drug rang grol gyi nyams su len tshul), to be published soon.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

1. THE TREASURY OF ATI SAMTEN, FIRST LEVEL OF SANTI MAHA SANGHA, new edition revised and enlarged (a ti bsam gtan dgongs mdzod).

2. THE TOTAL SPACE OF VAJRASATTVA: ROOT TEXT AND COMMENTARY (rdo rje sems dpa’ nam mkha’ che rtsa ‘grel).

FUTURE PROJECTS

1. SANTI MAHA SANGHA SECOND LEVEL, NEW EDITION.

2. SANTI MAHA SANGHA THIRD LEVEL, NEW EDITION.

TION.

3. LHUN GRUB THOD RGAL KYI MAN NGAG, from the Longsal Cycle.

4. THE TOTAL SPACE OF VAJRASATTVA WITH THREE COMMENTARIES.

5. VAJRA DANCE, ORIGINAL TEXT INCLUDING THE HISTORY OF ITS DISCOVERY

6. THE BOOK OF DREAMS.

7. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

Our goal is to collect every year a fair amount of money for the translator, so that all of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s Tibetan works could be translated in the best way and as soon as possible.

We hope that all the Gars, Gakyils and practitioners of our Dzogchen Community will continue to collaborate as they did so far very generously.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROJECT

The donations can be handed over manually to the Merigar Office or can be sent through bank transfer to the following account:

893, Banca Popolare dell’Etruria, Branch of Casteldelpiano, in the name of Comunità Dzogchen FA
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For any further information please write to Karin Eisenegger-Koppensteiner, garuda@bluewin.ch, and Igor Legati, edizss@tiscali.it

The International Gakyil, December 2003

passages

MARRIED

On December 19th, 2003, *Babette Eid* married *Jesko Partecke* in Konigsdorf, Bavaria, Germany.

MARRIED:

Kamalesh Raeannon and *Kirti Mills* on Dec 14th in Melbourne, Australia.

BORN

Graeme and *Catherine Horner* are delighted to announce the speedy, safe birth of their first child, a precious, beautiful daughter called *Alicia Tara Emakiri Horner*.

Alicia was born at 3:17PM, on September 25th, 2003, weighing 3455gms, 49cm long, with blue eyes and dark hair, at BoxHill, Victoria, Australia. Graeme and Catharine are all at home, happy, healthy and adjusting well to our new life together.

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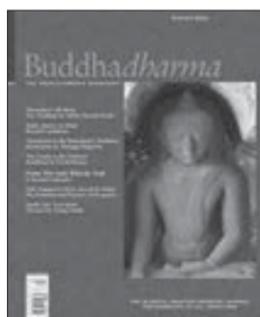
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DREAM YOGA

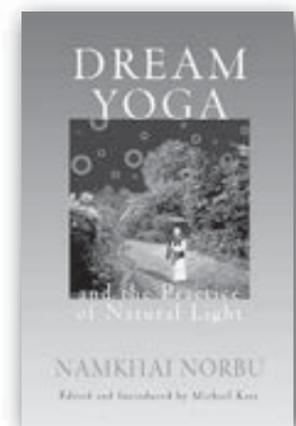
and the Practice of Natural Light

by Chögyal
Namkhai Norbu

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September 2003
Tsegyalgar

Death, loss and grief are clearly life's most arduous challenges and often lead to a spiritual quest. What else carries the terrible profound impact of the loss of loved ones, either through the death of parents, children, partners, or through divorce, relationships ending, loss of a treasured pet, loss of parts of our bodies, our minds, whatever? Attachment: the cause of suffering. We all know it and sooner or later; we all experience death and loss in varying degrees and ultimately the final loss of our own temporal existence.

The big hole, the last hurrah, the 'grand finale' which fills most of us with fear and trepidation. Hence the spiritual path, looking for relief and some meaning to this strange sentient existence of joy and suffering leading finally to separation. And we never remember. And we don't know what to expect. And it is scary and painful.

How can we grapple with and understand this confounding, paradoxical life which takes our loved ones and ultimately ourselves? So we begin to seek. Sometimes we find solace and solution in the religious practices of our families and traditions and sometimes not. Sometimes we become nihilists and just accept the meaninglessness of life and live for the moment. Sometimes we go mad or become alcoholics, drug addicted or compulsive shoppers. And sometimes we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha / Guru, Deva, Dakini, depending on our karma, capacity and circumstance.

We have learned many methods to work with our samsaric stew from renunciation to transformation to integration, where we see all the suffering as ornaments of the state. Are we able to use these methods to bring some level of understanding and/or realization or, at least, to suffer less during the journey? Do these hard life lessons make us better practitioners; do we really use all the precise and

powerful tools given by Rinpoche to work with our deep sufferings or do we habitually fall into samsara again and again?

The Mirror has asked that people share their experiences related to death, loss and grief and the Teachings. Printed here is an interview done with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by Paula Barry for the Death and Dying Committee of the North American Dzogchen Community, and a few pieces we have received from our readers. Please feel free to participate in the future topics listed below.

Thank you,

Naomi Zeitz for The Mirror

- Next 4 Topics for 2004
January 15 Sexuality
March 15 Love & Relationships
May 15 Family & Parenting
July 15 Addictions



**"A, LA, LA, HO!",
Everything is Marvelous!**
by Giada Manca

How does one grow up with the fact of death? How does one handle it?

Childhood: the death of animals, the drowned kittens in a pond, the death of grandfather, of a friend fallen from a horse; a deep sorrow but also a feeling of immortality of 'this cannot happen to me'. Adolescence: a teenage friend dead from cancer, the awareness that this might happen to me, the idea that all the surrounding world where

I felt so safe, that seemed the only world possible, would come to an end. The thought of impermanence is unbearable. Teachers, parents, adults, books explained and 'taught' but nothing seemed to correspond to our inmost questions.

Adulthood: Western society is all about "read me", "eat me", "buy me": in the maze of never ending illusions we get distracted,

always wanting this and that and at the same time nothing ever seems to quite match the essential problems of our being: Death? Just another commodity: the funerals, the flowers; the dead are somewhat disturbing and inconvenient, they are taken out of hospital from small back doors and quickly closed in coffins.

