

THE MIRROR

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Rinpoche teaching in Gonpa at Mandarava Retreat in Margarita

O LEICK

Mandarava Chüdlen Retreat *Rdo Rjei Srog Thile Ge Gnad Kri Man Ngag Zab Mo*

From the Longsal Cycle of Mandarava
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Tashigar Norte July 17th - August 1st, 2004

Integrating the Elements - Independence and Overcoming Distractions

by Karin Heinemann

The “Vajra Long Life” is promised to the practitioners who are doing the practices of Long Life according to the Tibetan Tradition. How is that possible? Is this functioning today in our busy situation in the West?

This was the first Practice Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu organized worldwide. (see page 3) Rinpoche explained and practiced with about 400 of his students in Tashigar Norte, Margarita Island, and at the same time, with many more of the big family of members of the International Dzogchen Community. Those attending on the Internet did so either in groups or alone. They could access the teachings by entering a password available to all members. For some the broadcast was nighttime and for others daytime, according to the part of the world where they lived. In Tashigar Norte on Isla Margarita, we arrived at the assembly area most days around 8:30 AM. This gave us enough time before Rinpoche arrived to hear the local Gakyil give information about the organization. Practice and teachings filled the morning from 9:00AM to

12:00 o'clock. Afterwards, Rinpoche remained with us, welcoming everybody warmly who came to speak with him personally.

In the afternoons around 3 o'clock, during the heat of the day, we reassembled in the assembly area. Fabio Andrico showed us how to apply breathing techniques. Nina Robinson gave explanations about the Mandarava Practice. Jakob Winkler prepared us for the transmission on the anniversary of Padmasambhava. Adriano Clemente went through all exercises that Rinpoche had given us in the morning. There were many questions, which Adriano patiently answered. Additional practice hours were offered for Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance.

It was so hot, that I put a wet cloth around my shoulders. In the morning Rinpoche had told us about the wet clothes which were wrapped around the shoulders of monks who were circumambulating their monastery proving their realization of inner heat drying them quickly. Independent of warm clothing, they wore only a thin white cotton cloth even during the cold Tibetan winters. Because of that they were called “Repas”, those who only wear cotton. Well, my wet cloth was drying also, but here in the tropical Caribbean it did not verify my attainment. Today many Tibetan refugees live in India and there are some Lamas who during the hot Indian summer wear cold weather clothing made out of sheep fur. Does that also show a realization of mastering the elements?

In Tibet, with its hard living conditions, some practices are obviously beneficial. There the yogis sit in their cold retreat caves high up in the mountains, far away from any settlement and practice with a minimum of food. No problem, if they had mastered the practice of Chüdlen. This

practice of Chüdlen, which made them independent of gross nourishment, is what Rinpoche taught us at this retreat.

My situation was quite a different one. I was practicing, Chüdlen, but in an “all inclusive” hotel which had a buffet table ten meters long three times a day. I ordered only hot water and rice according to our instructions. The rice sometimes was mixed with tasty vegetables. Plain rice is not good enough for some pretentious hotel customers. Well, no problem, I was competing for who was the best ascetic. It is not the main point to observe rigid rules, but rather to integrate the essence of the elements. To accomplish this one needs to apply techniques of breathing which are much easier on an empty stomach.

The integration of experiences or elements can not be realized through effort. One must begin by applying the Master's instructions in accordance with the transmission, but more importantly one has to be relaxed in instant presence. This means not being distracted by fantasies such as the wish to repeat pleasant feelings or our attachment to food. Only a firm resolution to overcome our attachment to food by itself is not enough to quickly and finely free us of temptation. One has to apply very skillful means to become independent of nourishment, clothing and the other gross elements. Even now the traditional exercises which have been preserved in an unbroken lineage from Tibet are working under our quite different circumstances here in the West. Integrating the essence of the elements makes it possible to realize “The Vajra Long Life”!

May our Master live long!

Edited by Joe Lamb

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Rinpoche's Schedule 2004 - 2006



Mahamudra, Anuyoga,
& Dzogchen

So you see, the first path is the path of liberation through renunciation. Tantrism is the path of liberation through transformation. Then we have Dzogchen. There is also Dzogchen in Tantrism, called Anuyoga. Anuyoga is different. Anuyoga exists only in Tibet, in the Nyingmapa tradition, because when Guru Padmasambhava arrived in Tibet, he taught the teachings of Anuttarantra, Anuyoga and Dzogchen. For that reason, in the Nyingmapa tradition, we say the three yogas - Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga. For other traditions there is not much difference between Mahayoga and Anuttarantra; they are the same. Anuyoga is different.

Anuyoga is a teaching used only in the Nyingmapa school and in no other tradition. There are some practitioners of the Kagyüpa tradition who used Anuyoga methods. Even though these practitioners used Anuyoga methods, they always recognized that Anuyoga is characteristic of Nyingmapa practice. Anuyoga practice became important in the Nyingmapa tradition because Guru Padmasambhava gave this advice to his students: "I am giving the teachings of all three yogas, but that is not sufficient. This is a kind of presentation or introduction and then you must learn and develop the Tantras and original books of these teachings. The Dzogchen teaching must be translated and introduced from Oddiyana, because that is where Garab Dorje taught. There were many, many Dzogchen masters in Oddiyana, therefore it is also the source of all Anuttarantras and the Anuyoga teaching." Guru Padmasambhava also gave this advice: "Later you should go to the country of Trusha where the teaching of Anuyoga is very developed and where you will find all the Tantras of Anuyoga. You can translate them into Tibetan and develop the Anuyoga method."

When the famous Vairocana went to Oddiyana, he translated and developed Dzogchen Semde, Longde, Upadesha. One generation later there was a student of Padmasambhava called Sogpo Palgyi Yeshe and his student Nup Sangye Yeshe. In the time of Nup Sangye Yeshe they went to Trusha where there was a very, very famous translator called Chetsen Kye who translated many Anuyoga Tantras. Chetsen Kye and Nup Sangye Yeshe worked together sometimes, collaborating and translating. In any case, the Anuyoga teachings were all translated into Tibetan and developed in the Nyingmapa tradition.

Anuyoga didn't develop in the Sakyapa, Gelugpa or Kagyüpa schools because they concentrate very much on Anuttarantra and Anuttarantra and Anuyoga are different. These schools said, "We didn't find the Anuyoga teaching in India, there is no such teaching." They do not consider Anuyoga a pure teaching. That is true, Anuyoga did not develop in India. In ancient times, according



Rinpoche at Margarita

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THE BUDDHADHARMA
TWO NOBLE TRUTHS - PART III
(WEB CAST TEACHING)
NAMGYALGAR, APRIL 20, 2003

to history, it developed in very, very ancient times in Sri Lanka. We don't know how it developed and how it disappeared. We don't know how this teaching went from Sri Lanka to Trusha; this is mysterious. Later Anuyoga developed in Trusha and Tibetan scholars discovered it after going to Trusha under the advice of Guru Padmasambhava. Anuyoga is not really accepted in other traditions, and that is why it remained only in the Nyingmapa tradition. Then Trusha disappeared, just like Oddiyana and Shambala. Turkish soldiers occupied almost all of Central Asia and it became Islamic, so we don't know if Trusha disappeared or Islam converted it. Even though Trusha disappeared, today we know where it was. We also know where Oddiyana and Shambala were, but it doesn't help very much. It is most important that we know that this teaching is still alive. That is something wonderful.

What is the difference between Anuyoga and Anuttarantra? Anuttarantra, generally speaking, is very similar to the Yogatantra style. We have that potentiality, but there is something to develop. That's why the development stage is very, very important, the accomplishment stage with channels, chakras and then integration. In that way, we can get into the state of Mahamudra.

In Anuyoga we can use the name "development stage" and "accomplishment stage", but there is no need, like in Anuttarantra. Anuttarantra it is very detailed. It is considered very important. For example, if you receive an Anuttarantra method of teaching, you have a Sadhana or a book. Sometimes the book is very long, sometimes short, medium, etc. When you do this practice, you must read the stages one by one and do the visualization, etc. You build the development stage. You should work that way. This is something similar to the Sutra teaching, the gradual system. That's why also in the Gelugpa tradition there is the famous teaching called Lamrim; Lamrim is a gradual path.

Anuyoga is not that way. In Anuyoga, the consideration is the condition of the individual since

the beginning. In the Dzogchen teaching we say that we have infinite potentiality. There is no difference in Anuyoga and Dzogchen. Anuttarantra is different and things should develop. In Anuyoga there is no need to develop. How can we get in that state? How can we realize that? The Anuyoga system uses the transformation method and Dzogchen Atiyoga uses the self-liberation method. That is the difference. When we transform in Anuyoga, for example, we transform instantly, not gradually. We know that the seed syllable represents our real potentiality. If we transform into Guru Dragphur, for example, we use the sound of HUM. HUM is the seed syllable of the Vajra family. Sound is the root of three primordial potentialities and how we develop manifestations. We use that sound and instantly we transform. We do not build anything because manifestation is a kind of qualification, our qualification since the beginning. We have that potentiality, just like a mirror.

The mirror has infinite potentiality to manifest everything. If you arrive in front of a mirror, your figure instantly manifests in the mirror. It is not gradual. It is immediate and total. Your color, form, size, everything manifests immediately because a mirror has that potentiality. In the same way, everyone has primordial potentiality; we only need a secondary cause or method. The method is something like being in front of a mirror. If you go in front of the mirror, you become the secondary cause for manifesting that reflection. If there is nothing in front of the mirror, if the mirror is in a box, for example, in the dark, it does not manifest anything, even if there is that potentiality. So you see, there is a difference between slowly, slowly developing the manifestation and instant transformation.

In the Tantric system in general, not only Anuyoga or Anuttarantra, the principle of all the methods is working with clarity. You think, you do the visualizations, and then you have clarity of that manifestation. You do not remain in this clarity, you only think there is this figure, etc., but you are in real your nature, in instant presence. You get into that state through clarity. In Tantrism

that is called the "state of Mahamudra".

Mahamudra in the Kagyüpa tradition is a little different because that is Gampopa's specific, special teaching. In general, if you want to understand Mahamudra, you must study. Sakya Pandita said to an inquiring student, "If you study that, you learn a little of this. Then you can have perfect knowledge of Mahamudra as the final goal of Tantrism."

In the Gelugpa tradition there is the Gelug Chakgya Chenpo. Mahamudra, which presents the final goal of Tantric teaching. Gampopa's Mahamudra is combined a little with Dzogchen and Mahamudra together. That's why there are the Four Yogas. In Dzogchen Semde we have also Four Yogas or Four Contemplations. They are very similar. In Dzogchen Semde it is something more and, in general, seems more essential.

There is also Indian Mahamudra translated and introduced from India. Many Kagyüpas say, "Oh, this is not only Gampopa's method. It comes from India." But Mahamudra in India is an explanation of the Mahasiddhas when they are in realization, like Doha. Doha means the Mahasiddhas sing and give teachings to the students. They do not really explain something in the way it is explained in the Four Yogas, etc. It is a little different. In any case, the path, the method we use in Anuyoga, is the non gradual Tantric system. When one realizes in Anuyoga it is called "realization", like in Dzogchen. They don't call it "Mahamudra" because, since the beginning, the idea of realization is similar to Dzogchen.

Dzogchen practitioners use the Tantric Anuyoga system of transformation because it is easier. We can transform directly, we don't need to work too much, going state by state. For example, when we use the practice of Simhamukha, Guru Dragphur, Vajrapani, or Vajrakilaya, all these kinds of practices are related with the Anuyoga method and are non-gradual.

Some Dzogchen practitioners ask me, "Can we use the Anuyoga system for doing the Kalachakra practice?" That's a little difficult because in the Kalachakra there is no non-gradual transformation like in Anuyoga. We have never received this kind of teaching, this transmission. For that reason we can't invent it. If we invent it, it doesn't work or have a function.

Recently I discovered one of the Terma teachings of my teacher, Changchub Dorje, in which there is a Kalachakra practice in the Anuyoga system. I was very surprised. I always thought that teaching did not exist, but it does. So I am trying to develop this practice in the Anuyoga system, and I will teach this practice at Margarita [October 18-29, 2004. (See page 3)] You can use the Kalachakra in the Anuyoga system if you have this kind of transmission, otherwise it can become a kind of invention. Invention is not good.

Tantrism is a transformation teaching method more related with our voice. Then we have a

teaching called Atiyoga, Dzogchen, more related with our mind, where we learn and apply what is called 'self-liberation'. So what is the difference between self-liberation and transformation? When we learn Dzogchen teaching, Atiyoga self-liberation, we say self-liberation is not transformation. So why we are not using transformation? What is the difference?

When you learn Tantrism, Anuttarantra, and Anuyoga, you need a very precise idea of "pure vision" and "impure vision". These two visions are represented with the symbol of the Vajra. In the center is our real nature, the same, but the two aspects of "pure" and "impure" exist. For that reason impure is transforming into pure. When we look through the Atiyoga way of seeing that becomes a part of dualistic vision. If you have a concept of "pure" and "impure" it is dualistic.

We also say that Dzogchen is beyond effort, beyond action. You already have that concept of "pure" and "impure", and now you also act. You try to transform that "impure" into the "pure" dimension. It doesn't correspond with the Dzogchen teaching. You can understand what the difference between self-liberation and Tantric teaching is.

In the path of self-liberation we do not give importance to "pure" and "impure" vision. For example, we are in the human condition, and, of course there are differences in an ordinary way. We can't say, for example, that when we see a statue of a Buddha or a statue of a pig we see the same thing. A pig is pig and Buddha is Buddha. They are not the same; that is our relative condition. We have dualistic vision and we see that. When we say we are in a state of self-liberation, that means we are in instant presence, not our ordinary state.

If you are in instant presence, in a state of contemplation, "pure" vision is a manifestation of Buddha Shakyamuni and "impure" vision is a very bad devil, for example, something ugly, terrible - there is no difference. Both are vision.

That is what Mahasiddhas understood in Tantrism in the end. For example, there is a saying that some Mahasiddhas, Tilopa and others, when giving advice to the students said, "Vision is the not problem." That means it is not necessary to always have pure vision. If you have bad vision, vision is not the problem; the problem is attachment. Attachment is not outside. You can understand that. So how can get in the state of self-liberation? For example, if I am a practitioner of Dzogchen and I am here and I open my eyes, when I open my eyes I can see something. In the same way also I can hear something with my ears, I can smell with my nose, all my senses are open. That means I have contact with objects, objects of senses. That is part of vision. So that is not a problem if I am in instant presence. Any kind of vision, good or bad, doesn't change anything.

The problem is, in general, that

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we immediately lose presence. We follow that vision. When we see something very nice, we think, "Oh, how nice that is! Wonderful! I like it." What does it mean, "I like it"? It means, "I want it also. I want to try to get that." If I can't get it, there are problems and I feel angry. Then other emotions arise, attachment plus others. So that is called, in the Buddhist teaching in general, Chag Dang. Chag and Dang. Chag means attachment, Dang means anger, we don't like it and we refute it. If we are attached, we accept.

We accept, reject, accept, reject, even if it is not necessary. We pass our lives that way. That means we are always distracted with this. That is a problem. For that reason, when we follow the Dzogchen teaching, we say, "Try to be aware, not always distracted! That is not good." With our two legs of attachment and anger we accept and reject. Now I accept, now reject, accept, reject, then we are walk, walk, walk that way in Samsara; it never finishes. Then we add many actions and accumulate many negativities.

When we say "self-liberate" we should self-liberate that, be in instant presence. You don't need any antidote or some particular method to liberate that. Just by being in that state, everything liberates. So this is called "self-liberation".

To learn about self-liberation, it is much better you know a little through the example of the mirror. That is very important. You know that the mirror has infinite potentiality, similar to our primordial potentiality. Everybody has that. But we are ignorant of that; we do not know it. In this case, even if we have that qualification, it has no benefit.

In general, if we look in a mirror, for example, we can see reflections. Our understanding is that we know, "Oh, this is a reflection, this is not real." That is a kind of understanding because understanding, "That is unreal", doesn't have much function. This is called "intellectual understanding", like we speak of "Shunyata" and "Understanding of Shunyata".