When I listened to Rinpoche for the first time I felt that at last I had found that missing part that gave a sense to the whole picture of life. Only the Teachings disclose the real meaning of life and death and beyond but understanding is not easy! Dualism, interdependence: when I first came across these concepts I felt them to be totally beyond my grasp. We are brought up to think that life is dualistic as a matter of fact, but the joke is that we are always dealing with one of the two terms: it's either you or me, my inner world (subject) or the outer world (object); one of the two terms remains hidden. We live as if death didn't exist. Our vision is so distorted that interdependence

seems to be something mysterious. We cannot even think that if we are present in our life, we are also present in our death, as one cannot exist without the other.

Attachment: the sense of an independent I is so strong, that

Although the concept seems easy to understand, it never quite sinks into us and again and again we consider our emotions, thoughts and bodies as concrete properties. Most of the time we are locked in our egos with no perception of the infinite universe where life and death are just illusory manifestations. I heard His Holiness the Dalai Lama say that many monks die in a perfectly serene state and some are even enthusiastic.

Past is gone every instant, time, change, loss, but as we recite in the Ganapuja: "A, LA, LA, HO!", everything is marvelous. This is inconceivable for our little I sitting in ignorance, but I know that when I am in the state of transmission things open up and what seems impossible to the ego becomes possible.

by Paula Barry for The Mirror

Q: What practices should be done when someone is first diagnosed with a terminal illness that could lead to death? Should the type of practice change at the various stages of illness, as the person gets closer to death, and how does this differ if the person is a practitioner or not a practitioner?

A: If someone is a practitioner they know what they should do because practitioners are following the teachings and teacher. They know very well there will be death one day, so they are at least prepared. If someone is not a practitioner, then it is a little difficult. If a practitioner

wants to help they can do some practice like Shitro or something like that for helping, but it is not always so very easy to help. We also have the possibility of preparing tagdrol and giving nyongdrol. Nyongdrol means tasting for giving the cause of liberation. Tagdrol is wearing something and the contact with the physical body creates some possibility of joining on the path for the future. So that is what we really can do. If you are a relation of the person who is dying, even if that person is not a practitioner, you can dedicate some practice like Shitro or Vajrasattva because, as a relative, there is a connection with these people. The practitioner and the dying one can have some benefit. Otherwise, sometimes we can ask some practitioners to do some prayers, etc. We can do our best, but if there is not much connection with that person, so really having a concrete benefit is not so easy.

Q: In terms of specific practices to do, if one is a practitioner, are there specific practices to do based on certain types of illness?

A: It depends on the situation of the illness. Some people, for example, have a heavy illness like cancer. In that case, that person can try to do some practice to overcome the illness or control the negativity; something like the practice of Garuda, until the end. When there are really no more possibilities and death is manifesting, of course the practitioner already knows what to do; that means when the Bardo of the moment of death is manifesting a good practitioner tries to remember Guruyoga and be in that state. At least someone who in their lifetime who did some practice like Vajrasattva or some other kind of purification; at that moment they try to remember and try to be in this visualization and

also use the invocation, etc., because at that moment it helps. What is important is being aware that it is the moment of death. The moment of death is normal for all sentient beings; not something special. If there is birth there is death, always. Many people are very upset and don't want to accept the moment of death. That is a little stupid and really missing an understanding of life. Life is birth, living, dying; everything is all connected. So we do not refuse that we are going to die; of course we accept. That is nature and we do our best in this case. That preparation is important in the lifetime; following teachings from a teacher and receiving information is the best way. Some people do the practice of Phowa. If someone can really succeed with this practice, they can use it.

Q: If we are diagnosed with a specific illness, is it a good idea to contact our master to understand which practice might benefit combating the illness specifically?

A: Yes, it is also relative to our situation. Sometimes it is easy to have contact with teacher and sometimes not, but in any case physical contact with the teacher is a secondary thing. More important is that you are always being in the state of the teacher. If you are being in that, even if physical contact is not present, you are in the state of the teacher. You can also be helped with that clarity.

Q: Do you think it's a good idea if when we get sick we ask people to do practice for us, for example, a similar practice to what we are trying to do, with us in mind?

A: Sometimes it can be useful, for example, if someone really has complete capacity to be in awareness, etc.; in this case it is useful that they help and do practice. For example, if someone can remind you of the principle of doing practice by reading the invocations of Samantabhadra or the Bardo - these are not methods of sitting practice - but they make the person remember the principle of the teaching at the moment of death and this is important

Q: If someone is killed or commits suicide is there something special to do? Related to a violent death, does the passage through the Bardo change as well as one's karma and rebirth?

A: When something like suicide happens, it is a very dangerous thing. These people are almost always dominated by some kind of bad spirits. That is the reason this happens. Also, these spirits continue to influence that being for many centuries. To be freed from this kind of cycle, many rites, like those in the Chöd practice, must be done. In the Chöd there is something called 'dur'; something specific for separating this kind of bad spirit from the consciousness of that person who killed themselves. If these are not separated the person is dependent on that (bad spirit) for centuries.

Q: So it's good for people who knew them to do practice like Chöd for them?

How I Met ChNN continued from page 28

among this crowd of seventy or so of his older students, but he grabbed my hand as I turned to walk away and looked me directly in the eyes.

"So we'll see each other again?" he said.

"Yes," I said. "I'm sure we will."

Des Barry is a novelist and screenwriter who presently lives in Cardiff, Wales, the land of his birth. His third novel, *Cressida's Bed*, will be published by Jonathan Cape, London, in June 2004. He met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Easter, in 1979.

GRIEF
The pain of the world, the tears, sleepless nights You are not immune
Money, amusement, entertainment Will not protect you
Avoiding the pain Avoiding the pain Avoiding the pain
Can you?
If you dream the world's dream of pain, will you splinter? Will you drown? Will you yearn to collapse against
A marble slab,
Or can you sit In a charnel ground Amidst the furious winds?

by Paul Bail

continued on next page

A: Chöd practice is good for them.

Q: In cases when someone who dies in an accident, is murdered or dies very suddenly, is that also bad spirits?

A: That is not bad spirits, that is accident. If someone is a good practitioner there is no problem; they can also be in a state of Guruyoga. But most people do not have that possibility and become a little lost in that situation. In this case, it is important for people who have some experience to do an introduction of Bardo on the third day; the third day and also each week. Also to do some purification, but at the same time an introduction of Bardo. We can find that introduction in the Tibetan Book of Dead. That's very useful.

Q: Is there any thing to do specifically to do for the family of a person who is ill?