Like in a mirror, reflections are unreal. The reflection that manifests in a mirror is interdependent with the object that is manifesting. We have that attachment and we think that object is real. For example, one day when there is very, very hot weather, sunshine, we enter a room and there is a big mirror. We look in the mirror we see a very nice, big ice-cream. You want that ice-cream because the day is very hot. You think, "Oh, I want to eat, I want to enjoy this ice-cream." You do not go into the mirror to get the ice-cream.

Because you have that intellectual knowledge already, you understand and know this is a reflection. Instead, you look here and there. And you find the ice-cream and you eat it. You like it. So you see, that is not real knowledge. That is still a dualistic situation and doesn't have much value.

Really having value means you must understand that we have similar potentiality of the mirror, infinite potentiality. We are not here and looking into a mirror in a dualistic way, and judging and thinking. We are being a mirror. It is an example. We are being the

mirror. If we are being a mirror, how we can get in its potentiality? Somehow the reflections manifest like the qualification of a mirror, somehow we discover and we are really being a mirror in a non-dualistic way.

If we are really being a mirror, even if there are reflections in the mirror, objects outside of mirror, infinite interdependent things, we have no problem. If terrible things manifest in the mirror, we have no problem. Manifestation is our quality because we have that potentiality of showing our qualification. Even if something fantastic is manifesting, that is the same thing. It is only a qualification; that is all. Then we can understand. We have no problem and we are in a state of self-liberation. This is the example of what self-liberation means.

But of course, being like the nature of the mirror is not so easy. For that reason we do retreats. For that reason I am giving different kinds of methods of practice and you apply, learn, and develop them, one by one.

It is important that you know the aspect of our body, speech, and mind. We also have the paths of liberation, the characteristic three paths. It is not necessary that you limit yourself because all is relative and related with your real condition.

For that reason in the Dzogchen teaching there is a saying, if we are becoming a Dzogchen practitioner we should work with our circumstances, how our circumstances are. If there is a circumstance to do practice, we participate, we do. If there is no possibility, we do not force. We work with circumstance. Also with practice, there are many possibilities of doing practices. We do not always need to do formal practice. In some places we can't do formal practices and it is also not so nice. Some people, for example, know very well what "Ganapuja" means. "Ganapuja" means a practitioner is learning how to consume food and drink, but not in an ordinary way. The practice becomes part of us. This is a Ganapuja.

We do not do a Ganapuja only by the preparation of some objects and doing a Ganapuja and chanting, etc. We must bring that knowledge into daily life. In daily life, we are eating and drinking at least three times a day. In that moment we remember Guruyoga or Ganapuja. Sometimes the circumstances are not so easy for you to do a Ganapuja and to chant something. Sometimes we have a short Ganapuja or at least we are saying "AHO MAHA SUKHAHO", "OM AH HUM" something to empower. That is not so easy. For example, if you are in a restaurant and are eating, there are many tables and many kinds of people. Most people are not practitioners. And if you chant a short Ganapuja for example, they all look and think, "Who are they?" In this case it becomes fanaticism. It's negative and not positive at all.

It is important that you know, "Now I am going to eat food," particularly if you are eating meat and bread. There is not much difference between meat and bread. Meat is dead animals. It is considered a more heavy karma. But how is bread produced? You go to a farm and see how they work. They kill millions and millions of

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Schedule Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 2004 - 2006

2004

MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA

Oct. 18 - 29 Kalachakra Retreat of Anuyoga system according to the Terma of Jangchub Dorje
Nov. 9 - 21 Complete teachings & practices of Lhalung Sangdag, the Terma teaching of Heka Lingpa

Dec. 5 - 8 Birthday teaching and practice of Tshedrub (Long life)

CHILE

Dec. 19 - 21 Chile Retreat

ARGENTINA

Dec. 26 - Jan. 2 Tashigar South retreat of Gomadevi, Argentina

2005

Feb. 9 Tibetan Losar, Mandarava practice, Argentina

PERU

Feb. 18 - 20 Peru retreat

MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA

March 4 - 6 Retreat
March 9 - 10 Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Exam
March 11 - 15 Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Training

MEXICO CITY

March 25 - 28 Mexico City Easter retreat

BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO

April 1 - 4 Baja California, Mexico Retreat

USA

April 13 - 17 Los Angeles Retreat
April 27 - May 1 New York City Retreat
May 6 - 8 Tsegyalgar, Conway, Massachusetts Retreat
May 11 - 12 Santi Maha Sangha II Level Exam, Tsegyalgar
May 13 - 17 Santi Maha Sangha III Level Training, Tsegyalgar

RUSSIA

June 3 - 5 Kunsangar, a course of Moxabustion (Limited to persons who know Medicine)
June 8 - 12 Moscow retreat

ITALY

July 1 - 5 Merigar, Italy Retreat 1
July 15 - Aug. 5 My personal retreat, Merigar
July 22 - 24 Moxabustion course for people who are familiar with medicine (Shang-Shung Institute)
Aug. 10 - 16 Merigar Retreat 2

SPAIN

Oct. 5 - 9 Spain Retreat

BRAZIL

Oct. 14 - 18 Brazilian Retreat

MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA

Nov. 4 - 8 Longsal Teaching Retreat
Nov. 25 - 29 Santi Maha Sangha Base and 1st Level Teachers Trainings, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga 1st and 2nd Teachers' Trainings
Dec. 2 - 8 Tshedrub (Long life) teaching
Dec. 26 - Jan. 1 Tashigar Norte retreat

FIRST MANDARAVA RETREAT WEBCAST with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu FROM MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA, JULY 2004

The web cast of the Mandarava retreat given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Margarita Island represents one of the first products in the extensive project of reorganization initiated by the Dzogchen Community together with AmbientiWeb Consulting with the aim of promoting growth and future support for the Community.

Merigar decided to propose a web casting service to all the other 'gars' and 'lings' in order that all Community members could have access to the teachings, even at distance. The technological solution by which the web cast service was carried out made use of the infrastructure set up for the Community's new IT system. This brought about a sizeable reduction in costs and is the first service produced and supplied by the Community. Examining in detail this initia-

tive, AmbientiWeb Consulting offered the Community their technical studio, the system set-up as well as all the work required for carrying out the web cast, free of charge.

The AmbientiWeb Consulting team collaborated with the Community's staff both in Italy (Maurizio Mingotti) and Venezuela (Amare Pearl, Grisha Mokhin). After the initial settling-down period, their collaboration was productive and very satisfactory.

Technically speaking, we ran up against the obstacle of a limited infrastructure for transmitting from Margarita Island that at first analysis proved to be quite inadequate, together with some organizational problems at the Gar. For about half of the retreat, the transmission was carried out through a direct telephone connection from Margarita Island to the office of AmbientiWeb Consulting where the digital audio encoding was done. This was because the stability of the line was not reliable.

For the second half of the retreat, the transmission took place through a 'dial-up' connection from Margarita Island, with the audio encoding done right at the

site of the transmission, since the line was considered to be stable enough. This improved the quality of the audio.

The Association's server which is located at the web farm of one of our technological partners has been designed to handle from 500 to 1100 connections at the same time in order to guarantee service even in the case of a considerable number of listeners.

The result of the web cast in terms of registered users (more than 550) and the number of connections together with the great amount of positive feedback that we received, has been very satisfying.

AmbientiWeb Consulting and the technical staff of the Dzogchen Community in Merigar, are currently working on developing still further the web cast tech system in order to be able to offer to the Gars and the bigger centers of the Association as soon as possible both a web cast audio service as well as a contemporary 'real time' audio-video transmission service.

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INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL NEWS

International Gakyil Web site

The new Web site of the International Gakyil is not yet available! It has been decided by the International Gakyil to wait until the new Merigar web site is finished and working.

As most of you might know, Yeshe Namkhai and Ambienti Web have restructured Merigar's economic and technical organization over the last year.

The International Gakyil has been kindly offered by the administrators to participate in this new project of the web site.

We are happy to have been offered a "harbor" for our IG web site, but there are still a few months to go. We have been working on the texts of the new web site and also on the new version of the little blue booklet "The Dzogchen Community".

Therefore, when questions within a Gakyil of a country, city or Gar arise and you need clarification, please contact us directly:

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Karin Koppensteiner-Eisenegger: garuda@bluewin.ch

Update on the Merigar Museum

An interview with Giovanni Boni
July 10, 2004

Liz Granger for *The Mirror*

Last August at Merigar, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu presented his idea for building a museum at Merigar to house the many Tibetan objects that have accumulated over the years - the nomad tents, the medical thankas and many other precious objects (see "The Mirror" issue 66). At the time, Rinpoche communicated his project to architect Giovanni Boni who has been developing the idea. The Mirror asked Giovanni how plans for the museum were progressing.

The Mirror: Giovanni, how are plans going ahead for the building of the museum at Merigar?

Giovanni Boni: The Project for the museum at Merigar started about a year ago when we presented the idea to the local authorities. They were very happy with it and we started to prepare the initial project that was examined by the local and provincial authorities who approved the general idea in December of last year. Then we started working on the project in its present form, the way you see it in these plans. The new plans had to be in agreement with the authorities' regulations on the height of the structure and its integration into the environment. They prepared a structural variant so that we could have planning permission. The variant was worked on but not approved because of local elections. The previous Arcidosso administration was replaced by the new and at the moment we are working with their architect to take up the matter with the new administration. I think that in a month or six weeks the variant should be approved.

The Mirror: Once you have approval for the project, what is the next step?

Giovanni Boni: Once the project has been approved, we have to find a way to get financing - it isn't enough to simply have local permission in order to build the museum. Up to now we have considered different possibilities but the financial help from the European Community that we were seeking for the construction of buildings for cultural purposes - going through the Province and the Region - has not yet been activated. There is European financing for other types of projects but not for cultural things such as the museum. So from our research we haven't yet found a source for financing the project.

We have contacted various people who are expert in the field of financing in order to have some advice about which path would be best to follow. These people, however, are waiting to see that we have permission for the construction from the local authorities. Hence, at the moment, we are in this condition - we have some possibilities for the future but until there is permission at the local level, we cannot go ahead.

The Mirror: When the museum project was first mentioned last summer, you spoke about the creation of a virtual museum. What exactly does this mean?

Giovanni Boni: The initiative of the virtual museum started along with the main project and it was intended to give a better idea of precisely what we want to do with the main project. The virtual museum, or virtual images on a web page, will give an idea or simulation of how the museum will appear. For example, photographing a Tibetan tent and showing how it would look inside the museum. Or creating a list of all the materials that will make up the museum collection. We already have photos of a good part of these objects and a rough copy of the virtual museum has been created, but it is not yet ready and will not be until we need to use it.

Our idea is to have it ready for the end of the year. At the moment we don't need it so it is not urgent. We had thought to have the virtual museum ready for the visit of the President of the Region, Mr. Martini, in August, but since he is unable to come there is no urgency to finish the virtual museum. 'Ambiente Web' is taking care of the graphic work and all other facets involved in preparing the web site. Then the Shang-Shung Institute (Italy) and ASIA are making all their material available in digital form together with all the works that the Namkhai family is offering.

Of course, this interview is a good opportunity to ask if other people would like to make objects available for the museum. We will be making a book of donors. Some people might like to lend things for certain periods of time or for certain exhibitions. If someone has something that they think would be interesting to exhibit in the museum, we would make sure that the articles were treated with the maximum consideration, insured, etc., so that the museum could really function beyond simply having just regular exhibits on show. For example there is a famous collector in Austria who is willing to lend us his objects for particular exhibitions.

The Mirror: Since it seems very probable that approval by the local authorities for building the museum will be given, financing must surely be the most important issue to tackle.

Giovanni Boni: The first thing is approval of the variant by the local authorities and then we will concentrate on the financing. In fact, I think we could ask readers of *The Mirror* if any of them know of any type of opportune forms of financing in Europe, perhaps as a part

ner for a foreign activity or foundation - we would be very happy to collaborate. It is important to open channels of collaboration to research financing even outside Italy. I think that in Europe we could find ways to work together with another group which might be more effective in obtaining financing from the European Community rather than just operating in a single country.

For example, if there is a foundation, say, in Germany, interested in sponsoring this initiative, it might be seen with different eyes by the European Community because it would be a collaboration between two countries, not just one. This type of collaboration is also more likely to receive financing on the European level. Through our contacts outside Italy we

would like to know what groups might be interested in the museum project. Even if financing is limited, perhaps through donations, etc., if we could put together a package of people who would finance the project, we could present this list of people who had already donated to the project to possible future donors.

The Mirror: Have you been able to make an estimate of the costs involved in construction?

Giovanni Boni: The full amount for the project we estimate at around two and a half million Euro. Of course this is an estimate, it could be more or less, depending on how things go, the materials we use etc., etc. We have calculated this hypothetical amount to give an idea, although in practice it may be different.

The Mirror: Could you briefly tell us about the construction of the building and the material that will be used.

Giovanni Boni: The outer walls of the ground floor will be built of reinforced concrete poured inside a wooden mould which will also create some insulation. The walls will be about 30 or 35 cm thick and insulated both internally and externally. You see, since we are in an earthquake area, we have to build according to the regulations for buildings in earthquake areas and so the walls must be reinforced concrete that will be able to withstand tremors. So the walls on the ground floor will be built in this way to a height of six meters. Then there will be the main central pillar supporting the beams that spread like rays from the central pillar. There will be 16 beams spreading out from the central pillar, which rest on the external walls.

The beams will be made of wood similar to the beams that we used in the Gonpa. They are made of layers of wood that have been glued together to a thickness of about a meter. The floor should be quite resistant, not made of wood that could be easily spoiled in a public place at least on the ground and first floors. Perhaps we might have a wood floor on the second floor, what we call the "Treasure Room" since it would be the smallest and most particular, both for security and accessibility. We'll see.

The roof will be a conical shape and covered in copper. It will house a long window that will wind up in a spiral shape, like a shell. That means that it will be a long single window. It will go up from the lower part to the top. It has been designed to give the idea of a shell.

The Mirror: That is a very unusual form for a window.

Giovanni Boni: This was a cross between an idea that I proposed to Rinpoche and an idea that he had in one of his dreams some time ago about this part of Merigar. When I spoke to him about this idea for the window, he told me about a dream he had had some time ago. In the dream he had gone inside this building where he heard some music with the melody of the mantra of the liberation of the Six Lokas. He said that the building had a lot of glass and was open and built in a particular form and from this the idea of the conch shell was born.

The central column will be very large and contain a lift so that the upper floors will be accessible to all. We also had an idea to build a room below ground level but then we decided to keep the project just to the ground floor and two upper floors because of the costs involved.

Another important aspect of the museum will be the way it is managed. It would be a good idea to involve a public body in the management of the museum, not just try to manage it ourselves. A collaboration between a public structure and us. Since it will be a museum, it will be open to the public and will have opening hours. If a structure is open to the public, it should be easy to visit. We cannot ask the public to pay an exorbitant ticket for entry. People will pay a normal price ticket. In order to do this, it will have to be managed publicly so those public funds will be involved in the running of it.

The Mirror: Thank you for your time, Giovanni. We look forward to hearing more news about the museum in the near future.

www.istitutoshangshung.org

CONCLUDING TALK
by CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU
SANTI MAHA SANGHA TEACHERS' TRAINING
ISLA MARGARITA, JUNE 2004

transcription by Monica Gentile

Today is the last day of the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Teachers' Training. We have finished the teacher training, more or less, and now we must remind ourselves and understand what the importance of this training is.

Teaching means that somebody is going to teach. In general, there are many types of teaching, but when we speak of teaching a spiritual path, that means that the teaching is going to deal with the real condition of the individual.

So, if we are going to do something in the correct way, we can help that individual, but if we do something wrong we can damage the individual. We need to understand what our capacities are and what our understanding is.

In general, many people have a strong ego. They always think, "Oh I know everything". Some people even qualify themselves. They feel, "Oh I am not normal, I am a special person, I am a daka, or dakini". This means one is not daka or dakini, but one is conditioned by one's ego. This is very important to understand. In fact, many teachings explain that the cause of our human birth is pride.

We have very strong pride, that is true. So it is very, very important that we observe our pride. Particularly, if one becomes teacher, one does not have to think immediately, "Oh I am a teacher, I have a position". A teacher means somebody who has some knowledge and with this knowledge he helps others. In this case, this person should be very humble.

One has also to be prepared to make sacrifices if necessary. For example, if someone goes to teach in a place where there are not good conditions, one does not have to think, "I am a teacher, they must make good service for me, prepare a good house, etc."

Sometimes people say: "Oh they did not make good service and we had difficulties". A teacher does not need any service. You have two legs, two hands, you know how to speak and can arrange things for yourself. All those are really manifestations of ego.

Particularly, when one becomes a teacher, one has to remember that those things are very, very important. You must maintain the idea of only helping others. That means maintaining the idea of how you can help - how you can make someone understand what is the real condition. You are really ready to serve others and make sacrifices until they understand what the real condition is.

If you are not presenting yourself as a teacher then you do your best, but you do not have that particular duty. When you are considered a teacher, that is your duty.

Also, when one becomes a teacher, one has to learn how to communicate. Somebody may have already have experience of teaching in a school or university

and have some training in speaking. Somebody else, even if they have practiced and learned and trained and have knowledge, they do not have that kind of experience and when they start to talk with people they find it difficult.

But this is not the main problem because one can train and learn how to speak. The important thing is to show that you are helping people and making service for them. It is not like giving an intellectual lesson. Teaching is not giving a lesson. In the teaching, the principle is that you have some knowledge, some understanding and you transmit this to others.

If, for example, you know how to repair a watch, then you know how to open it and how to repair it. That means you have that knowledge. If one is interested to receive that knowledge, you show him how to open and close

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the watch and what one has to do. Your really your duty is really that the person understands perfectly what to do. Then your teaching is fulfilled and you also feel happy.

But we are not teaching how to repair a watch. We are learning and transmitting the Base of Santi Maha Sangha. The Base of Santi Maha Sangha is to transmit the global basic knowledge of the nine vehicles, so in this case we should first learn and train ourselves, do the practice, become familiar with it and then we can inform and teach. That is the reason why we ask if one has really done the training sufficiently and not only read the words found in the book of the Base. In particular, one has to practice and have the experiences of the different practices, because one needs to have this knowledge to be able to inform others. If we are not entering in the knowledge with our experience, then we cannot communicate. So this is the way we prepare the Santi Maha Sangha and how we communicate it.

We should not always think, "I am only explaining the Base of Santi Maha Sangha according to this book", but when one is teaching one has to be in the state of what he is communicating. That is why when we do any kind of practice and teaching we always deal with Guruyoga. Guruyoga is the essence of practice, it is the knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching that we have received, and it is the transmission. Being in the state of Guruyoga also means that you are in the state of presence with your teacher, even if he is not physically present. The teacher represents all the three roots, and in particular, in relation with the Guardians.

When we deal with the Dzogchen teaching in particular, this is also related with the Guardians. You remember that I frequently say when we are going to teach, and in particular teaching the principle of the Dzogchen teaching, we always ask the Guardians for per-

mission. Guardians are those who make service for the teaching, the transmission and the teacher. So we cannot teach without this presence. We ask permission and then we teach. So that is how we understand why we deal with Guruyoga.

When you are speaking and communicating with other people, you do not think, "Now I am going to explain the Base of Santi Maha Sangha according to this book, this argument." You are thinking, "Now there are people who are interested to learn, and I ask permission to my teacher and the Guardians and try to communicate according to the interest of these people".

If you observe somebody who gives teachings, you can see this very well. For example, sometimes if somebody is giving a teaching, at the beginning, even if we ask him to talk loudly

because we do not understand, that person still speaks in a low tone and it is not easy to understand. After fifteen minutes that person speaks in a very loud voice. It means that that person has enough voice to allow everybody to understand, so why did it happen this way? It is because that person is thinking; "Now I am explaining this argument to the people". Then, of course, when you try to explain you do not have sufficient voice, but later you become more integrated with

It is said in the Sutra that one should teach according to the condition, capacities and desire of the people. If we communicate in this way, people can understand and be interested.

that argument and your voice develops. That is normal.

If you know that if you are giving a teaching, a public talk, and you think, "These people are interested so I will communicate", then you can also have a sufficient voice to make people hear and understand. It is also very important that from the very beginning you talk loudly enough so that everybody can hear you. It is not necessary that you slowly develop your voice.

This is an example of how to communicate. Moreover, you do not think always, "Now I will explain this thing and then I will say other things". That means that you are preparing in an intellectual way. You do not need to prepare so much in an intellectual way. In particular, if you have a little more experience of the teaching, you have more or less the idea, you need to work with circumstances and make people understand. When you are teaching, you can also read on the faces of the people. If you look at the people you may see when they do not understand, when they are not listening or hearing. That means that you are not communicating

in the proper way and you try to communicate in a more interesting way.

I remember when I was in Japan. There were some twenty-five people at the teachings. They had all listened to teachings before and had teachers. They all sat in the meditation position, with joined hands and it seemed they were meditating. Some people had closed eyes, some had open eyes, but all were very stable. Then it seemed like they were not very concentrated on what I was saying. Then I wanted to see if they were really listening and started to give examples of very funny things and also some stories of Drugpa Kunleg, but even if I was explaining very funny things and laughed myself, they were still not laughing. I was very surprised thinking, "Why aren't they laughing?" I developed more this kind of explanation to try to

understand what they were feeling. Still they were not laughing but insisted on their meditation positions.

Then I laughed and said, "Even though I am laughing you Japanese people never laugh, even though I am saying something funny". Then they started to laugh and continued laughing for some minutes. Later they changed their attitude and when I went to Japan the second time, they changed their attitude and they became almost normal.

Another experience I remember was in a place near Tsegylgar, in a center where they were having a Theravadan retreat.

things and then they started to laugh. Even then, however, they laughed in a ritualistic way. I was very surprised and kept repeating the jokes to enjoy that way of laughing. John Shane understood what I was doing and he was also laughing a lot. You know sometimes things like that happen.

So when we are teaching it is very important we know the desire of people, what people like and how they understand. This is very, very important. In the teaching of Buddha, for example, there are not only three yantras, but there are also innumerable teachings. Nowhere did Buddha say that the teaching is set once and for all in a determinate way, because the teaching must work with the condition of the individual. It is said in the Sutra that one should teach according to the condition, capacities and desire of the people. If we communicate in this way, the person can understand and be interested. This means that the teacher has to enter in the dimension of the student. It is never said that the teacher decides to teach in a particular way and everybody has to follow in that way. If we work like that, even if there are ten different desires and capacities, everybody can understand in ten different ways according to one's capacities and desire. In the real sense, the condition is unique; there is no difference.

You remember that Buddha said, "This is the really profound luminous real nature of understanding". That is what the teacher introduces, but then if we only repeat those words of the Buddha, then nobody can understand. For this reason we must work with circumstances and with the conditions of students

This is something very important to understand to become a teacher.

Moreover, by practicing year after year, we should be able to discover how precious the Dzogchen teaching

is and how it is really the essence of all teachings. How understanding the real sense of that teaching is something very difficult to have. Fortunately, I have sufficient knowledge of the teaching from the grace of my teacher, and with my experience I can communicate to other people who are interested. So maybe you already have at least that knowledge, and for this reason I prepared the Santi Maha Sangha and made sacrifices in order that the teaching can be carried on in the future. I hope that it is a kind of guarantee that in the future there will be some continuation of this kind of teaching. There really is the danger that the teaching will become only a form. Many people are dealing more with worldly situations; people are interested in place, position, money, etc.

We are going ahead, day after day, continuously in that way and then we completely lose the sense of the teaching. We know that and we try to keep our responsibility. Keeping responsibility means we should do the Santi Maha Sangha and make some really qualified teachers who can carry on the teaching in an alive way.

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RINPOCHE: Do you have any questions about this text (*The Marvellous Primordial State, Changchub Sem Medu Jungwa [Byang chub sems rmad du byung ba]*)? If you have questions then I can reply or explain, but I cannot explain the entire text. Do you find this book easy or difficult?

TRANSLATORS: Difficult.

RINPOCHE: Yes, it is not that easy. Some parts are not very clear. That is the problem. And that is the case not only with this text, in many Tantras there are parts that are not very precise and very difficult to understand.

ELIO: We also use four different editions of this Tantra, the Tsamdrag (*mTshams brag*), the Vairo Gyubum (*Bai ro rgyud 'bum*), the Tingkye published by Dilgo Khyentse (*gTing skyes*) and the Derge (*sDe dge*). The Derge edition is often very different from the Tsamdrag. It seems as if the editors of the Derge have added some extra words to try clarify obscure points that are difficult to understand. These kinds of additions sometimes seem useful but sometimes it is not certain if they really convey what the Tantra wants to say. What do you think Rinpoche, what could be the version to use as the base for a translation?

RINPOCHE: How is the edition of Vairocana?

ELIO: It is almost the same of the Tsamdrag.

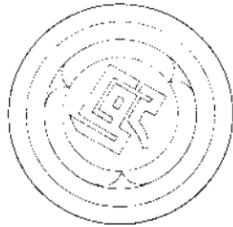
RINPOCHE: In the Vairo Gyubum there are many mistakes, but this book must be more authentic

ELIO: The Tsamdrag and Vairo are very similar, almost the same, there are also some mistakes in the Tsamdrag and in the Vairo, but they are very similar. The other two editions are similar between themselves, but different from the Tsamdrag and the Vairo editions.

RINPOCHE: Yes, because when they printed the Nyingma Gyubum, the editorial work was always supervised by Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (*Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen; 1697 - 1774*). Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen also checked the printing of Tengyur and Kangyur at Derge. At the end of many discussions they also published the Nyingma Gyubum, which he checked. So he had a deep scholastic knowledge. I do not know how his knowledge of Dzogchen was, but when he found something not clear it was

Interview & Discussion by the Translators of the Second Translators' Training with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Isla Margarita, Venezuela

May 2004



easy for him to clarify.

ELIO: Do you want to say something about Mejung in general?

RINPOCHE: Yes, when we are learning about the Tantras of Dzogchen Semde, we can find a list of the various Tantras and at the end we find the Kunje Gyalpo and the Mejung; this is considered something important. There are also other texts whose titles are Mejung, but the text we are trying to translate now is considered a kind of root of Dzogchen Semde. Maybe when we find some difficult part we can also check other Tantras with the title of Mejung and see if there are any explanations of those words we cannot understand well.

ELIO: Where can we find them?

RINPOCHE: In the Tsamdrag, I think. There are two or three of such a text, I think, that can be found in different editions.

ELIO: When you asked us to translate this text, did you have in mind some particular reason?

RINPOCHE: Yes, because we already know the main text of Dzogchen Semlung, but when Semlung is quoted in other texts, the Mejung is considered a kind of root. Many years before, someone wanted to translate something and I told her she could try to translate the Mejung and I prepared everything, but then she did not do it. I always thought it could be important to translate it. I read the text many times and some parts are not so difficult, others are. If we could find some kind of commentary, it could be easier to clarify the difficult parts, but unfortunately no commentary to this Tantra is available. If you check the other Mejung Tantras, you can find some clarification. For example, the Rigpai Khujug is only few verses, but when I read the Tantra called Rigpai Khujug I then understood those few words and the principle of those few verses.

JIM VALBY: I had the idea that maybe in the future - if our capacities develop together - we could do some translation in a group

because a few years before you told me that it is not a good idea for one big ego translator to do the translation.

RINPOCHE: Yes, this is very important, because in general we have many problems with translators. In general, they decide their way is a unique way and they never compare their work with others and do not accept [input from others], and they use some words and it becomes also very difficult to work with these kinds of people. I feel afraid to work with these people who are limited, because one cannot clarify things in this way. They have their own ideas and they always go with these ideas.

We should do translation like a research. But how do we do research? Also many professors say they do research, but in fact they already have their own ideas, and in particular ideas related to a political situation, left or right ideas, and when they do research, they apply those ideas and it never becomes a research. Research means trying to discover the real meaning, it does not mean the relationship to fascism, communism or any kind of politics. The thing is to discover what is really there. If there is something wrong one can also point out there is something wrong. What is called research is something very rare, and very rare that people are really doing serious research. In translation we also do the same thing, we try to understand the real meaning and sense and then we try to bring it in another language and try to understand how to do it better. This is very important. So a group of people work and exchange ideas and it becomes something very important. Translation is important because in the future people who are learning and

studying will study from that text will consider it as correct. So if there is something wrong they will follow that; they will not be able to check the translation.

For example, a professor wrote an article about *drekar* (*'bras dkar*). There is a tradition in Tibet during the New Year about some people called *drekar*. Those *drekar* come and put a mask on the face. *'bras* means "fruit" and *dkar* means "white" Those *drekar* get up very early in the morning of the New Year and go to various houses, particularly houses of rich people and say good things and then they receive food and money in return because it is considered a good omen. The professor misunderstood the word *'bras* as *'dre* that means "spirit" so he understood the word *'bras dkar* as meaning "white spirit" instead of white fruit. So once he asked me: "Do you know some story of black spirit, black *'dre*?" And I replied "No, I do not know, I never heard of it, but what is that?" He replied "I do not know, but as there are already white spirits, I thought there could be some story about black spirits too". Then I asked him, "But what is this white spirit?" and he replied, "'bras dkar". Then I said, "You mean those people that go around saying things in New Year?" He replied, "Yes". But I said, "Those people are called "'bras dkar" white fruit not "'dre dkar" white spirit, in Tibetan. However, he did not accept what I said because he had already published some book about it, and another professor had followed and wrote also something about it so it all had become something public.

So everybody who learns about Tibetan history keeps the books of these two professors in high esteem and that is the reason why he could not accept and change. I told him that *drekar* is a tradition started in the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama and that is why when they recite it, they always mention the Fifth Dalai Lama because

he invented this tradition and asked people to do this. Later the professor asked me: "Can you find something written by the Fifth Dalai Lama about this subject?" And I replied, "I don't know, but I think I can find something written by Mipham." In fact I went to the library and found the book of Mipham mentioning the *drekar* and brought it to him. Then the professor said, "Oh yes, then it is true". However he never changed his version, he just put a footnote in his book saying, "According to Prof. Norbu, *drekar* means White Fruit." And that is all. This is an example of people when they become intellectual, they construct their own dimension and consider this is my version, that is his version. Also in translating they consider a word should be translated in a certain way and they do not accept how others translate it. I think this is not very productive. If there are some complicated words, like Dharmakaya, Nirmanakaya or Sambhogakaya, is much better if we use the Sanskrit word and later we can explain it. But when we translate those words they become really complicated because they are very limited and do not correspond. In Tibetan there are some words that are really not easy to translate. So I think it is important to collaborate. I think it is also very important when translators are together and work together, that they can make a kind of collection of words which can become a kind a manual that everybody has agreed upon and can use. When one person compiles a dictionary by himself, others do not accept it because that is human limitation.

Medu jungwa [literally: marvel, wonderful, excellent], I like also this name. Also I like when we say Kuntu Zangpo, *Medu jungwa* Kuntu Zangpo. Much better than saying samsara, transmigration, suffering, no? We already have all these things, but it is not necessary to concentrate on them. We are now perfected in our condition. Being in that state, then we are happy.

Good work! Go ahead with your job! It is time to eat, and also you can go swimming sometimes. Yes, that is good.

Transcribed by Monica Gentile and edited by Jakob Winkler

The Second Training for Translators from Tibetan Isla Margarita, May - July, 2004

A report by Oliver F. Leick

It was the wish of our precious Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, that a training for people with good capacity to translate texts from Tibetan into a Western language be offered. Rinpoche asked for this training so that the Dzogchen Community would be able to publish various texts - especially the very important Dzogchen Tantras - in a very precise and correct way. The main translator of the Dzogchen Community, Adriano Clemente, is so overloaded with translation work that he cannot take on anymore responsibility. The idea of this training is to train translators so that they will be able, in the near future, to translate Dzogchen texts. Rinpoche appointed the Tibetologist and the newly approved Santi Maha Sangha Base Level teacher, Elio Guarisco, to be responsible for the training and asked myself, Oliver F. Leick, the chairman of the Shang-Shung Institute/Austria, to be in charge of all the



organization and financing of the training.

This year was the second time that translators of the International Dzogchen Community from all over the world had the possibility to take part in the Training for Translators from Tibetan. In 2003, the training took place in Merigar, Italy, and the result of this first training - the new book of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu called "Being Born, Living and Dying" - will be published soon.