A: We do our best to help them to understand the situation and how to work with it; not only to be suffering, worried and agitated. They work with the situation.

Q: I think in the retreat you answered this question, but what should we do in the moment of our death?

A: A practitioner should try to be in the state of Guruyoga. This is supreme.

Q: If we are with someone who is dying, what should we do in the moment of their death? For example, if I were with my mother who is not a practitioner.

A: You can't really do very much, but if you are there, you can sing the Song of the Vajra, for example, or chant the 100 syllable mantra of Vajrasattva, because she can still hear. You can make a good cause. We say also thödro; thödro means hearing to make a cause of liberation. Then we use tagdro, nyongdro; everything. We try to help in that way.

Q: If I am a practitioner, for example and there are other practitioners around, what should they do in the moment of my death?

A: They should sing the Song of Vajra, be in the state of Guruyoga and remind the person who is dying of how we always do collective practice to get into the state of Guruyoga. That is the best way of dying.

Q: Can you talk a little about Tibetan cultural traditions of what to do with the body after death. For example, how they wash it, etc.

A: It depends who is dying. If a practitioner is dying, someone can chant Om Mani Padme Hum, and also someone who has a little knowledge and understanding tries to keep the body maybe one, two or three days, etc., particularly if they are still showing that they died in the meditation position. Then we pay respect and wait. That is important. Some people say, "Oh, in the Tibetan system it is important we must not touch the body for two or three days." That's not true. There is not much reason because it only makes a bad smell. That's not really useful. It depends if the

person who is dying has knowledge or not. If someone, a normal person, is dying, then there is no problem. When you discover they are really dead, then you do the normal things. You can do everything. Many people they ask if it is positive or negative to give organs for others. That's positive, not negative at all, because it can help some other people not to die. If someone is a good practitioner and is still in a meditation position, even if it's not a sitting position and we know that they are a good practitioner, in that case it is much better if we keep the body for some days if it is possible. Giving organs may be important, but still more important is realization.

Q: When you say "keeping the position", is the only position sitting, in other words is the sitting position is the only sign? What if the person dies laying down? Does a good practitioner only die sitting up?

A: Many practitioners are sitting. At the moment of dying they move to a sitting position and die. They are particularly interested to keep a straight head for two or three days, then they fall down to right or left side. That means they are no longer in Samadhi. That is the reason.

Q: Can they be in Samadhi if they are lying down?

A: Yes, that is also possible sometimes. For example, like in parinirvana position of the Buddha; he is lying down. It is not necessary to be sitting, but it is good if it is possible. What is important is knowing the condition of that person.

Q: For normal people who do not die in Samadhi, are there some particular beliefs in Tibetan Culture, how you wash, how to prepare, whether you burn or bury the body?

A: No. A dead body is always just a dead body. After death we are not interested very much.

Q: After somebody has died, it would be good to understand precisely the timing of the practices. When do we start Shitro. Do we do Guruyoga with the White A for a few days first? What is done exactly, for the person who has died.

A: In a more general way, we do the practice of Phowa and introduction of the Bardo or the invocation of Bardo Thödro. We start that on the third day. Why? Because that is consideration of all sentient beings; human beings. After death, they are linked for at least three days and then wake up. Then, for each seven days, there is a kind of process of death.

Q: For the first three days if the person is a practitioner, do we do something in particular?

A: Yes, for example if someone is dead, from the moment of death you can always sing the

Nothing to Lose

by Jay Callahan

My father died suddenly when I was thirteen years old. One day, I was part of a secure happy family living in a beautiful place; the next, most of that was gone. My family had no money, no help, not much hope.

Even then, though, I was a skilled Buddhist practitioner, and immediately saw through problems, straight to the empty nature of suffering—or so my ego would like to think now. In truth, I spent many years after my father's death completely governed and driven by a desperate search for safety and security, closed down against the world.

The effects of loss ruled me.

When my mother died, I spent the last five weeks with her, observing her lose herself as the cancer slowly dismantled her brain. She told me towards the beginning that she was afraid to sleep, because she didn't know what she would be

when she woke—what part of her brain (and self) might have gone. One morning, she did wake as a different person; a person who talked rapid-fire nonsense and moved restlessly from bed to chair to door and back. Talk and movement slowed as exhaustion overtook her, and then she died.

Watching her though, I was aware that, behind her chatter, a being who did not chatter looked back at me always. She died, and that being and the chatterer both were gone. That's ten years ago; almost ancient history.

Now, I practice for her, who worked endlessly all her life so that her children would be well; for my father, who tried to find Dharma in a time there were no teachers or books available in the United States; for my brother Gary, killed when a small

Song of the Vajra and do the practice of Guruyoga. If someone is a good practitioner then they are in that state, so the unification in that state is always very positive. It is positive not only to help those who are dying, but also for yourself.

Q: What does the dead person experience in the days and months after death?

A: First the person feels they are still alive and then slowly, slowly the sensation of being alive diminishes.

Q: In our lineage, because we are you students, your disciples, what is your view about having other lamas practice for us after our death

A: What is important is if a lama does something, that at least that lama knows the real sense of the teachings and has realized in the sense of teachings, then there is no problem. There are many lamas today who only read and comment on books, giving arguments, etc. That doesn't help very much.

Q: What about having someone do Phowa for us? I know we are Dzogchen practitioners, but what if someone is an accomplished Phowa practitioner?

A: It depends for whom they do the Phowa. If it is an ordinary person, there is no problem. If someone was a practitioner and has knowledge of Guruyoga and is in the state of Guruyoga, trying to Phowa for that person is ridiculous.

Q: Are there ways or signs that can determine how the dead person fared after death, how their

part in his motorcycle broke; for my grandparents; for all of them. I knew them well once, loved them, but that time is gone; a dream. We took hands together for a little while, but the world tore us apart. Maybe we'll meet again, but who know?

Samsara is vast.

What is to be done?

Practice, of course.

But who is it that practices?

By now, I've had a number of beautiful and profound "Dzogchen" experiences, and sometimes I'm pretty pleased with myself. My ego is calmer and more assured than it was years ago; it wears Dzogchen comfortably, like a sort of uniform—an attractive and fashionable uniform. Dzogchen makes me feel good; life is less difficult. My ego is pleased that it can have very nice Dzogchen experiences. It knows that these experiences are a sign that, though other people's egos may be foolish and obstructive, it's a unique and wise Dzogchen ego.