This year, for the lucky participants, the training took place on Isla Margarita, near Tashigar Norte, and Elio Guarisco guided and instructed the translators again in a smooth and humble way, so that everybody could benefit from working together. Like last year, the Shang-Shung Institute/Austria granted some scholarships to those unable to afford to come and stay in Margarita.

The training lasted for forty-four days and was split into two parts: the first one was May 20 - June 10, 2004 and the second one from June 24 - July 15, 2004. Most of the people took

continued on next page

part in both parts of the training, but some could only participate in one. The task of the training in 2004 was to translate the Mejung Tantra, an ancient and marvelous Dzogchen Tantra. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu chose this text. It was clear right from the beginning that this work would be very difficult, as the Tantra is extremely difficult to translate and would never had been possible to complete without the generous and compassionate help of our Master. Everyone was very pleased and thankful that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche himself visited the group of translators and gave a talk on the importance of the training, and especially on the particular text they were translating. Adriano Clemente also found some time to collaborate with the group for some days. The outer situation for the Training was absolutely perfect: It took place in a wonderful house very near to Gar, where people could work in a very concentrated way and not be disturbed by anybody. For individual study the participants could sit outside on the veranda, where they enjoyed a smooth cooling wind, and if they wanted they could also take a swim in the swimming pool.

For the collective reading of the text, everybody sat in the house around a big, wonderful wooden table on comfortable chairs, using their own laptops. The number of translators was just perfect as everybody had his or her own place to sit and to work on the table. Everybody had the necessary materials that are used for translations, like different kinds of digital Tibetan dictionaries, and even a connection to the Internet was supplied which is not at all easy to get on Margarita Island.

Everybody was very happy and expressed their gratitude that such a precious and unique possibility for studying, learning and becoming a qualified translator in the future was happening. They were thankful that they could read and work with this old and fantastic text, even if it was a very difficult work as the text itself was so difficult to understand. The teamwork or collective translation was very important for most of the translators and they especially liked it since, in general, translators are used to working alone.

The work was very intensive, concentrated and with a strict timetable. They worked six days a week, Monday to Friday, and dedicated the whole day for translation work. Saturday mornings and Sundays were used to relax. Their work was divided into two parts: individual work on the text and collective reading and discussion of the translations. The collective reading and discussion of the text was very helpful for everyone and that way they could learn and progress. Much emphasis was also put in the explanations and discussion of the correct meaning of Tibetan grammar, as this seems to be the crucial point, as a translation can only be good and especially precise if the translator knows and is following the precise rules of Tibetan grammar. According to Elio, everybody who took part in this training could proceed in their way of translating and improved their capacity of translating very much; the progress is really visible.

The group managed to finish the translation of this Tantra. The translation will first be rechecked by Elio Guarisco and Adriano Clemente and then edited into correct English. Afterward, the text will be ready to be published.

The following people took part in the Training (in alphabetic order of the countries):

- Finland, Mika Sillanpana
- France, Jean-Luc Schneider
- Germany, Saadet Arslan and Jakob Winkler
- Hungary, Attila Nadi
- Italy, Monica Gentile and Fabian Sanders
- Russia, Grisha Mokhin and Alexander Pubants
- Spain, Oriol Auguilar
- Ukraine, Igor Berkhin
- Jim Valby from the USA helped as a coordinator in the first part of the training.

The special training in 2004 is over now, but the individual work for the translators is not finished. In order to become a good and qualified translator it is very important that one trains oneself several hours a day. Most of the participants of the training are fulfilling these requirements, as they either study or work at a university or are writing their thesis. It is planned that the training in 2005 will take place in Italy in Merigar, as Rinpoche will stay in Europe next year for some months.

As the responsible for the Shang-Shung Institute/Austria, I don't want to miss the opportunity to inform you about the financial aspect of the Training for Translators from Tibetan. Until now, we have spent more than 20,000 Euros for the two trainings, which covered all the expenses for the scholarships, the rent of the location and the costs of the instructor. The Training for Translators has been established as a permanent task of the Shang-Shung Institute and in that way continuity, quality and stability is guaranteed. If you think this training is something important and worth support, we would be extremely happy if you could collaborate with us financially. With your support we can grant more scholarships and do more translations, which again is for the benefit for all beings interested in the Teachings. To offer support, please contact our Institute or send your donations online via our web site.

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Project for Preservation of the Sacred Texts of Changchub Dorje

Over the years, all of our Vajra brothers and sisters have heard Chögyal Namkhai Norbu tell many wonderful stories about the time Rinpoche spent with Changchub Dorje. When Rinpoche was young man, he studied and transcribed the *gongter* of his teacher Changchub Dorje dictated from an open window while Changchub Dorje visited patients. Changchub Dorje was quite prolific and left behind a legacy of about sixty books, spanning in content from Tibetan Buddhism to traditional Tibetan medicine and astrology.

Unfortunately, after Changchub Dorje's death, due to the political instability of the times, the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, and other socio-economic factors, about ten volumes were lost and now only fifty volumes remain. Recently, Rinchen Samdrub, a Khamdo native related to Changchub Dorje's descendants via marriage, contacted Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to ask for his help to preserve this important treasure trove of teachings. According to Rinchen Samdrub, currently the coordinator of the project to preserve Changchub Dorje's writings in Khamdogar, Tibet, the remaining treasure books of Changchub Dorje are seriously at risk of disappearing because the village does not have the financial resources to preserve them.

Compelled by the urgency of the task, Rinchen Samdrub moved the project's base of operation to

Lhasa, where he and his assistants have access to more advanced technology and a better environment suitable for the preservation



of the handwritten originals (previously, in Khamdogar, mice and a leaky roof in the granary where the blocks were stored ruined most of the original woodblocks). At present, they have already begun to enter the texts in Samboda script into the computer. This is a process that requires painstaking work. The handwritten script of the originals is often hard to decipher, and once the text has been input in the computer, it is revised at least four times to make sure there are no mistakes or typos. Simultaneously, delicate originals are scanned before they deteriorate further. Eventually the entire works of Changchub Dorje will be printed in one thousand copies, to be distributed among monasteries and various schools.

However, more help is needed if this project, scheduled to take three years, is to be completed successfully. There is need, for example, for a computer, a printer, a scanner, and other necessary equipment, as well as office space, and living expenses for the people working in the project. To give you an idea of the work involved, each book averages about 500 pages. The cost for entering each page in the computer is 6 Yuan RMB (a bit less than one dollar). Each page needs to be checked against errors four times, and the first control of each page costs 2 Yuan, and for the second, third and fourth it costs 1 Yuan for each page. The total amount needed equals 374,096 Yuan or \$45,621 US.

It is not a huge sum, especially considering the immense benefit to result from this initiative. In order to make this extraordinary project a reality, donations are necessary.

Please send contributions to:

Shang-Shung Institute in America
 Att: Will Shea, Treasurer
 PO Box 277, Conway, MA 01341
 USA

Or use the link below for contributions on line

<http://shangshung.org/cgi-bin/merchant2/merchant.mv?>

If you choose the latter option, after making your donation, please make sure to write an email to our treasurer, Will Shea, will@shangshung.org, specifying the amount donated and the name of the project. For any other information please contact will@shangshung.org.

Shang-Shung Institute, Italy

A well-owed thanks and a warm welcome!

The management of the Shang-Shung Institute, Italy, would like to thank Rita Renzi and Liz Granger, who in the last seven months has collaborated in the office work, for their precious collaboration. Rita leaves the Institute after five years although she will continue to work on promoting new courses. Liz will continue to translate various textbooks for the Institute as they are readied for publication. Rita, whose name was proposed for collaborating with the Institute by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, has had a fundamental role in the growth and development of the Institute over the years for which we are very grateful. Liz was able to flank Rita part-time from February until the present. The Shang-Shung Institute Italy, would also like to welcome Ana Lopez who from August 16, 2004, will become our new secretary. We give her our best wishes for her future work and for an atmosphere of active collaboration and communication within the Institute.

CALENDAR OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES 2003-2004 DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE - ITALY

MERIGAR: September 18-24
 Second part of the intensive FIRST YEAR COURSE OF TRADITIONAL TIBETAN MEDICINE, which will last four years.

MERIGAR: September 25-29
 Five day intensive course of DREAMS & MEDICINE
 Cost: 250 Euro

OCTOBER
 GERMANY: October 1-10
 Intensive course of KU NYE FIRST LEVEL

BOLOGNA, ITALY: October 15
 Lecture on Tibetan medicine and massage
 Libreria Ibis of Cesare Pilati

ROME: October 16-17
 Sixth and final weekend of the 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 KU NYE FIRST LEVEL

ROME: November 13-14
 First part of KU NYE second level
 The course will start with a theoretical/practical exam of admission.

Cost: 750 Euro for the entire course of six weekends including all teaching material

NAPLES: November 26-28

First part of KU NYE first level
 Cost: 720 Euro for the entire course including teaching material

DECEMBER 2004 – FEBRUARY 17, 2005: TOUR IN AUSTRALIA

Information and reservations:

Milan: Elisa Copello
 tel: 0233607505,
 email: elisa_cop@libero.it,
 mob: 3387027207

Rome: Anna Marie Clos:
 tel. 065885142, email:
arura@libero.it

Austria & Germany:
 Oliver Leick,
 email: oliver.leick@utanet.at
Merigar: Secretary of the Shang Shung Institute: tel.0564966941,
 email: ssinst@tiscali.it

Karma Ling:
 tel. 00330479257800; email:
info@karmaling.org, lhundroup@rimay.net

England: Peter White,
pwhite@i12.com

Naples: Fabio Risolo, fabio.risolo@libero.it

The Shang-Shung Institute, Italy is pleased to announce

**CONFERENCE ON MOXA
GIVEN BY CHOEGYAL NAMKHAJ NORBU
July 22 – 24, 2005**

The course is particularly intended for those who have attended the Institute's medicine and massage courses in Italy and abroad. Those who understand at least the general principles of Tibetan medicine may also attend. Registration for the course is mandatory and should be made no later than June 30, 2005. For registration and further information, please contact the Istituto Shang-Shung, Tel: 00390564966941, Email: ssinst@tiscalinet.it

**Bagchen World Tournament 2003
Organized by the
Shang-Shung Institute, Austria**
Report by Oliver Leick

In his book about Bagchen Igor Berkhin writes:

"Bagchen (bag chen) is an ancient Tibetan game that originated several thousands years ago and traces back to the powerful non-human tribe called Masang that in ancient times inhabited Tibet together with humans. Tibetan legends say that Masangs possessed very highly developed culture, art, and science. There was time when people could immediately communicate with Masangs and even marry them. Some of Tibetan clans trace their origins to the children begot in such marriages. It was Masangs from whom people received much ancient knowledge and skills. Masangs invented dice that were originally used for divination and not for playing, and it was on the base of dice that Bagchen stones were created. Tibetans believe that even though Masangs are now invisible for humans, they still continue to patronize games of hazard and bring good fortune to those they sympathize."

As playing Bagchen has become very common within the Dzogchen Community, the Shang-Shung



Grisha Mokhin (left), winner, congratulated by Oliver Leick

Institute, Austria started a new initiative. In the beginning of 2003, with the help of Igor Berkhin and Michel Bricaire, the Shang-Shung Institute, Austria, organized the first ever held Bagchen World-Tournament in the West. Several Bagchen tournaments had to be played by the participants that took place in Moscow and in Merigar in 2003. All the games were very difficult and most of the players showed their very good skill.

The final round finally took place in Spring, 2004, at Isla Margarita. Four qualified people - Igor Berkhin, Grisha Mokhin, Igor Kopanev and David Zuricchio - were present there and played for several hours in order to find out who was the best player. In the end, as a result of qualified playing and also being lucky, Grisha Mokhin was the first winner and Igor Kopanev the second winner. Oliver

Leick, the director of the Shang-Shung Institute, Austria, could congratulate Grisha personally in Margarita in July 2004 for his win and handed over to him the winning prizes. Even, if unfortunately, not all interested people could take part in these tournaments, it was a great success and made Bagchen know to a larger group of people. If there are enough requests for another Bagchen World Tournament, the Shang-Shung Institute is ready to organize it in the near future.

ChiNN Teaching continued from page 3

animals and then produce bread. What is the difference? What is very important is that we are more aware. If there is a possibility that we can be in a state of contemplation or instant presence, for just one second, you can make a really good cause for any being. That is very, very important.

For example, with everything we work with circumstance. This is very important. I am always saying, if there is rain, we need an umbrella. If there is no rain, we

don't need umbrella, even if you have a very nice umbrella made of silk and rainbow colors, if there is no rain, what you do with an umbrella? Some people have a very nice raincoat. That's a fine. When there is rain you use it. But when there is sunshine, hot weather, do you put on a raincoat? People think you are abnormal. That is real. So some people say, "Oh, I learned this teaching, this Ganapuja. I should do this everyday." If you always have that possibility, that is fine, there

SMS TT continued from page 5

For this reason we have Santi Maha Sangha and in particular the Santi Maha Sangha teachers. This is something very important. Some people think that only translating book is important, only keeping a book is important, only building a nice monastery is important. All this is secondary. Maintaining the knowledge, understanding, alive transmission, this is important. So this is the purpose of Santi Maha Sangha Teacher Training.

We have already done Santi Maha Sangha Teacher Training in 2002, and we have a book where all the information regarding Santi Maha Sangha training is kept. In that year we qualified ten teachers. That training was for fifteen or sixteen people, but only ten qualified. They are Jim Valby, Grisha Mokhin, Igor Berkhin, Adriano Clemente, Che Goh from Singapore, Jacob Winkler from Germany, Costantino Albini from Italy, Elisabeth Stuchbury from Australia, Elias Capriles from Venezuela, the special philosopher, and Angie Gilbert from Australia. Now we have four new qualified teachers.

I want to say to all the new candidates who qualify, the important thing is how we communicate, and that knowledge does not only remain at the intellectual level because otherwise there is not much value. That also means that when you have the possibility, from time to time, you can find time to make some qualified retreat. If you listen to how other people explain, you can also learn many things.

We now have now fourteen Santi Maha Sangha teachers in total. We will also go ahead with the Santi Maha Sangha Teachers' Training in the future. But please, if you want to present as a candidate in the future, please prepare very well, not only on the arguments of the Base book, but you should train in

how to communicate and become familiar with the practices. Then you can become a good teacher, and when you start to teach you can improve. After making one, two, three retreats one can learn a lot from their experiences. In this way I can be confident that those who present are good candidates, not only because they know the arguments, but also because they have real knowledge.

Remember that we have tawa, gonpa and chöpa. Tawa, the View, is related more to intellectual studies, what we learn. Gonpa means being in the knowledge and dealing with it in one's existence. Chöpa means attitude, if one is too limited, does something wrong and creates problems between students, then your chöpa is not good. There is no need of the teacher or anyone else to tell you. If you can understand it yourself it is much better. So you check well if your tawa, gonpa and chöpa are sufficient for presenting yourself as a candidate.

Now we give the diplomas for becoming a teacher of the Base of Santi Maha Sangha. Here is my name and here is your name. And here is my seal, it is an historical one, you can learn about it. There are also two gifts. One is the [drawing] Guardian Dorje Legpa. He collaborates with you if you do everything perfectly, but if you do not do things in a perfect way, then Dorje Legpa is not happy and things manifest naturally. The other is Gomadevi. Many Dzogchen teachings I give are connected with the Longsal Nyinthig, so for this reason I am giving you this. So, Jey Clark, Elio Guarisco, Alexander Poubans, Fabio Risolo. Now you do your best, train your experience as a teacher and deepen your knowledge in the various level of Santi Maha Sangha and in the future there will also be other trainings for

is no problem if you don't. We live in time and with circumstance. Time and circumstance change every day. We don't know which kind of situation we will have tomorrow. For that reason it is very, very important that we really use the knowledge of how to work with circumstance. This is very important.

*Transcribed by Hans-Georg Meschede, Munich, Germany
Edited by Naomi Zeitz*

**His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama
Miami, Florida, September 2004**

September 19th - 21st, 2004

A Public Talk on:
World Peace through Inner Peace & a Two-Day Buddhist Teaching

Teachings on the Instructions on the Garland of Views
(The only written teachings by Padmasambhava)

Long Life Empowerment
of the Combined Practice of Amitayus and Hayagriva

Long Life Practice
The Glory of Immortality
written by Dubthob Chaksampa

These are the last scheduled teachings by His Holiness in America this year.