My ego doesn't want to step down from its throne and have to see that its whole world is just a little puppet-show. It fights skillfully to prevent that happening, in any way it can, even creating something that feels and tastes like the primordial state, in an attempt to protect itself from realization, which it dreads with an overwhelming fear. My ego convinces itself that its life, my life, will never end—that it can block out the light of reality forever.

My ego doesn't rejoice when I simply let it rest in its own place, recognizing it as just one way clarity manifests, because in that way, it loses its commanding role—and my ego sees that as its own death. I'm so accustomed to my ego that I sometimes feel that letting its walls dissolve is my death too. How can I bear to lose this universe I've created, and in which I'm now so comfortable? What else can there be, outside? Fear of loss rules me.

I can practice for my parents in a way which strengthens my ego, but who will that help? I can create my own 'primordial state', but that would only be the worst kind of hell. Maybe I should pay careful attention, and do my best, instead.

Last night, it snowed, and the roads were bad, driving home in the dark. Today, the sun is shining.

experience in the Bardo was; signs, dreams, etc?

A: Sometimes we can have some dreams, some aspects can manifest, but not always. Some interesting people manifest something, of course.

Q: If, as we are dying, we loose our mental functioning and are confused because the brain isn't working normally, for example, due to a stroke or illness. Can we still practice on other levels?

A: We are living an ordinary life with our six senses. Consciousness of six senses is dependent on our organs of senses, so dying means all the functions of our organs, of the elements and our consciousness, is dissolving in the center. In the end when all that is dissolved, we completely lose this function. That moment is called dying. It is something like the dark. From that point, until we wake up again in the state of the Bardo of Existence, there is no function of mind. Before mind wakes up, in Tantrism teaching it is called : nangwa, chedpa, thobpa, nyerthob; the four states of light. Slowly, slowly, like the early morning light, it becomes bigger and bigger and more and more clear and at the end it is like sunshine. At that moment the mind is working. The mind is associated with the consciousness of senses, that is called the mental body. That is what we call death. But if someone is in the state of Guruyoga when they are dying, then at this moment there is natural light, the state of natural light, just like how we do practice of the night. Then all our manifestations of our real potentiality through sound, light and rays, are

naked in that moment and we also discover our real potentiality. Particularly having experiences of Shitro wrathful and peaceful manifestations, all these manifestations, are connected with sound, light and rays. For that reason, for practitioners, there is the possibility of having realization of the Sambhogakaya. Many good practitioners are not in the Bardo or ordinary Bardo because before they reach that they can have realization.

Q: If a person lives to be old, and as an old person becomes very confused for many years, if that happens to a practitioner can they still be practicing, even though outwardly they appear to be confused?

A: Even a practitioner getting old can have mental problems. As long as we are alive, we are dependent on the condition of the physical body. If we are leaving the physical body, that is different. So if someone is very familiar with the state of contemplation then maybe even if we have mental confusion as we are getting old, there is also still such presence and with that presence one can notice what is going on. If we are being in instant presence then we are no longer dependent on mental confusions. Otherwise, then all is the same confusion and when we are dying we couldn't be in the state of Guruyoga. It depends on how we do practice, if we are a really good practitioner and if we have that capacity or not.

Q: Do you have any suggestions from your personal experience, when needing surgery and anesthesia? What to do during those

continued on page 27

REFLECTIONS

Communicating within the Sangha (Part 1)

by Dorothea Franck

“There is no solution because there is no problem.”

(Marcel Duchamp)

I. Relax! Observe yourself! Relax!

The main problems in daily life as well as in the Sangha are problems of communication. Having done work in the field of communication, I am experimenting to find ways to integrate the experiences in this field with the advice of our Teacher. It is a bit scary and it might sound overly ambitious to relate enlightened speech with our daily samsaric mess, but if we cannot turn the riches of those teachings into small coins for everyday life we cannot make real use of it. I want to discuss some communication problems and offer a little ‘bag of tricks’ which I found helpful in situations of misunderstandings and poor communication.

As samsaric beings, our interactions come in roughly the following three kinds: 1. neutral, more or less smooth communication, exchanges of information, making/maintaining contact at work, everyday encounters, 2. deeply satisfying warm and profound moments of communication, feeling understood and valued, as they occur in loving long term relationships but sometimes also in spontaneous encounters.

3. Irritating conflicting situations, one or both parties getting hurt or enraged. It can be about big issues or ridiculously small things. Triggering all the sensitive and sore points and inter human allergies. Or leaving you with the feeling that we are living on different planets.

What strikes me in the Sangha is that the types two and three are unusually frequent. This seems to point to the fact that the Sangha is more like a family or marriage than a business. In the family moments of effortless intimacy occur, but when there are conflicts, emotions tend to rise higher than anywhere else.

The Sangha meets additional difficulties. Whether we think of the Bodhisattva Vow, Tantric Pure Vision or the freedom of Dzogchen Self Perfection, without sufficient self-knowledge all these views turn into over-ambitious aims which make us overrate our capacities, demanding perfection of others while staying blind for our own limitations. At the other hand, if we are aware of them, communication problems are a great teacher since they reflect flawlessly all our emotional tendencies, preconceptions and limiting habits.

We all know how often our Teacher reminds us to be aware of the way we communicate. Of course, the most important secret to good communication is to remain relaxed and to practice self observation. The Teachings provide the only really effective method to develop them. Nevertheless, if you have more awareness about communication processes, it is easier to remain relaxed and self-aware in difficult situations. The principles I mention are the same principles we hear frequently in the Dharma Teachings. The point is to apply them. If we don’t make them concrete from moment to moment, lofty principles are a highway to self-deception rather than to liberation.

II. Communicate, communicate, collaborate

Why the repetition?

The first ‘communicate’ means to get me out of my shyness (they are not exactly waiting for my call), fear (I might get criticized and humiliated), reluctance (what do I get out of it?) or paranoia (they hate me, they think I am stupid, I’ll only make things worse).

The second one means perseverance: Don’t give up, continue to communicate in spite of tensions, conflicts and misunderstandings.

The third imperative, ‘collaborate’, is almost redundant. To communicate well means to collaborate. Collaborate means first of all that you have a common goal. Being part of a Sangha means by definition that we do have a common goal, stronger: we share the one and only real goal of our life - Total Realization for ourselves and everybody else. But as long as we lack total clarity, our individual goals look sometimes as if they were conflicting. Ultimately this must be an illusion, so we have to clarify what this illusion consists of. How does the disagreement come about?