Note: Spanish translation will be available.

<http://www.odn-usa.org/>

**Prayers for
His Holiness the Dalai Lama's
Long Life**

Here are the dates and suggested practices:

November 4th, Dec. 1st -25th
Mani and Prayer of Tara, as many as possible.

*Please inform Tashi Lama at
tashilama10@hotmail.com the number of prayers
accumulated. Thank you.*

teachers of the Santi Maha Sangha First Level, etc. We try to go ahead as much as possible. You remember how important this is, particularly for me. When I work, or even in the night when I dream, Santi Maha Sangha is always very important.

I told you when I had cancer and they informed me, I thought that my life was finished, at that time the only thing I was a little worried about was the Santi Maha Sangha. I was not worried for the Dzogchen Community, my family, or myself, I was only sorry that I could not go on with Santi Maha Sangha. Knowing the Dzogchen teaching is very, very important. What I have understood and communicate to my students and I wish that this knowledge continues in the future. If people continue this teaching, I am convinced there will be some kind of evolution. Teaching really helps all beings, particularly human beings. Our human condition is impermanent and changing. This change we call development. This is true.

When I arrived in Italy for the first time, for example, there were only a few televisions, but after some years it developed and now everybody has television. The same thing with tape recorders, etc., now we have computers and internet and we think this is something very superior, but after five or seven years there will be other things. We don't even know the name of these new things. This is how the world changes.

Many people consider this development is not very good. They speak of degeneration of Kaliyuga, and problems. Maybe the condition is that way, but we must integrate with that. If we have the capacity to integrate, then everything can develop. I always think that it is a pity that

when I was in the college there was no tape recorder. We cannot remember how many things our teacher use to say in a single day. Today we can register everything and this is a positive development, not negative.

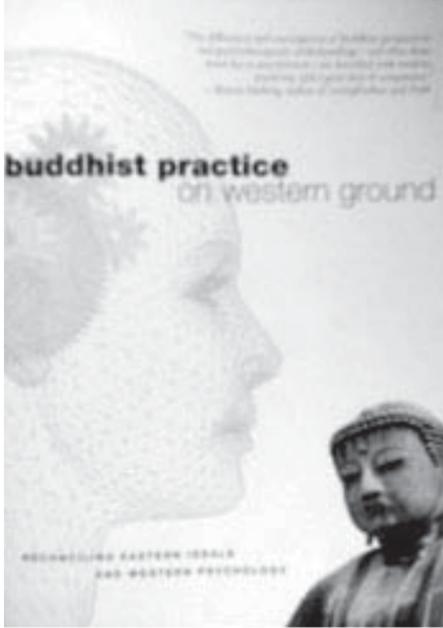
In ancient times in Tibet there were no books. Even if we wanted to read and study, there were no books. But now it is very easy to find them, we can even make copies very easily. This is not negative, it is positive. So if we know how to manage and integrate then everything is fine, that is what we call Kuntuzangpo. So we don't worry thinking, "Oh we are arriving in Kaliyuga and tomorrow there will be a terrible earthquake or some disaster of the ocean". Many years before somebody had this theory that California would go under water. They even sketched a map of the area in US that would not be flooded and many people got worried and concentrated in the area where Tsegylgar is. But you do not worry in this way, you relax and enjoy and work with circumstances. If there is rain you take the umbrella, when it does not rain you do not need it. That is an example of how to work with circumstances. You go ahead with your awareness, knowledge, and what you have learned. In this way, everything will go well.

Also our teachers communicate this knowledge to people and don't complicate things. Otherwise they think they are developing and read this book and that book, and in the end they complicate things. Books are always relative, sometimes if you really have knowledge you do not need many books. Also in the practice, going only with A is the most essential. So we should go directly to that point.

book and film reviews

Buddhist Practice On Western Ground: Reconciling Eastern Ideals and Western Psychology.
by Harvey Aronson
Boston, Shambhala, 2004

When I first became seriously interested in Dharma, in the 1970's, there were no good books on the relationship between psy-



chotherapy and meditation. Rinpoches and Roshis had little to say about it. And most psychologists had a very primitive understanding of meditation. The "best" psychology book available at the time was Herbert Benson's "The Relaxation Response," which viewed meditation one-dimensionally as a method for calming oneself. The worst and stupidest books equated meditation states with "regression" (a bad word in psychology) to an "infantile omnipotent state." Lacking guidance from either side, I had to struggle on my own for many years to try to figure it all out. Did meditation practice and psychotherapy ultimately take one to the same place? Or were they in opposition? In retrospect now the answer is glaringly obvious. When the Dharma teachings address relative truth - such as behaving responsibly, being aware of our motivations, healing damaged relationships - some of the same issues can be dealt with by psychotherapy. But when Dharma teachings address absolute truth, there is a parting of the way. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu expresses this in his booklet "Buddhism and Psychology": "What can happen to a person if he mixes the Teachings with psychotherapy and then teaches it to other people? It doesn't mean one cannot use psychotherapy in their personal life. . .but one should also know the vast difference between the two. . .This does not mean Dzogchen needs psychotherapy to be complete. Instead, Dzogchen neither rejects or accepts anything in life, but makes everything the path of contemplation" (p. 27-28).

In the years since I began to understand this, some thoughtful books have come out on the topic, by such authors as John Welwood and Mark Epstein. But, I must confess I've only glanced at them, because the subject just doesn't interest me that much anymore. So, when Naomi Zeitz handed me Aronson's book to

review, I didn't exactly begin salivating to read it. Nonetheless, the author does make some interesting points. One of the best aspects of his book is the attempt to show how some Western students distort the Teachings by assimilating them to Western cultural predispositions.

Due to "the psychological emphasis found in modern Western culture" many will "use time on the cushion to immerse ourselves in the contents of our mind, rather than observe the process" as instructed. Beyond this pervasive cultural influence, certain personality characteristics "lend themselves to particular interpretations of Buddhist teachings. Individuals who find difficulty with commitment and motivation often find refuge in Buddhist language that counsels renunciation and non-attachment. Such

student see only what they psychologically need to see" rather than what is actually presented in the tradition (p. vi).

The author gives the example of a weeklong meditation retreat attended by ethnic Chinese and white American participants. At the end of the retreat the participants were asked to describe their realizations. The Chinese spoke of repentance and of realizing how selfish they usually were. The white Americans spoke of getting "in touch with themselves" and gaining strength to "cope with the pressures of society" (p. 1). These were two very different, yet culturally conditioned, responses.

Modern Western culture is individualistic, and many Westerners are more "detached" from significant relationships and from a sense of community than people from more traditional Buddhist societies. Some Western Dharma students then "spiritualize" this state of indifference to others, falsely equating it with the more positive "detachment" that is described in the teachings. As a result, there is often not a strong sense of Sangha, and of connection among practitioners. Although the author makes other points as well, these seemed to me to be the among the most significant.

by Paul Bail

Movie Review: *Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter*
by Kim Ki-duk
Tartan Films, 2004
(In Korean with subtitles)

Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter is a masterful Buddhist film that conveys, with minimal language, an authentic view of the Mahayana path. Utilizing the majestic visuals found in a remote valley hermitage afloat on a pristine lake with an eye to classic Zen aesthetic, this film illuminates the larger questions of life. The film accomplishes this by aligning the seasons with the unfolding story of a teacher/student relationship between an elderly monk and his disciple whom we follow through life amid the unchanging presence of the floating hermitage itself in the seasonal cycles.

The film's genius lies in its synthesis of a slowly revealed story, season by season, of the mischievous child's coming of age with an unpredictable but credible plot of one person's path to realization. This young heart disciple is no saint. The elder monk's kindness is ever present through his laconic ordinariness and understated humor, even in sternness. Practitioners will appreciate this film for its lack of sentimentality about the master/disciple rela-

Buddha Mom: The Path of Mindful Mothering,
by Jacqueline Kramer
Tarcher/Putnam, 2003;
\$23.95

Who is Jacqueline Kramer? She's certainly not a traditional Buddhist guru with retreat centers and students traveling halfway around the world to hear her teachings. Nor does she have an exotic name or an important spiritual title. But there is no doubt that she has some serious experience under her belt.

Kramer has been a practicing Buddhist for 25 years and a practicing mother for 21 of those years. In her debut book *Buddha Mom*, she proves that her dedication to these two callings and her integration of them makes her an authority on the subject. The book is part memoir, part parenting-manual, and filled to the gills with inspirational verse; Jacqueline Kramer throws everything into the mix. She shares what she has learned during her personal journey and lays out simple tools anyone can use to awaken and nourish the sacred inherent in parenting and everyday life.

As a Buddhist mom myself, with a new 18 month old guru, and meditation cushions now gathering dust between each use, I was hungry for some tips on Buddhist inspired "enlightened" parenting. Kramer kicks off the book with her warm-and-fuzzy memories of pregnancy and birthing. She writes: "I loved being pregnant. I loved the power and sensuality of it. I loved taking a step out of my egocentric world into a realm where I was just a function of Nature, one piece of an enormous puzzle. Pregnancy brought me into the moment and back to my elemental, sensual earthiness, connecting me with the wisdom

and effect, pacifying anger and hatred through realizing the essence of the prajnaparamita teachings and finally, the necessity for purification. There are so many instances of humor, heart-break, sexiness, and liveliness; I wouldn't want to spoil the experience of viewing the film by citing them. Filmmaker, Kim Ki-duk, has crafted an extraordinary work which manages to convey with little dialog an action filled plot with ordinary themes of suffering, forgiveness, selflessness and compassion anyone can relate to. Were it not for the few graphic scenes of sexuality and violence, this would be a film you could take your kids, your parents, and your grandparents to.

On the richer symbolic level, the film conveys an atmosphere of mystery that subtly infuses the unfolding story without compromising its integrity in easy resolutions. Like the hermitage itself, animals are actors in this drama that serve to draw out the inner qualities of the characters. Even architectural details convey multiple meanings such as the placement of a door dividing the sleeping space and the shrine space without walls or the guardian portal at the shore of the lake through which the film's characters pass in and out. Other unusual aspects of this film are scenes relating to

and perfection of nature." Reading this love-fest initially made me wonder what realm this woman was living in. After feeling waves of inadequacy wash over me, I was able to acknowledge the judgments that were surfacing (a true exercise in putting all that "Buddhist awareness" to work), and then simply kept reading. After all, I reasoned, I didn't want to discount someone just because they (unlike me) actually really, really, really, enjoyed being pregnant.

My patience soon paid off, as I read about Kramer's initial experiences with Buddhism. She was drawn to do her first retreat because of strong feelings of unaccountable anger that were ever-present within her. Adding fuel to the fire was the Buddhist nun Anagarika Dhamma Dinna who became her teacher for the next 20 years. Personally greeting Kramer at the gate of the retreat center, Anagarika takes one look at Kramer and says "So, you're in the hate group". Thinking back to the incident Kramer reflects that "She said exactly what I needed to hear in order to get right down to the business of clearing up my murky consciousness. During that retreat there were many times I just wanted to scream, to leave." The author leads us to this newly edgy revelation, but that's all we get; she doesn't share with us the process of how she got from undercurrents of anger to the dreamy love haze of pregnancy three years later. She touches on her struggles but does not bring us into their depths. This has the disappointing effect of distancing and excluding the reader. I had this experience at various times throughout "SETTING FOOT on the PATH" which includes the first three chapters and comprises the whole first section of the book.

natural medicines and the healing process—a mysterious balance of body mind harmonization connected to the primal energies of the natural world. On a grander scale, the film's gorgeous cinematography contemplates the notion of timelessness in time against the backdrop of the elemental forces of nature. Spring is the time of the young child's curiosity and playful cruelty; Summer, —the youthful monk's lusty experiments and heartbreaking tears roused like sudden rainstorms; Autumn - the crisp bitterness of betrayal and radiant display of forgiveness culminating in Winter - with the solitude of the mature monk (his master long dead) now a sage in his own right, returning to the hermitage to begin the cycle anew with a heart of compassion at last unlocked from its inner chambers. *Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter* evokes the quietude of Zen art in which nature serves as a mirror for the unconditional purity of mind, eternally present through the cycles of change. Here we are brought to the everescent state of mind made famous by the Zen poet, Issa, "The world of dew /in the world of dew/And yet, and yet..." This is a great film not to be missed.

by Jacqueline Gens

Once Jacqueline Kramer actually gets on the path, however, with the section comprising the rest of the book entitled "THE PRACTICE on the PATH" she clearly hits her stride. She shares with us how after becoming a mother she realized her path was not that of the revered Buddhist nun but instead that of a Buddhist layperson, a "householder". She writes "When I came to a crossroads in my life, with mothering and householding pointing in one direction and the contemplative life in the other, I went to see my teacher and sought her counsel. I was enraptured by the beauty and power of the spiritual life I was seeing. The rapture was broken by the sound of my teacher's voice informing me, point blank, that if I was meant to be a Buddhist nun I would be doing so now. She said that since I was clearly engaged in the life of a householder, I would get the most benefit from committing fully to that path." Kramer then sets to work at seeking and finding holiness in what she had previously viewed as merely the mundane. Kramer deftly outlines the basic principles of Buddhism in straightforward language and then shows how they can be incorporated into the experiences of everyday mothering. Her chapters on Simplicity, Homemaking, Nurturance, Cleaning, Joyful Service, Self-Love, Unconditional Love, Faith, and Meditation reflect deeply on mothering and the practice of the Buddhist teachings. She shows us how enlightenment is really just being present and mindful while doing the everyday "chores" of motherhood and householding. She invites us to re-awaken to the sensual and healing qualities of washing dishes and "creating nurturing meals".

I read this book during the few

continued on page 19

LIFE INSIDE TIBETAN SCHOOLS

The mission of ASIA long-distance sponsorship project in Amdo

by Linda Fidanzia

After the monitoring mission carried out last autumn in the Tibetan region of Amdo – the Chinese province of Qinghai – I set out this spring with Wolfgang Schweiger, a German doctor who works with ASIA, in order to complete the work that had been started for the schools in Dongche, Grazingland and Thanggan and to collect all the information necessary to begin the new projects. In fact, starting next semester, ASIA will initiate two projects for study bursaries (Project no.0592 and 0593) to permit students who have finished the middle school in Grazingland and Dongche to attend high school, and three new projects of long-distance adoption (Project no. 0526, 0527 and 0528) in the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu.

It was very important to be there in person both to monitor the management of the project on the part of the local referents and to observe the impact of these projects on the local community, as well as verifying the results that have been achieved. In the three schools that are supported by ASIA in this area, the long-distance adoption project has had a very strong and positive impact for the entire village, increasing the literacy rate and improving the living conditions within the school. There are three very different situations: Dongche is a village of farm workers where Chinese colonization is very pronounced (from 3% Chinese population about 50 years ago to the current 60%); the school in Grazingland belongs to a farm which manages a large part of the surrounding territory and which has badly upset the lives of the inhabitants (originally nomadic shepherds who now have to farm the land) and the environment, more and more devastated by desertification; the school in Thanggan is situated at an altitude of about 3,200 meters in the midst of the mountains which are covered in snow most of the year and is inhabited by nomadic shepherds.



education system is the commitment of the teachers and the solidarity of the village people. Since there are no beds at the school and the distance to cover each day to school is enormous, the families who live close to the school currently host from 4 to 6 children in their own homes while the teachers have personally gone into debt in order to give the new generation an opportunity to study. ASIA has already begun the construction of dormitories, a kitchen and a refectory here so that a greater number of children can attend the school next autumn.

With the aim of supporting this population in their effort to guarantee an education for future generations in Tibet, starting next semester (July 2004), ASIA is presenting new projects in this area to guarantee not only a basic education and suitable living conditions within the schools of compulsory education, but also the opportunity to go on to higher studies and reach a higher level of education.