In fact, the feeling that we live on different planets is - in samsaric isolation - not so far off the truth. Each of us lives in their own sphere or ‘dimension’, as our Teacher says. There is no ‘neutral’, ‘true’ definition of the given situation. We have to keep investigating how far the common ground of shared karmic vision goes. We cannot take it for granted. That’s where patience and perseverance come into the picture. Perseverance in finding out what keeps me from understanding the other, myself and the current situation.

Why is perseverance so important? Because lack of understanding is in many cases ‘the perfect crime’: we don’t even know that a misunderstanding has happened. So what we need in the first place is an open minded curiosity. A mentality which is not just looking for emotional comfort and confirmation of what we already (think to) know but being open to the thought: I could just as well be wrong. At least I am aware that my view is limited. I might have overlooked or misjudged something. Putting it beyond wrong or right: I want to understand why the other person is acting so strangely or why I am so frustrated. So here we get trick number one: First of all I transform ‘how awful’ into ‘how interesting’ and put on the Sherlock Holmes hat. This means we have to cultivate the art of listening.

III. Discover and transform - just a few pronouns

If we want to listen well, we have to know what impedes good listening. There are different kinds of hindrances. A major factor are emotions we are not aware of. In communication the feeling of insecurity and the attitude of arrogance are particularly bothersome. They seem to be each others opposite, but their effect is very similar. Insecurity makes us defensive: our ears filter all messages for confirmation and potential threats. We are no longer really curious, we just check: is there support for my view or is this an attack. Arrogance creates a similar kind of blindness. We think we know the solution, we don’t need to go deeper into unknown territory and we just look: is the other person intelligent, that means on our side, or stupid. We are proud of our quick judgement. We assume: we know the situ-

ation, we know this person, we know their motifs and hidden agendas.

But do we know our own? We think we follow actual information, but in most cases we follow age-old scenarios - we turn any situation into the same old soap opera over and over again.

Let’s have a look at the scenarios which steer our perception of a conflict situation. Allow me a risky simplification, distinguishing three basic models of increasing complexity.

The most frequent and primitive pattern: good or bad, right or wrong. You are for me or against me. Blunt dualism: I am right, you are wrong. The fundamentalist model. God or the Guru is on my side; not yours! Since you overcome the gross partiality of the first view, you might understand: we are both right, we are both wrong. This is certainly a deeper level of insight: there is not just an evil aggressor and an innocent victim, an idiot and a genius, a villain and a saint. It takes two to tango. But there is no way out. We have both legitimate yet conflicting interests and irredeemably different perspectives. This is the model of the Greek tragedy. Samsara without end. There is no one to blame, but also: there is no way out of the tragedy. The melancholic pessimist model.

Both these models seriously limit the patterns of our behavior and the games we prefer to play. We tend to cast ourselves and the other into the same complementary roles over and over again, playing variation after variation of the same kind of drama, - usually tragedy. It can give some relief to realize: we can see the tragedy just as well as a comedy; a bit of distance and humor and sharp-minded friends can help to make the switch.

Often we shift between dualistic roles without knowing. Now we are the courageous hero and now the innocent victim, now parent, now child, shy avoider or keen manipulator, good girl or cruel avenging angel. The worst thing about these roles is that they imply the definition of the role of our partner, no matter how they would like to define it. We perceive them in role X while they think they are playing role Y. What’s important to see is: Whenever we are limiting ourselves we are also limiting the other!

The third model is going a step by a big step - further. It is the only one capable of overcoming dualism: Discovering the hidden perfection in the present situation. The present moment might not be painless but it is perfect, - in a sense that we may not understand as yet. It is perfect because it is there. Immediately, we become more inventive and relaxed when we start from the assumption: it is the best possible situation, given all current circumstances and all our limitations. Then we start to ask, “What can the given situation tell me?”

This attitude does not generate a particular predictable kind of behavior. Sometimes this attitude can mean that we soften our line of behavior and give in, sometimes just the opposite: maintaining firmly one’s own line of action, sometimes it might even mean challenging behavior. But it will always come from a spacious sense of compassion. Accepting ‘what is’, including given limitations and not separating oneself from the dimension of the others is compassion. Ultimately this behavior is based on nothing but the trust in the self liberating power of relaxed presence and

awareness. Now and then we all know experiences where this really works. But in situations of conflict we fall back into the habit of distraction and dualism. How do we get rid of the tension and tunnel vision that befall us in difficult communication situations?

We can try to transform. Not into a deity but transform some patterns in our inner chatter. I use a couple of linguistic tricks to change the endless line of inner comments, judgements and justifications. In observing my thoughts I try to change personal pronouns. An interesting transformation is to change ‘I’ and ‘them’ into ‘we’. Once we notice these tendencies we can just play with it and reformulate. When you do that with the honest wish to open up to compassion, you can feel perhaps a subtle kind of internal shift, like in the practice of Refuge and Bodhicitta, when you are sitting under the Refuge Tree together with all the beings with whom you have a connection, really feeling ‘we’ are sitting here together. We, the Sangha, are sitting here together in the precious boat of the teachings. We, in this room, all want to get something positive out of it. We around this table want to find a solution to a problem. We, in this fight, want to break through our limitations. This change of pronouns can change the social climate in all kinds of situations. It does not necessarily make you love or like the other persons but it creates a neutral kind of solidarity. After all, we are in the same boat.

This shift is a way to reduce distance and separation. The next language trick increases distance; between me and myself. It applies to the inner monologue accompanying self-observation. I substitute ‘I’ by ‘her(him)’, i.e. turn first person into third person in talking/thinking about myself. What is ‘she’ doing now? Why is she getting so upset? What is she afraid of?

This trick can bring a bit of humor and self-irony into the situation, but it can also add a touch of genuine non-defensive compassion for yourself. Getting a little more distance between me and myself makes it easier to see the beam in my own eye and relativize the splinter in the eye of the other. This is similar to the dream practice: I am dreaming this and I know that I am dreaming. Unfortunately, in spite of this, the splinter of the other person might still look very big and their point of view still seems to be coming from an alien. Then I can use another strategy:

Look for similarities, create a mirror image. Pretend we are twins or at least (vajra) brothers and sisters. Try to catch yourself at the same kind of stupidity that annoys you in the other person. For instance I find myself thinking: he/she is ridiculous by getting so upset by something I consider very small, oh what a giant ego he/she has! Well! Now I am getting upset about the same situation - while feeling quite superior! So I am just as ridiculous, and worse: I’m arrogant as well. Or you can look further than the present situation: this person is late at appointments. I am here in time, but am I not always late with my tax papers or behind deadlines with publications? I am good at creating irritation too! I just pick other victims!