SAD Projects in the Tibetan Amdo Region

New Projects
Shala primary school – Project 0526

Founded in 1993 by a nomadic shepherd concerned about education in the village, the Shala primary school is situated in a remote area of Malho Prefecture, in the Chinese Province of Qinghai, along 60 km of rough dirt road from Malho county. The area is inhabited by Tibetan and Mongolian minority groups who make a living raising yak and sheep. 80% of the population



Thanks to long-distance support, the number of children enrolled in all three schools has greatly increased, so much so that the schools that originally were half-empty are overcrowded today. Besides the economic possibility that support gives to the poorest families who otherwise would not have been able to send their children to school, the living conditions of the children within the schools have improved considerably, with ASIA covering the school fees, these structures are able to manage the numerous expenses to be met. They have a kitchen for preparing meals, the quality of the food has improved, and there is medicine and heating for the winter months. Moreover the summer training courses for English teachers and the presence of foreign teachers in some of the schools has improved the level of knowledge of this very important language for a people who are so isolated from the rest of the world.

And, most of all, the inhabitants of these villages are becoming more and more aware of the importance of education for the future of their children and for Tibetan culture.

Visiting new schools in the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu, the difference strikes the eye immediately. The pri-

mary school in Meshi, Gansu province has no kitchen and the dormitories are not big enough for all the students. For this reason, the children, most of whom live at the school for about 10 months of the year, are fed for months on the food supplies that their parents provide when they are able and which often deteriorate over time (usually tsampa: butter, toasted barley flour and tea). A large number of them sleep at the nearby monastery which helps as much as it can, just as the village does.

At the primary and middle school in Rigmo in Qinghai province, there are not enough chairs and tables in some of the classrooms and the children have to follow the lessons sitting on the floor. The dormitories are overcrowded to the point that in some rooms up to 40 or 50 children sleep. What strikes you the most is that entry to the school is never denied; the poorest children who cannot afford the school fees are supported by the teachers themselves who in order to give a greater number of children the possibility to study are willing to renounce part of their own (meager!) salaries.

Even at Shala in Qinghai province, the driving force of the



is considered “poor” by the government. The difficult climatic conditions – very severe winters and scarce precipitation – make life extremely harsh at an altitude of 3,200 m., particularly for the children who often have more than a two-hour walk to school. In 2000, with financing from the Embassy of Holland, ASIA constructed two buildings in place of the old stable which previously served as a classroom, and in the spring of this year began construction on nine classrooms and dormitories, thus permitting the school to host the 120 children who attend it at the moment.

In September 2004, long-distance support for 30 children from the poorest families in the village will start which will cover scholastic fees including all expenses for each student (food, lodging, heating, medicine, textbooks, exercise books, etc.).

continued on next page

Rigmo primary and middle school – Project 0527

The Rigmo primary school is located in Gonghe county in Hainan Prefecture in the Chinese province of Qinghai. At an altitude of about 3,200 meters, it is situated in an area inhabited by about 12,000 people belonging mostly to the Tibetan and Mongolian minorities. Along with another 8 small schools in the village, the primary school hosts 1,300 students. In September of this year, it will also become a middle school. The inhabitants of the area are nomadic shepherds but due to the harsh climatic conditions they often cannot depend on provisions from their own livestock and live in very poor conditions. The mortality rate is very high and about 10% of the students are orphans.

The school was founded in 1987 and makes use of an old military base from 1957. The buildings are very old and the school is overcrowded. The long-distance adoption project will start in September 2004 with help for 30 children who are orphans and very poor and for whom a quota will be paid to cover all the costs necessary for maintaining them within the school.

Meshi primary school – Project 0528

Meshi primary school is situated in a remote rural area 120 km from Xiahe county, in the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in the Chinese Province of Gansu. It is an area inhabited by farmers who cultivate barley and rape. The land is subdivided into plots which are smaller than the average size assigned to each person by the government (0.8 mu) and are often too dry, because of the scarce precipitation, to give a good harvest.

More than half of the 108 students cannot stay at the school because it is too small and are hosted at the nearby monastery founded two centuries ago by the Gelugpa sect, destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and today restored or partially reconstructed. The school is located at the center of the district that includes another 3 small village schools and receives no support from the government. It has no possibility to provide meals for the students (there are no funds for either a kitchen or food) who are forced to live off the scanty provisions that their families bring on and off.

The long-distance adoption project will start in September 2004 and aims to assist the school by supporting 30 chil-

dren belonging to the poorest families.

Scholarships for students of the Dongche (0592) and Grazingland (0593) Middle School

The Scholarships will offer the most deserving and needy students who finish the middle schools of Dongche and Grazingland (Hainan Prefecture) the opportunity to attend high school. In order to select the 15 students who will benefit from the Scholarships starting this year, besides their economic situation and progress at school, the aptitude and



desire of each student to contribute to the development of his or her own community will be taken into account. The objective is to train worthy people who will be able to give their own distinctive contribution to society and keep the culture and identity of the Tibetan people alive.

Projects in progress

Dongche primary and middle school – Project 0505

Farmers, who live off the harvests from their own land (essentially barley, wheat, rape), inhabit the village of Dongche in Hainan Prefecture in Qinghai Province. Three different ethnic groups - Chinese, Tibetan and Muslim - live together, not without difficulty, in the area that is under a strong Chinese influence. Thanks to long-distance support, the children in the area have an opportunity to study and learn about Tibetan culture and traditions (by now many of them do not even know how to speak Tibetan) and an international language which will permit them to have contact

with the external world.

Thanks to the constant presence of foreign English teachers, the Dongche School has become one of the most renowned and sought after schools in the area.

The project that started in 2002 with 40 students now has 77 who are supported long-distance.

Grazingland primary and middle school – Project 0522

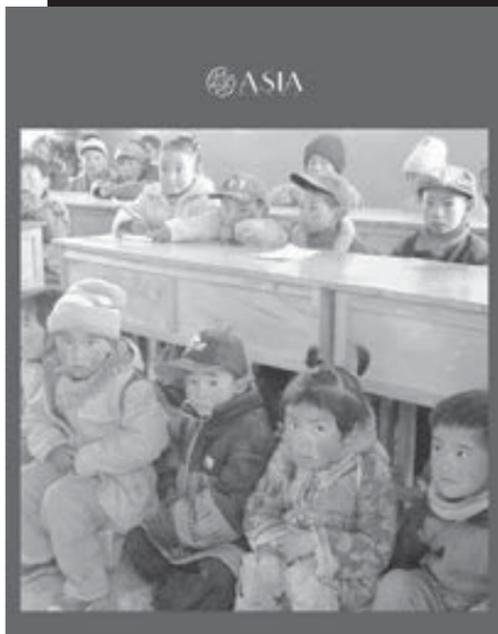
As in the other schools in the area, the children at Grazingland in Hainan Prefecture in the Chinese Province of Qinghai, wake up at 6.30, have breakfast at 7.00 and start lessons at 8.00 which, with a break of two hours for lunch and an hour for dinner, continue until 21.00. They study with an uncommon earnestness and diligence, taking advantage of all their spare time to go over, repeat and study their subjects in depth. The area surrounding the school has a desolate look; the desert is progressively consuming the meadows, advancing before one's very eyes and making the landscape almost lunar. It's hardly believable. The agricultural policy adopted by the government is one of the causes of this dramatic desertification that, besides radically altering the landscape, has impoverished the population and eradicated traditions and ways of life.

In two years, from 2002 until today, the children supported by the long-distance project have gone from 12 to 107.

Thanggan primary school – Project 0523

At an altitude of 3,200 meters, Thanggan School is situated in the midst of the meadow-covered mountains where sheep, goats and yak with their herders (often women and children) are the only form of life to be seen for miles and miles. The children are dirty, often barefoot with very light threadbare clothes yet always smiling and very curious. They come from the families of nomadic herders and are often seen only once a semester because they are too distant and too poor to afford the journey. Here the land is wild, magnificent, uncontaminated. There is neither electricity nor water – the women walk tens of miles to bring water from the well. Even the school has no water and the children sleep 10 and 12 to a room without heating on a single bed made of concrete platform along one side of the room, sometimes covered with carpets or mats, other times bare. The project was started in 2003 with 25 children assisted long-distance. Today there are 48.

ASIA CALENDAR & CARDS 2005



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Thank you!
The Mirror



**WORLD WIDE TRANSMISSION:
ANNIVERSARY OF ADZOM DRUGPA**

**9th Tibetan month – 25th day
Sunday November 7th 2004**



ABOUT THE WORLD WIDE TRANSMISSION:

Newcomers who want to participate in this Transmission must be truly interested in the Teachings transmitted by our Teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and practiced in our worldwide Dzogchen Community. Participation of newcomers in this World Wide Transmission should try to receive Teachings from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the future. After having received this Transmission, they should also try to train and collaborate with the Sangha of the International Dzogchen Community of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Originally our Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, had the idea of a "Transmission on Distance", because he wanted to help people in difficult situations, who could not travel at that time to meet the Teacher. The Transmission will enable them to practice the Dzogchen Teachings transmitted by him, without needing direct contact with the Teacher at that time.

Here is a short summary of how this Live-Video-Empowerment works:

1. To receive the World Wide Transmission, new students need to participate with an experienced student who will host both the preliminary explanation as well as the actual practice. The explanations should be given by a long-time student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, well in advance of the event.
2. Hosts of the Empowerments with the videotape should be Members of the International Dzogchen Community.
3. For new and interested persons, it is important to have seen the explanation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu that is also on the videotape, in advance. They should also have the possibility to clarify doubts about the practice on the videotape with some serious, dedicated, older students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche before the Empowerment.
4. Exactly at the given time (see timetable) at your place, you start the Transmission-Video at the starting point of the part of the Anniversary of the Master Padmasambhava. At that moment - worldwide - students and newcomers start to practice together with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Master and students simultaneously practice together this session of Thun, which ends with a dedication of merits.

We wish you all a successful practice.
Please contact your local Community for details.

Schedule

01.00	Wellington, Auckland
02.00	Hawaii
03.00	Fairbanks
04.00	San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver
05.00	Denver, Salt Lake City, Pagosa Springs, Edmonton
06.00	Chicago, Mexico City
07.00	New York, Conway, Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana, Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa, Lima, Quito
08.00	Caracas
09.00	Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago
12.00	GMT, London, Dublin, Lisbon
13.00	Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brussels, Geneva, Prague, Salzburg, Stockholm, Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw
14.00	Helsinki, Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Vilnius, Johannesburg
15.00	Moscow, Murmansk, Baghdad, Kuwait City, Riyadh, Tashkent
16.00	Kabul
17.00	ODDIYANA, Islamabad
17.30	Delhi, Bombay
17.45	Kathmandu
18.00	Dacca
19.00	Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon
20.00	Singapore, Beijing, Lhasa, Manila, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Perth
21.00	Tokyo, Seoul
22.00	Brisbane, Vladivostok
22.30	Adelaide
23.00	Kamchatka, Melbourne, Sydney



The Mirror
Newspaper of the
International
Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEWS

merigar

Annual General Assembly at Merigar

Once again the annual general assembly of members was held at Merigar in the Gonpa on Friday July 30, 2004. The first item on the agenda was the election of the new Gakyil with 5 new people stepping in to replace those who were leaving.

The Gakyil for 2004 – 2005 consists of:

Blue
Sergio Quaranta – Director
Pia Barilli – Vice-Director
Virginia Policreti

Yellow
Marinella Atzeni
Giorgio Dallorto
Alfredo Colitto

Red
Marco Almici
Patrizia Moscatelli
Andrea Calducci

Geköes
Robin Bennett

Next, the budget for 2003 was briefly presented and it was noted that income had decreased over the year because there had been no big retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It was also apparent that the income from membership was not sufficient to cover the running costs of Merigar and there was a feeling that there was a need for change possibly either reducing expenses or increasing membership or both.

As far as expenses were concerned, the Merigar accountant, Pia Bramezza, explained that it was difficult to have a clear picture of why last year's budget had been exceeded and that a clear budget for work that needed doing had not been established before starting it.

At this point, Yeshi Namkhai stepped in to explain that a big structure such as Merigar has high costs and a lot of income is required to support it, otherwise you need to start reducing the structure and the costs. Then he gave some examples to evaluate expenses and assets - like dividing all expenses by the number of members to consider if it is worth keeping the structure as it is.

Yeshi then launched into a long and detailed presentation of various facets of the reorganization of the Dzogchen Community that was introduced last summer. After officially introducing AmbientiWeb Consulting, a company recently set up by himself and Luigi Ottaviani in Grosseto, Yeshi spoke about the motivation for reorganization – the hope to continue to develop and spread not only within the actual structures of the Community, but also towards the outside world. He explained how important it is for the Community to have one whole vision, rather than separate and different points of view so that we look and move in the same direction; to achieve unity and intimacy and therefore move in the same direction, we need to have the same governing principles.

Yeshi went on to speak about the various fields within which the three colors of the Gakyil operate and then the theme and objectives of reorganization. Four main themes were presented covering all aspects of the organization's life – financial (our balance and results), members and market (how we appear to members and people outside the community), internal activities (our activities and what to do better), knowledge and teaching (how to preserve and transmit). Later he gave statistics related to our future performance, our objectives and how to reach them.

Yeshi's presentation was very detailed and sprinkled with a terminology more fitting for a high power business meeting rather than a very mixed group of Dzogchen Community people. However, even though some of the business jargon may have been unfamiliar, the underlying principle of reorganization was very clear and familiar to us all. The energy, innovation and know-how that will be available to reorganize the Community will be very welcome and we can look forward to taking a more dynamic step into a modern world.

PASSAGES

DEATH: Thursday August 12th, 2004, in the early morning, *Claudia Ciardulli* died. She had faced serious illness already once in her life and that experience had given her a very deep awareness of impermanence and the importance of practice. Still she never lost her open, solar and joyful smile. We will all miss her a lot, especially the Dzogchen Community in Rome, where she was very present and active until a few months ago. We'll try and be near her with our practice, and also hope that it will be a comfort for Donatella, Claudia's dear family and Vajra sister.

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Web site: web.tiscalinet.it/merigar



Impressions of the Month Long Santi Maha Sangha, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga Practice Retreat at Merigar

with Jim Valby, Prima Mai and Laura Evangelisti

The Merigar Letter spoke to some of the participants and teachers towards the end of the month long retreat at Merigar on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance.

Merigar Letter: What were your impressions of the retreat?

Tea: Personally I was very happy with the retreat because following it for four weeks was very useful for me within my limits and I was really able to get into it. Then there was the fact of alternating teaching with Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga. I was very happy and recommend anyone who has the opportunity to participate not to miss it.

Annamaria: I agree with Tea. It was a unique opportunity to go into the Teaching much more profoundly.

ML: Do you think that being 24 people together at the retreat was a good number?

Silva: It was a good number. In my experience, the dynamics of the retreat came out not so much from the group as a whole but from our personal reactions over the four weeks. I think that each one of us had at least one difficult day, either due to tiredness or for the emotions that came up. It wasn't so much a group dynamic but each one of us coming up against their own limits because there were a lot of hours of work. I think the retreat was a little long. In fact, this last week I really just want to go home and not see anyone. Just have the time to absorb it. Four weeks are just too long even though I agree that it was a great opportunity to really go into the teaching in depth. It is like jumping into the teaching that we have received but with the possibility to understand more calmly.

Gloria: We had the chance to put into practice some of the things that were more theoretical in the book.

ML: What do you think of the fact there were sessions of Teaching and practice as well as sessions of Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga? After sitting for so long it must have been good to do some activities and put into practice what presence means.

Jim Valby (SMS teacher): I thought it was very nice in, say, the Dance class that there was individual attention because with such a small number of practitioners dancing, each person was corrected and we were able to learn. Often in a larger group we don't do the dance steps correctly, we don't learn the details. But this time with only a few people, we learned better.

Carla: It was the same thing with the Yantra. It was very nice to meet together each evening and do the nine movements, and perfect the movements we had already done.

ML: What did you do with Jim?

Carla: We laughed!
Jim is a great teacher. We had the possibility to listen and reflect on the teaching as well as do the practice. The best thing was the possibility to listen to things we had heard before but from a different angle. For me it was important. Each day there was the chance to understand something better. Nothing was taken for granted – even practicing a simple A.
Annamaria: The way Jim teaches leads you to the experience of the practice in the most profound way.

Carla: What I really enjoyed about the retreat with Jim was that we were able to understand concepts

that were difficult to understand in the text, The Precious Vase, which is written in a philosophical language.

Alexandra: The retreat was really a challenge for moving, for staying calm. It was very interesting to see in these three and a half weeks the attempt to feel familiar in something and just letting go. So this was a nice experience to have. I also liked very much to alternate between sitting practice and movement even though it is a challenging amount in one day. And every day the energy increases. I noticed that it took me quite a few hours to get my energy level adjusted to my physical state.

Christian: This is the second retreat I've been to with Jim and now I understand much more than before. What was very important for me was the differences between Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen point of view and the practices I do. Now I can look at the different points of view. It was very important for me to find this. It was quite difficult to understand on my own and now I feel much better about it.

ML: Do you have any advice for future retreats like this one? Does anything need to be changed?

Konstantin: I think the retreat was really good for learning Yantra Yoga. It was quite intense and you can go quite far in that time, but it wasn't so easy for the Vajra Dance.

Alexandra: For the Dance it was very difficult. For Yantra even in the beginners group there were different levels so it wasn't too much of a problem, because even if you didn't do all the exercises, you could join in. But in the Vajra Dance if you reach your limits and you don't try your maximum, you

continued on next page



VIDEO CASSETTE CLEARANCE SALE

ISTITUTO SHANG SHUNG

In the future, the Shang Shung Institute in Italy will no longer be offering the video material in their catalogue in the VHS (standard video cassette) format, but only as DVD. For this reason, the Institute will be offering up to 50% discount on most listed video tapes starting September 1, 2004 and until stocks last.

Please note that mailing expenses will NOT be charged for single orders of at least €50. Place your orders while stock lasts!

Instead of €13, the following tapes will only be €8.50:

- Garuda
- Kailash
- With a Lama Around the World
- With a Lama Around the World 2

Now at only €8!

- Ganapuja
- Mandarava
- Purification of the Six Lokas
- 20 Years of Merigar

At only €9

- Chod
- Ku Nye - Tibetan Massage
- Transmission Video

For only €10!

- Tundus, Tundrin and Tungyas
- Teachers' Training

For further information and placing an order please contact: The Shang Shung Institute's secretary in Merigar, ssinst@tiscali.it

Orders can also be made by credit card on the SSI Archives secure web site at: <https://ssi.dzogchen.ru> (if you are already registered; if you are not, you can receive the instructions by sending an e-mail message to ssiadmin@dzogchen.ru).

For €13

- Teachings on the Vajra Dance
- Green Tara

(2 video cassettes: explanation + practice)

New Vajra Dance Costumes!

Dear Vajra Dancers,

We finally received the new samples of the Vajra Dance costumes from Nepal, both Pawo and Pamo, and they are really beautiful! They are professionally made in pure silk with cotton lining. It's really an experience to wear it!

We thank you for being so patient and waiting so long. We had different sorts of obstacles that did delay the process. On the other hand, the Vajra Dance costume is quite elaborate and, as you know, it comes directly from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's dream.

Now we would like to inform you that we are ready to start the production and that the final price will be \$300 US plus \$30 US shipping costs, total = \$330 US (or 250 Euros plus 25 Euros shipping costs, total = 275 Euros).

We understand that there is a big difference compared to the price of a few years ago (\$120US), and that this difference is high enough to make someone change his/her mind, but please believe that they are beautiful, they are in silk (previously they were in viscose) and so the price is worth it.

Please consider also that it is a once in a lifetime purchase and for a very precious costume that is for our spiritual practice, not just a worldly one. This is the best we can do at the moment but we'll continue to look for other solutions, to make it less expensive, with the collaboration of all Gars.

We kindly ask you to inform us soon if you want us to proceed with your order.

The possibilities are:

- 1 - Confirm your order and send the difference of \$210US (originally you paid \$120US each)
- 2 - Order and send \$330US (for those who didn't pay yet)
- 3 - Cancel your order and ask to be reimbursed for what you deposited earlier
- 4 - Wait for other possibility to have less expensive costumes.

To send the money, please send a bank transfer to: Monte dei Paschi di Siena (Bank), Branch n. 2760 Arcidosso-Italy Account nr 7086.09 in the name of Adriana dal Borgo. Please send an email (adrianadalborgo@tin.it) to confirm the deposit.

Thank you in advance,
Our best greetings!!!

Adriana dal Borgo and Federica Mastropaolo



MERIGAR

PROGRAM

2004

September 18-19

Course of explanation & practice of the Liberation of the Six Loka Dance. The course starts at 5 p.m. on Saturday, September 18
Cost: 50 Euro with discounts for members.

September 25-26

Retreat of Xitro practice & Karma Yoga practice
The retreat starts at 10 a.m. on Saturday Sept. 25th

October 1 - 3

In-depth Course of Song of the Vajra Dance with Prima Mai
The course starts at 4 p.m. on Friday October 1st
Cost: 105 Euro with discounts for members

ENROLLMENT

If you wish to enroll for a course, seminar or retreat, please contact the office to book a place and send advance payment of 25 Euro to confirm your booking via postal order at least 10 days before the beginning of the course, indicating the course you are confirming your place on. The postal order should be addressed to: Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen - Merigar - 58031 Arcidosso GR.
You should make your booking with the office sufficiently ahead of time since courses that do not reach a minimum number of participants will be cancelled.

To take part in the activities of the Association you need to be a member. A first installment of 15 Euro for the ordinary member's card will be required before taking part. A first installment alone does not entitle you to the discounts for members. Discounts for paid up members are: 20% for ordinary members, 40% for sustaining members and 50% for students and retired people on a low income.

For further information, contact: Merigar Office
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Dzogchen Community
in ITALY
- EUROPE -
58031 Arcidosso GR,
Italy
Tel.: +39 0564 966837
Email:
merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it - <http://web.tiscalinet.it/merigar>

Passages

Died:

In the early afternoon of Thursday August 26, 2004, our Vajra Brother *Leon Ghalichian* passed away in Frankfurt, Germany. He had been ill for some time. Those who knew him will fondly remember him for his loving generosity and kindness. He will be greatly missed by all his friends.

e u r o p e

The Dzogchen Community UK is proud to announce

Tibetan Ku Nye Massage (Level 1) and Mantra Healing

Two courses led by Dr. Nida Chenagtsang

Tibetan Ku Nye Massage (Level 1)

An intensive residential course led by Dr. Nida Chenagtsang. Part of an ongoing series of courses in Ku Nye and more generally Tibetan medicine to be held in the UK.

Dates:

Tuesday, November 2 - Thursday November 11, 2004, (10 full days).
Cost: Email: pwhite@i12.com. GBP 500 all-inclusive (see below).

Venue: Kunselling Retreat Centre, Powys, Wales. This is a residential course and includes accommodation and full board. For more details contact the organizer.

Maximum Places: 20, Minimum (for course to run) 10.

Contact Peter White

Email: pwhite@i12.com

Tel: 07900 496909,

35 Finchams Close, Linton, Cambridge, CB1 6ND, to book your place on this course.

A GBP100 advance booking payment is required, returnable only on cancellations of the course due to insufficient numbers. The balance to be paid on the first morning of the course.

Description

Ku Nye is an ancient Tibetan treatment modality belonging to one of the four main therapeutic approaches: diet, behavior, medicines and external therapies such as massage, moxa, the application of compresses, stones, balneotherapy. Ku Nye can be practiced by anyone having the correct attitude, skills and training with an adequate knowledge of the basic principles of Tibetan medicine.

A Ku Nye session includes three different phases: ku or application of oil where different curative herbs and spices are added according to the various types of disorders, nye or the actual massage techniques like rubbing, tapping, stroking, stretching of muscles, tendons, meridians and the rotation and pressure of points, chi or removing oils by applying chick-peas or barley flours to avoid or prevent possible unbalances of humors.

Tibetan Massage includes also other therapeutic methods to balance chakras energy and the flow of lha, a very subtle energy circulating throughout the body according to the lunar calendar. Beside massage Ku Nye includes external therapies such as cupping, moxa, balneotherapy, golden needle technique, tapping with a stick, the use of shells, fomentation, blood letting. Ku Nye can prevent many illnesses, balance the energies of the five elements and contribute to slow down the aging process of the body.

The structure of the Ku Nye seminars given by Dr. Chenagtsang are in three levels with a final diploma level to complete the training. In this first level course we will cover the following:

- Historical outline and fundamental principles of Tibetan medicine.
- Explanations and practice of Ku (oiling of the patient, mobilization of joints and application of heat).
- Explanation and practice of Nye (treatment of muscles, tendons, meridians and points).
- Explanation and practice of Chi (cleansing of the patient with specific flours and powders).

The first level includes 70 hours of teachings plus 20 hours of group work within the course, the treatment of at least 50 patients and 60 hours of individual study for a total of 200 hours altogether. Course materials are included.

More information about the subsequent levels can be provided on request.

Mantra Healing

A course led by Dr. Nida Chenagtsang

Dates: Tuesday, October 26 - Friday October 29, 2004

Cost: GBP 200, (members contact the course organizer)

Minimum Places: (for course to run) 15, maximum 35

Venue: The October Gallery, Central London.

Contact: Peter White, Tel: 07900 496 909, 35 Finchams Close, Linton, Cambridge, CB1 6ND, Email: pwhite@i12.com to book your place on this course.

A 20% (GBP 40) advance booking payment is required, payable to "Dzogchen Community UK", balance to be paid on the first day of the course. Further details will be announced shortly.

Description

MANTRA HEALING is a healing practice employed in traditional Tibetan culture as a component of Tibetan medicine. The main points dealt with in these seminars are:

continued on next page



- An explanation of the origin of this spiritual healing practice.
- The main fundamental principles of Tibetan medicine.
- An explanation of natural sound, the sounds of elements, their colors and their associations with hands and fingers for healing purposes.
- The meaning of mantras: main mantras and mantras used to cure specific disorders, the action of mantras.
- Mantras and their transmission.
- Explanations on how to use the mala and the meaning of different types of malas, the recitation of mantras, the posture to assume and many other necessary details for a correct mantra recitation.
- Explanations on the use of other ritual objects employed for healing purposes.
- The therapeutic properties of some precious stones.

During the course students will have the opportunity of devoting a lot of time to practice in order to have the experience of mantra recitation. This course consists of an intensive seminar of four days.

About Dr. Nida Chenagtsang

Dr. Chenagtsang is a fully qualified Tibetan Medical doctor, trained in Tibet. Since 1996 Dr. Chenagtsang practiced at the Traditional Tibetan Medicine Hospitals in Lhasa and Lhoka, Tibet. In 1998 Dr. Chenagtsang was invited from Tibet to the Shang-Shung Institute in Italy where he continues to work as the Coordinator of the Traditional Tibetan Medical Department.

Here he teaches and facilitates the 4-year Traditional Tibetan Medical Course as well as leading international courses in Ku Nye massage, mantra healing, dream analysis, diet and behavior and many other Tibetan Medicine oriented subjects.

SHANGSHUNG EDIZIONI

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu SANTI MAHA SANGHA LEVEL ONE TRAININGS July 1994 to June 2001

Edited by Jim Valby

Two Volumes, 622 pages, Euro 40,00

Shang Shung Edizioni has published a new English language book with transcriptions from Rinpoche's first thirteen Santi Maha Sangha Level One Trainings. Rinpoche's explanations are arranged firstly by topic and secondly by the retreat dates. The content of the SMS Level One Training evolved over the years. Rinpoche added new topics and explanations.

This new book is intended for those who have already passed the SMS Base Level examination, received the SMS Level One teachings, and kept their Nine Samayas.

SMS1 practitioners who wish to receive this new book should contact their Gar's SMS coordinator.

Merigar: Igor Legati <edizss@tiscali.it>

Kunsangar: Grisha Mokhin <mokhin@dzogchen.ru>

Namgyalgar: Elise Stutchbury <elise777@austarnet.com.au>

Tashigar: Ricky Sued <rsued@onenet.com.ar>

Vajra Dance Course Dance of the Liberation of Six Lokas October 1- 3, 2004 with Rita Renzi Berlin, Germany

We are happy to announce the following Vajra Dance Course of the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas with Rita Renzi in Berlin, Germany from October 1st - 3rd, 2004. Anyone is welcome to participate who is interested, even without transmission.

The course will start on Friday 17.00 and end Sunday afternoon at 16.00.

Fees: Euro 130. for non-members, 100. for members

Booking in advance while remitting until 30/8/04 is Euro 120. for non-members, 90. for members (reduced 108./ 80.).

Please remit to the account of the Dzogchengemeinschaft Deutschland e.V., Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf, Knt.-Nr.: 11047891, BLZ: 30050110, IBAN DE 40 3005 0110 0011 047891, SWIFT/BIC DUSSDEDDXXX

For registration & more information please contact:

Regine Zettler, Email: Regine-125@gmx.net, Tel: 0049-(0)89-74298244

PASSAGES

MARRIED:

Waltraud Kranz & Alexander Sochor

We are happy to announce our marriage to the International Dzogchen Community! We met at the July retreat, 1999, at Merigar, Italy, and married on 07.08.2004 in Salzburg/Austria.

Tsegyalgar, Dzogchen Community in America,
18 Schoolhouse Road, Conway, MA 01341
Tel: 413-369-4153 | Fax: 413-369-4473
Email: secretary@tsegyalgar.org



SMS Rockers

N ZETZ

SMS ROCKS!

Random thoughts on a SMS Base retreat with Jim Valby, Tsegyalgar, July 2004

by Paola Zamperini

Year after year, I would read in the Mirror ecstatic accounts of Santi Maha Sangha Base Practice Retreats with Jim Valby around the world, and I would always finish reading the articles feeling torn. I was delighted that so many Vajra sisters and brothers were following the Santi Maha Sangha training. But I was beginning to feel a bit left out; why was it that these courses always seemed to happen when I had to work if they took place in the USA, or when I was on vacation but could not travel outside of the country?

So it was with immense joy that I learned that, for once, I was going to be in the right place at the right time, and that as of July 1st, 2004, I would be able to follow a six-day retreat with Jim Valby at Tsegyalgar. I wish I could tell everything of those days. Yet, words fail me. Simply

put, it was wonderful. Jim showed us with his light-hearted wisdom and deep compassion, one moment guiding us with clarity and precision through the *mdo bcu*, the "ten topics" or concise teachings about Dzogchen, the next carefully and simply explaining the base of the Santi Maha Sangha practices. He showed us the huge wealth of Dzogchen sources written in Tibetan and taught us to appreciate the challenges of translating them into English; he also made sure we understood the contents and the practices contained in "The Precious Vase," leading us to and through them, with patience and enthusiasm. He often shared his own experiences as a Dzogchenpa with disarming honesty and humor and brought laughter as well as understanding to many of us. We discovered in him a great scholar, a true practitioner, and a very cool friend.

We sang the Song of the Vajra while floating (or trying to) together with newts and frogs in the pond of Khandroling; we scared Conway dogs out of their wits with our loud "Phat", and learned more about ourselves, each other and the wonderful transmission we are all so incred-

ibly fortunate to be in. Practitioners, old and new, from all over the world, joined the teachings, and it was amazing to sit in the Tsegyalgar Gonpa and realize how truly global our community is simply by listening to the various accents (American, Czech, Macedonian, Italian, Argentinean, and so on) echo in the words we read out loud from Jim's skillful translation of one of Longchenpa's works. Paula Barry led the Yantra Yoga practices with her usual grace and kind enthusiasm, and our multidimensional Geköes, Cindy Thibeau, once more produced food and comfort for all around, even while nursing a broken foot.

The end of the retreat came too soon, at least for me, and left me feeling a bit homesick for all the friends, old and new, who left the Gar to go back to their lives. Jim left too, to continue his selfless task around the world. I hope that he realized how truly grateful we all were for his time and teachings. But even more, I hope he will come back to Tsegyalgar soon to continue to offer to other practitioners the possibility to open and unfold this wonderful gift that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave us, the SMS training.