Part II Next issue #67

Nothing Short of a Miracle

Ori Klibanski's miraculous recovery

Dorine and Ori Klibanski recently moved from Brooklyn, New York to Northampton Massachusetts, to be near Tsegalgar. On October 23rd Ori, Dorine's 9 year old son, was hit by a car and seriously injured. It was questionable as to whether or not he would survive. Ori is recovering and the doctors are calling it a miracle.

Dorine and Ori want to thank everyone in the worldwide Dzogchen Community for the practice and prayers on their behalf. Upon waking from his coma of several days, Ori first expressed his appreciation and need for practice.

Here is an excerpt from an article in the Northampton Daily Hampshire Gazette on Nov. 8:



Ori before his accident at Conway

"Nothing Short of a Miracle"

Doctors are calling his recovery miraculous. Two weeks after being hit by an oncoming car on Ryan Road and suffering life-threatening injuries, 9-year-old Ori Klibanski is back at home and likely to make a full recovery.

"The doctors are very, very, very surprised," Dorin Klibanski, Ori's mother said Friday.

Ori was rushed to the hospital in critical condition Oct. 23 after a car hit him with such force that it threw him 85 feet. Police have determined that the driver could not have prevented the accident.

For 48 hours, doctors did not know if Ori would survive. He lost a lot of blood, had a fractured skull, collapsed lung, broken rib, hip and leg, and other injuries.

But, Ori's mother said, Ori has a lot of love and passion for life and was not ready to go. "Me and Ori,

we can't imagine not being together. Klibanski, originally from Israel, had been visiting the area's Buddhist community for the past five years and moved to Northampton about a month ago from New York City.

The accident happened during Ori's first few weeks in fourth grade at Ryan Road School and on his mother's first day at her new job as a hairdresser at Salon Herdis on Main Street.

Now Dorin Klibanski must stay at home full-time to take care of Ori, who is beginning a long recovery process and needs help getting around the house. Klibanski's medical insurance expired Nov. 1 and has been helped to get insured by MassHealth.

People have been amazed at Ori's recovery. The doctors at UMass Medical Center sent Ori through a battery of tests and could not believe how

well he did on them and retested him. Based on the excellent results, Ori does not have to enter Mass. General Hospital's intensive rehabilitation program in Boston. The doctors called his recovery "miraculous."

Ori may need more surgeries and is still very traumatized, his mother said. Dorin, too, is still coping from the trauma of the accident.

"Ori is the most important, precious thing in my life," Dorin said. "I can't imagine ... without him," she said, falling silent in the middle of her sentence.

Any donations may be mailed to Florence Savings Bank, 85 Main St., Florence, MA 01062. Checks should be made to "Fund for Ori Klibanski."

Donations may also be wired to Account #1980489786, Routing/ABA #211871688.

continued from page 20

ADVICE ON THE FUNCTION OF GAKYIL AND OTHER ENTITIES

important.

In Merigar we sometimes have a problem with the Gakyil. Some people are new in the Gakyil and have the idea that the Gakyil should control everything. That is not good because when the Gakyil controls everything; they create many problems. The Gakyil should be collaborating with people, not controlling. The Gakyil should feel it is responsible for communicating and making things understood and collaborating with people. In that way there is no problem. When you try to control you find that each human being has a strong ego and it is not so easy. That is my opinion.

For the new Gakyil here, we need people who already know how to collaborate with different organizations and how to work together. That is something very important. For example, the Gakyil in Italy is a little different this year. Everything is more focused on the method of organization developed by Yeshi Namkhai. (see page 5, the Economic Reorganization of the Dzogchen Community) Everybody is studying this. In this case, people need to have a little more experience of computers and understand modern methods of communication, etc. We don't particularly need that here, but we need more people who collaborate well.

If there is a lack of agreement, problems arising and being creat-

ed, then we have no stable base and that is not good. This stable base is the first thing which is very, very important for all our activities here.

Rinpoche: Fabio, do you have something to say?

Fabio: No, not really; only what Rinpoche has already said. In Margarita the business of the Aloe has technical requirements, therefore you especially need people who have some technical knowledge. Now there are people who have some experience; Dick is trying to sell the Aloe and Gilberto has been overseeing things. You cannot put some new people in the Gakyil who have a lot of ideas and sometimes a little pride, and without knowing anything, without any preparation, they see that the Gakyil makes decisions and want to decide things and create a lot of problems.

Rinpoche: That is very true.

Fabio: So it is very important that the people who are in the Gakyil understand very well and are prepared and humble enough to be willing to listen and learn how things are already being done. Sometimes people have no knowledge and create problems. Especially now, here, it would be a real risk if somebody started acting like this on the Gakyil.

That is one of the reasons that Rinpoche's son has proposed this system for the Dzogchen Community. People start wanting to do things; not even asking the previous Gakyil what they have already done. They are redoing the same thing; wasting time, money and people's energy and creating problems in the end. So it is better not to go that way.

Martin Bortagaray: How do you relate the Gakyil with the company's activities?

Fabio: As Rinpoche said, there is a company but there is a Gar. You cannot have the Gar run by the company. This cannot be.

Martin Bortagaray: It's a company within a Gar.

Fabio: Yes, the Gar is the principal thing, the principal organization. If there was not a Gar and no Rinpoche, these houses would not exist. But at the same time, you cannot have the Gakyil deciding for the company, the private people, what they should and should not do. Also these people cannot forget that there is a Gar and the Gar has its function, needs and dynamics and should be respected. It is ridiculous to have the Gakyil decide for the company. It is possible in some cases, related to some methods and ethical issues. Also you cannot have the company running the Gar - saying this is how you have to do this and that, who can or cannot come. That is impossible.

moments?

A: If someone is a practitioner they try to be in a state of Guruyoga. You can have more experience also later.

Q: Do you have any particular suggestions for animals when they are sick or dying?

A: For animals you can make some benefit by singing the Song of Vajra or chanting mantra. The Mantras of the Six Liberations have benefit.

Q: What is your feeling about euthanasia; if someone is suffering a great deal is it acceptable to end their suffering by helping them to die?

A: If someone has that kind of problem, maybe you should try and get some medicine or something for calming the pain. Some strong medicine helps.

Q: Is there anything to do in particular at the moment of birth?

A: There are many things to do. You can read in the book of Birth

and Life; it is explained. There are also some mantras which can be given and some mantras and syllables can be written for the benefit of the child, Manjushri, etc., so the child becomes intelligent, for example. Also, instead of Manjushri, the seed syllable of Mandarava like hri or bam or Buddha Amitayus, etc., can be given. This helps strengthen their energy. Also you can make these syllables, not on paper, but on honey or something dry that becomes like a paper; the letters are written on that and put on the tongue of the baby where it melts.

Q: Do you have any final advice?

A: Being in Guruyoga. If you are a practitioner that is definitely useful for everybody.

Q: Thank you so much, Rinpoche. Everyone will benefit from this.

DREAM ON THE 49TH DAY AFTER YOUR DEATH

The table is set with a white cloth and
we are all gathered around –

plates steam with ham and onions,
yellow dogs lay at our feet –

when you rush in and
oh lucky stars we embrace,

mother and daughter, like
two clouds we meet

between realms.

by Barbara Paparazzo

Ahh, Dissolution

by George Pitagorsky

Upon hearing of the ending of a long time relationship the following came spontaneously to mind. I think it sums up the combination of grief over loss and the hope for beginning within the frame of ultimate space:

Ahhh, dissolution brings with it the sense of disappointment and sadness over loss and the hope of transformation. Behind it all, emptiness; clarity.

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How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dream, Game, Encounter
by Des Barry

I was brought up a Catholic. I went through a period of atheism during my teens but before I was twenty, around 1970, like many others of my generation, I had a powerful experience with LSD which shattered my atheism. Like many at the time, I began a study of Western esotericism, Castaneda, Jung, dreams, and Arica movements, which were meant to coordinate body and mind. For all my passionate exploration of states of consciousness, by the end of 1977, I felt that I had hit a wall and I couldn't make any further spiritual progress by doing what I was doing on my own. I had studied simple sitting meditation with Sogyal Rinpoche but I felt no attraction whatsoever to Tibetan Buddhism as it reminded me too much of Catholicism with its statues, saints and rituals. On January 1st 1978, I gave up all hard drugs, but I hadn't yet given up hashish. A few months later, I had a very powerful dream, which I have never forgotten. This is it.

I was in my small, ground-floor bed-sit in London, where I lived with my girlfriend. A young man came into the room. He had dark, shoulder-length hair. He said that he was a Games Master and asked if I was interested in playing a game. He said that this game had no strict rules, and there was no way to know who else was playing, but that, somehow, the game involved role-playing. I was intrigued.

"Well how is it played?" I said.

"I'll give you an example," the Games Master said. "I'll go out of the room, and when I come back in, I'm going to frighten the life out of you."

I laughed. Forewarned is forearmed, I thought. There's no way he can possibly frighten me. He left the room. A few minutes later, he came back in. He was dressed in the black uniform of the Waffen S.S. with swastika armband and skull emblems. No problem.

"While you were in here doing nothing," he said, "I've just strangled a four-year-old child to death, right outside your door."

I was horrified. Horrified that for the sake of this stupid game, he would go so far as to kill an innocent child to prove that he could frighten me. I wanted to kill him. At the same time, I didn't want to have anybody's murder on my own hands. I was in total confusion. I ran out through the French doors of my bed-sit and into the garden so that I wouldn't lose control and kill this bastard. I ran to the garden fence. I sensed something behind me and I turned around to look back at the house.

The Games Master was standing on the terrace. He was wearing a dramatic black cloak and held a long wooden staff in his hand. Completely irrationally, this terrified me more than the murder. I tried to climb over the fence, lost my balance, and plummeted forward. My face hit the dirt of the flowerbed and I blacked out.

When I came to, I was on my bed. My girlfriend wasn't there.

The room was quiet. I sat up in bed and looked toward the garden beyond the French doors. At that moment, the long wooden staff came in through the cat-door that had been cut into the bottom of one door. And then the hand that gripped the staff appeared. I was terrified but insane with rage. This time, I was determined that I was going to kill the Games Master for murdering the child. The cat-door somehow expanded and the Games Master's head appeared. I grabbed the staff and wrenched it out of his hand in order to beat him to death. He looked up at me and I knew that I had been duped.

"I told you I was going to frighten you," he said. "And you fell for it completely."

I was in a state of shock. There had never been any child murder. I had been totally fooled. "Do you want to continue playing?" he asked.

I nodded. This was no ordinary game. I was hooked.

"The next part of the game takes place in Paris," he said. "You have to go to the cemetery behind the Place Pigalle, in Montmartre, and find the female guardian of the cemetery. She'll tell you about the next part of the dream. I'll show you a tunnel where you can begin your journey."

The Games Master took me out of the house and onto the disused railway track that runs from Crouch Hill to Highgate. After a while, we came to the entrance of a railway tunnel and he indicated some steps that led down into a cave. I descended the steps alone. The cave at the bottom of the steps had some lights in the damp walls so that I was able to see. I began walking. More tunnels joined the one that I was in. And more people appeared as if this cave complex was the thoroughfare of an underground city. The other people said nothing to me. When I reached a kind of crossroads, I asked someone the way to Paris and he pointed out which direction to go. I followed the passage and then came up some steps and came out into the graveyard through the door of a sepulchre vault.

It was night. There were other people in the cemetery as if a party was going on. A young man welcomed me.

"I'm looking for the woman who is guardian of the cemetery," I said.

"There she is," the young man said. "She's in charge of this part of the game."

I looked across at a terrace of buildings and – through the row of windows – I saw an old woman, very lithe and healthy, passing along the corridor.

"I want to talk to her," I said.

"No need," said the young man. "I can tell you everything you need to know. This next part of the game is a team game. We, from this cemetery, are playing against a team who are based in a cemetery in the south of Paris. You have to go out into the city and see what you find. You won't know who's playing and who's not. There aren't any specific rules so you have to keep your wits about you and work out what you have to do depending on

what's going on around you."

It was dawn now. He took me out to the cemetery gates where he gave me a motorcycle and wished me luck. I drove off into



the city and headed south past Opera and across the Seine. The streets were quite deserted. It was some kind of national holiday. Close to a park, the motorcycle ran out of fuel. I coasted into a service station but it was closed. I left the bike there and walked down into the park. Just beyond the entrance was a narrow pathway with a flimsy fence on one side and a vertical drop on the other. Pressing against the flimsy fence was a huge crowd who seemed to be waiting for some important personage to arrive. I balanced my way between the crowd and the vertiginous drop and came out on a hillside.

At the top of the hill, I saw an old school-friend of mine. He was with a man, a woman and a baby. I walked up the grassy slope and joined them. The woman was very beautiful and I wanted to make love with her. She was holding the baby. It was a very strange-looking creature with pointed ears and ridges that ran from the nostrils, under the cheekbones and up to the ears. The child's appearance made me feel quite uncomfortable. I said hello to the adults.

"I wish I could communicate to the baby, too," I said.

The baby looked up at me and said, in a strong Brooklyn accent,

"Why dontcha just open your god-damn mouth and talk?"

I felt a bit shocked. I stayed with these friends for a while and told them that I was just taking a walk around the city. I asked if there was another way out of the park. The dark-haired woman offered to show me. She was very affectionate. I looked around for a place where we might make love without being seen but there were people everywhere and the bushes were very sparse. We reached the gate and I felt that I'd lost an opportunity to connect with her.

We said goodbye at the gate and I walked into the city. I saw a poster advertising that an Oriental master was teaching some kind of martial art at a nearby church hall that day. It intrigued me and I went off and found the church.

I went inside. The master was in his forties. He was dressed in a white Karate-gi. I joined some other students and the master demonstrated some movements. At the end of the class, he began to whisper something in my ear. I didn't know what he was saying but I was suddenly in a very pow-

erful, altered state of consciousness with a tremendous sensation of bliss and well-being. The class finished and I walked out onto the street, still a little stunned and blissful. I passed by the shop with the poster and I read it again. The Master's course was finishing that day. I ran back to the church. The beautiful woman from the park stood outside the door but the door was all locked up. I was desperately disappointed.

"Don't worry," she said. "You'll meet him again."

And at that point, I woke up, still stunned that I seemed to have lived for about three days in only three hours of sleep.

On the following Saturday, at a contemporary dance class, I found out from one of the dancers that there was, in fact, a cemetery in Paris behind Pigalle in Montmartre. I was so convinced of the significance of the dream that I went to Paris from London to find the cemetery. I stayed in Pigalle, the red light district of Paris.

In the early morning, I went to the cemetery. I walked around and found nothing of significance. As I was coming out, I noticed a small round garden. Because I had read Jung, I thought that it would be auspicious if I walked into the centre of this 'mandala.' It turned out to be a strange mandala to me because it was split into three sections rather than four. I left the cemetery. After a tour of the strip joints, I returned to my girlfriend in London.

The following Easter, I began a vacation from my job as a library assistant at a London college. For some months, I had been wanting to give up smoking hashish (the last of the drugs I was using, other than alcohol). It had been impossible for me to give up smoking while I was working but now I had ten days free. I woke up on the first morning of the holiday and I knew that I had to go out for a walk. My girlfriend had no intention of giving up hash at the time and there was a large piece of Ketama hash on a board, right next to the bed. If I stayed at home, I knew that I was going to smoke it.

I left the house. Some days previously, I had seen a poster advertising a teaching by H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche but I couldn't remember the time or date. I decided to go for a walk as far as Orgyen Cho Ling, Sogyal Rinpoche's centre in London, in order to find out more information. I thought that perhaps that Dudjom Rinpoche, who was head of the Nyingmapa School, might be able to help me find a way forward in this exploration of consciousness.

I walked across the disused railway line from Crouch Hill to Highgate, and from there, across Hampstead Heath to Kilburn and Orgyen Cho Ling, the Nyingmapa Centre then on Princess Road. I rang the doorbell. A man with a beard answered the door. I said that I was looking for information on Dudjom Rinpoche. He told me that Dudjom Rinpoche was in Paris at that time and that Sogyal Rinpoche was there too, translat-

ing for him. Then he very kindly invited me inside for lunch.

I asked if there was anything else happening at the centre. He said no, not until Dudjom Rinpoche came, but there happened to be a Lama upstairs at the moment who had come for lunch and that this Lama had agreed to teach a little in the afternoon. I asked if I might stay, and Sogyal Rinpoche's student said that it was no problem.

After lunch I went into the shrine room with this man. Other students of Sogyal Rinpoche were also there. I felt a bit uncomfortable with all the statues and thrones and thankas. A whisper came from the doorway, "The Lama's coming." Everyone stood up and faced the throne.

A beautiful blond-haired woman in white came into the room, and then a beautiful blond-haired woman in turquoise followed her. A huge man with a big beard and a shaved head followed these women in, and then last of all a thin, wiry Tibetan man with longish black hair, a red shirt, white trousers and an old parka. The Tibetan man looked around the room and then went and sat on the cushions at the back. Everyone turned around, all a little confused. The Lama asked everyone to sit down and then he said, "You have to be careful when you build a centre for the teachings because it's easy to forget that the real centre is not the building, but what's inside. That's the real centre."

He then asked the woman in turquoise to demonstrate some movements from a kind of yoga. When this was over, he said, "I'm doing a retreat for ten days in another part of London. If you're interested, you can come there where I'll be giving Dzogchen teachings."

Then he and his three stunning students got up and left.

I was in a state of shock. I was completely convinced that this was the Oriental Master that I had dreamed exactly a year and a day beforehand. I had ten days vacation from my job. I was certain that I was going to this retreat. I went home and told my girlfriend and went to the teaching that evening. I was a bit incoherent to tell the truth so I left her rather confused.

For the next ten days, this Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche taught on meditation, yoga, dreams, everything in which I had been interested, but I had only succeeded in scratching the surface of a kind of knowledge, which I knew was far deeper. This teacher, I was convinced, was the real thing. After a few days, my girlfriend also came to the teachings, and herself became a student of Norbu Rinpoche.

Finally I got around to speaking with Norbu Rinpoche after a teaching, and I recounted my dream, with the beautiful Nancy Simmonds translating for me. I'm a bit ashamed to say that I wept my lungs out as I was telling it.

When it came to the last day of the retreat, I went up to Norbu Rinpoche in the kitchen of the house where the retreat had been held. I had gone to say goodbye, thinking that he would hardly remember someone so new from

continued on page 24