NEWS FROM TSEGYALGAR EAST, CONWAY

Dear Vajra Kin,

In the past few months so many things have happened here at Tsegyalgar that we feel it is about time to give you a brief update. First of all, we want to thank all the people who have left and are leaving the Gakyil and the Gar, beginning with Andrea Nasca, who recently left her post as the secretary. Many of us found our way to the Conway thanks to Andrea's explanations, directions, either via email or phone, and we all owe her a great debt of gratitude. She is currently working hard for A.S.I.A. and we hope to always have her around, one way or another. We also want to thank Damien Schwartz, who many of you may remember as the previous Geköes of Tsegyalgar. As of last month, he has left the position of treasurer on the Gakyil, so we thank him immensely for all his hard work, and we hope to have him soon again among us. Another person who is leaving us is Marilyn Newberry, the part-time secretary at the Gar who has helped us to "hold the fort" as Andrea was leaving and we faced a rather-legally and financially- turbulent period. Due to drastic budget cuts, we unfortunately have to let Marilyn go: we will miss her help and devoted work, though we are sure that she will have a lot of fun and success in pursuing her art career. Last but not least, Dominik Niceva, our "spicy Macedonian", has decided to step

down from her position of president. She will stay on as Blue Gakyil until May 2005, so you will hear still a lot from her, but we would like to take this opportunity to thank her for all her hard work and incredible generosity as a president. She flew almost every month from Miami for our Gakyil meetings, and has made a tremendous difference in the Gar and the Community. We are all way more spacious as a result of having met her and we look forward to working with her more.

"New entries" in the Gar are Lynn Newdome, our new Yellow member and treasurer; Patricia Shahan, who has just been elected as Yellow this month, and James Fox, on Blue. Welcome to all of you! Also, as many of you already know, we have a new full time secretary, Ed Hayes, to whom we are already indebted for his hard work and efficiency.

The new president of the Gakyil is, well, myself, and I would like to take this opportunity to call on all of you to come forward and join us. We still need at least one or ideally two new Reds (see announcement below), and even if you do not feel you have the time and the energy to become a Gakyil member, we are always very much in need of whatever time and skill you have to offer. People often think that being on the Gakyil is the only way to actually help the Community, but the Gakyil is made up of volunteers who simply try to figure out the work that needs to be done and how to organize it. We always welcome and need your help and support, in what-

continued on next page



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ever form or shape you want to offer them, from time to suggestions, from skills and expertise to donations. Especially with Rinpoche's retreat coming up in May 2005, we are looking to create teams of volunteers to take care of publicity, advertisement,

fundraising, and so on and so forth. So, do not be strangers, stay in touch, write us, and, regardless of where you live, if and when you can, come and practice with us!
Paola Zamperini
Tsegyalgar Gakyil

REDS WANTED!

The Tsegyalgar Gakyil is looking for at least one and ideally two people to work on the Red Gakyil, whose task is to organize any physical work that needs to be done, from looking after retreats cabins to maintenance of the gar, land keeping, road repairs and so on and so forth.

To be able to become part of the Gakyil, one needs to have attended at least three retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to have been involved in the Community for at least three years, and to be a current member of D.C.A. Please contact us at gakyil@tsegyalgar.org with your submissions and/or queries, we will look forward to hearing from you!



Nina with practitioners inside Rinpoche's cabin at Khandroling

N ZEITZ

The Mandarava Practice Retreat with Nina Robinson July 9-15, 2004 Khandroling, Tsegyalgar, Conway, Ma

by Sally Atkinson

As always, as you walk up the mountain to Khandroling, the energy of the land begins to permeate your body and by the time you reach the top of the land there is a remembered sweetness, peace and deep relaxation from the earth. The light and shadows of the forest dance and the sky blue.

Rinpoche's retreat cabin welcomed us all. Fifteen to twenty practitioners along with Nina Robinson, our guide, flowed in and out from around the world and came together in a play of personality. All of us shared the

energy of dedication; commitment and respect to this energy of truth and presence that we all wish to fully live and offer. It was a wonderful oasis of healing and strengthening in a world that feels increasingly contrary. As Nina so succinctly said, "Practice, practice, practice."

Nina Robinson led the retreat beautifully. Her very humble presence was as delightfully refreshing as the air, her wisdom and kindness were constant and her playful spirit was very patient in teaching and very steady and attuned when guiding the practice.

We gathered together Friday evening for the teachings and practiced the first morning, at sunrise on the Mandala. It was a good beginning.

We made *dadars* the first morning in the cabin. We worked in a focused way, closely together, cut the bamboo, threaded the

needles to sew the ribbons - all was done by the fire warming the early morning air. The teaching and practice moved from the cabin to the forest and back again. Some practitioners camped on the land. Food manifested in various ways. We had one glorious meal altogether around the table at the pond.

There was swimming, canoeing and long walks. Golden air. Conversations were gentle. Coyotes, bears, snakes and all varieties of wild animals visited. The frogs put on an amazing concert rivaled by none with amazing tones and sound all shifting and blending into harmony, moving in space, in the absolute darkness of the night.

It was a special time of Community, peace and healing - a time to experience the clarity brought about by the practice - living in the grace of the Sangha.



Painting Universal Mandala

N ZEITZ

Khandroling Update August 2004

by Santo Santoriello

We were fortunate this year to be able to apply for a government program, The Forest Stewardship Program, which paid for having a professional forester inventory the Khandroling and Pike's land parcels.

valuable hardwoods to fill in those openings. We will be exploring the possibility of having a band saw mill cut the pines into boards for use as siding on the retreat cabins. Being enrolled in the program may allow us to cost share additional projects with the government, except that the person acting as President has cut these funds.

We were able to build the Universal size Dance Mandala this Spring, with lots of help from the participants in the Santi Maha Sangha retreat with Jim Valby, and many others. It was constructed on the former site of the Dance

The site has its challenges: being at the end of a long gravel road, with no electricity, or drilled well. Having the bathhouse will make the retreat more hospitable, by providing toilets, and hot showers. We are exploring the options for extending the electric and telephone lines to the site, but these may be very costly, and have to wait for fundraising. The site is secluded and quiet for retreats, with a wonderful pond for swimming. Rinpoche has said that practicing at Khandroling for one week is like practicing elsewhere for six months. It has special blessings.

We made a start on the Mandarava long-life cabin, and the Thögal cabin. They should be ready to use next summer. There will eventually be three more cabins built, a little more secluded than these will.

There is currently a small cabin near the pond, which we intend to make a handicap accessible cabin with parking. There is a very nice cabin which was built for Rinpoche, but which is available for anyone to do a personal retreat. Lastly, there is the guardian shrine that has a room that can be used by someone. There are also lots of wonderful spots for camping. The Community also has a dark retreat cabin on another site that can accommodate a number of people, and can be used for regular retreats, if no one is doing dark. This cabin has a toilet and kitchen, and is on a paved road. There will be a Community meeting on September 12, 2004, to continue the discussion of possible uses for the Pike land. One possibility is building a home for Rinpoche, which would also have an apartment for a Geköes, a Mandala sized room where small teachings or Ganapuja could occur, and space for smaller offices for Tsegyalgar. Another possibility is having lots, where people could build cabins. This property is on a paved road with utilities available. It adjoins the Khandroling property. This is the latest update from Khandroling.



Assembling Universal Mandala

D NICEVA

She also plotted the corners of the properties with GPS, so that we have a more accurate description of the properties, and they have been plotted onto a topographic map. She identified two old roads through the Pike property, which could be re-established to connect Khandroling to the paved road, instead of having to travel miles on a gravel road. There were no wet lands issues with these paths to complicate the process. The forests have good potential for long-term lumber income. She did concur with Rinpoche, that removing the low value pine trees would encourage more

Mandala, where Rinpoche had had a vision of dakas and dakinis dancing. It is now in the process of being painted. The earth size Mandala in the center should be ready for the Vajra Dance retreat with Anastasia McGhee, August 20-22, when there should be an opportunity for the retreatants to help paint the rest of the Mandala. The bathhouse is to the point of painting the bathrooms, installing the cabinets, and having the plumbers back to hook things up. We have to order another water heater, because the gravity feed water system does not have a high enough water pressure for the first unit we had delivered.

NEW NEW MEXICO GAKYIL

RED: Chizuko Tasaka
BLUE: Julia Deisler
YELLOW: Susie Marlow (Treasurer)



baja tsegyalgar west

TOPES* AND TACOS

by John Bidelman

The Drive to Baja Sur

Things to bring:

Driving skills
Passport or Birth Certificate plus Picture ID (Driver's License is best)
Insurance for driving in Mexico
Good, recent map of Baja roads
Decent Travel Guide for Baja
A sense of humor
An elevated respect for speed limits

Do not bring:

Stress and impatience
Pets

In Baja a good byword for the road could be "keep your eyes peeled". If some of the scenery appears to be pulled right out of some western movie then that old saw of watch and wait and staying aware is right at home here too. The lack of guard rails and encroachments to the road edges are some of the realities bound to keep a person wide awake. Several miles of panoramic views north of Loreto take on a more thrilling aspect with the absence of any guard rails or even shoulders. The fact that the few areas of respite on this stretch being littered with shrines is not that comforting. Vista pull-outs were few and far between so this driver missed all but a few adrenaline filled moments to share in a breath-taking view.

CON QUIDADO*

If anything can be said for the "rites of passage" on Baja Highway 1 it would be "don't do it". Passing a swaying semi-truck on this narrow road is not for the squeamish. But "faint heart ne'er won fair maiden" really applies here as well. You can't make decent time if you don't pass the slow (slow) trucks. Picking the right place and moment takes some common sense and good timing. Fortunately, truckers in Baja have a fairly civil way of aiding the captive driver behind them. They'll put on their left turn signal when the coast is clear making it much easier to get around them. However, be aware that not every truck driver has the requisite judgment that you'd want to bet your lives on. After one such left hand signal we found ourselves literally being pushed off the road, necessitating a screeching emergency stop because the truck for some odd reason started squeezing us off the road as we attempted to pass even though he signaled the "all clear". Later, I passed on a wider lane. The lack of shoulders and the encroachments make passing trucks and other vehicles a veritable dice toss. Encroachments are the large and sometimes deep gashes where the road edge is compromised by a miniature canyon, capable of throwing you off the road or taking out your tire. Before passing it's wise to check whether or not you can see the "fog-line" (white stripe on edge of road) continuously down the road. If you see breaks in the line on your side, do not pass as you may have a serious encroachment in your passing lane. It may also be wise not to assume that there is no fog in Baja. It has some seriously thick fog and can

BUENA VISTA

But don't let the caveats preempt the enjoyable ride. There are many incredible vistas to be had, most notably south of Loreto where the landscape could be from another planet. Some of the landmarks of barren desert and high plateaus are enough to make you swear off airlines once and for all. Also controlling your own destiny is one very high priority for some people making the drive. If you dislike being searched every 200 miles or so then take a flight and forget driving. A burning paint can on the side of the road heralded one such stop. Another few hundred yards and another pair of burning cans. After coming around a sharp curve we were confronted by a mass of black-soot cans burning kerosene and a medium sized armed Federale checkpoint. A hoarse but effective dog barked incessantly as they went through the vehicle. The scene, with the sound of the frenzied dog and the smell of burning diesel was apocalyptic. We were on our way in 10-12 minutes. You can expect to be stopped at the Baja Sur border and again just North of La Paz but it's the policy of the Mexican Government to change the style and location of checkpoints frequently. We were stopped a total of 5 times on the way down. Sometimes they just want to ask you questions, other times they want to go through your vehicle.

TOPES

Again, "Be Aware" is a golden motto but definitely worth it's weight on the road to Baja. Topes are the name for those things we know as "Speed Bumps". At times they are flat and gentle and at times you will wonder if a re-alignment might be needed before you proceed. Surely, they are the best speed prohibitive that exists south of the CHP. Many times these yellow painted mounds will toss your passengers into the headliner and other times you discover that it's just a paint stripe with no mound. But do not take the chance....unless you are driving a tank, it's best just to slow down; there's usually a good reason. Driving through Ensenada and other large towns makes it perfectly clear that there are absolutely NO emission laws enforced in Baja California. The exhaust was so bad there were numerous times I wanted to stop and wait for the traffic to die down. There were times when

it was borderline unbearable, even with the windows up.

Now it must be said that speeding is inevitable with a 45 kph (27 mph) speed limit in many areas. If you want to make the drive in under 5 days you might have to break a law or two. Don't send me your tickets because I am not suggesting you speed. I'm only going to tell you that going 45 mph in a 40 kph zone will get you a \$250 ticket...unless you're accompanied by a beautiful woman. Then you only get invited out for a beer after a 10 minute plea for leniency. Speeding is easier on the long (long) stretches of straight narrow highways in the central sections of Baja Norte and Baja Sur alike.

TACOS

My companions and I were never sick from the road-food. We stopped several times and can recommend only our luck. I suggest not eating in Ensenada or larger towns. It's safer to eat at the establishment that's affiliated with the motel you're staying at. Lacking that, stick with the medium sized restaurants and not the tiny little taco stands. Again, use your common sense and play the odds. We ate some great Tarjetas at a roadside stand near Santa Rosalia (mango and guava) that were still warm. Also, Liquados (smoothies) are good although I was warned not to eat fresh prepared food, I never had a regret. The papaya and mango Liquados were absolutely reviving on a soul level.

LA PAZ

Once south of the Baja Sur border and through the last checkpoint your trip will transform along with the scenery. La Paz is an example. First of all you must know this; people do not regard stop signs in La Paz as a rule...only a general guideline and one-way streets are in no way marked not even in Espanol. This is somewhat the case in Baja in general but not like it is in La Paz. We turned at least once the wrong way down a one-way street but were cut off by people running stop signs every other intersection. It's every man for himself and this reflects the free-wheeling and bohemian style of life in Baja Sur.

But La Paz (The Peace) really is just that, so if cars are behaving in a different way than you're used to, relax and just walk. The beach is wonderful and after all, this is the gateway to another Baja.

Tourism reigns in La Paz and all points south so the military presence is nil and even the policia seem to dwell somewhat in the background.

THE ROUTE

As luck would have it, if you're going south to Baja Sur you need only to remember Highway 1. There's a few turns most notably in Ensenada but once you're on Baja 1 south of the U.S. border things get simple real fast. Heading south from L.A. in the early morning is best in order to avoid Ensenada and other northern Baja towns that are less than picturesque.

If you can it's best to drive all the way to El Rosario or Catavina. In El Rosario there's Mama's Espinoza's, a motel/restaurant with a long history of feeding travelers. Our stay there was pleasant and the staff afforded us a warm hospitality. There's a local legend in El Rosario but I won't spoil the mystery.

We didn't stay at Hotel Catavina in the town of Catavina but we did gas up there and the hotel looked like a good bet for a night's stay. It's approximately 130 km's down the road from El Rosario so if Mama Espinoza has no room for you your best bet is to drive on to Catavina. It's also a good strategy to stop early at these places especially during the tourist season as they have a small number of rooms and fill quickly. So you may want to plan your trip so that you arrive at one of these places early enough to get a room. Both establishments have their own restaurants. If you have time, look for a small shop on the right side of the road just 60 km south of El Rosario called The Trading Post. It's run by architect Kim Williams. She has many beautiful artifacts of Baja, fossils, shells and jewelry. She can help you if you are in need of information on just about anything from food/gas to maps and hotels.

The next leg of our trip took us deeper into the Baja Norte where we found a nice little roadside eatery; it's on the right side of the road in a little invisible town called Rosarito. I say invisible because the local facilities, gas and etc, seem to have evaporated so that the small restaurant is the only business on the main highway besides the mercandito (small store) next door to it. This is a good place to eat either breakfast or lunch and the people are very friendly. However, I do not recommend the fried chicken or anything fried for that matter. Stick to the frijoles, arroz, huevos and oatmeal.

Be advised that about 80 km south of Rosarito is the border check-point of Baja Norte/Sur. Here you will need to present your passport or combination of birth certificate and driver's license to obtain a visa for entry into Baja Sur. This can change overnight but for our trip at this time, those were the conditions. We were not asked for anything before this point, either at the U.S. border or anywhere else in Mexico. The nearby town of Guerrero Negro is a largish town and looks less than inviting.

200 km south of the border is a good place to stay if it's getting late and that's the "El Morro" 1 mile south of Santa Rosalia. They have a pool and an incredible terrace overlooking a romantic ocean vista. The food at their restaurant was noteworthy and the beds were everything a weary traveler dreams of. There's also the Hotel Las Casitas de Santa Rosalia. We didn't stay there but it's a newer building and also has ocean view rooms. Failing both of these, check out the Hotel Frances that is a totally refurbished bed and breakfast in town with 17 rooms.

Now, if it's too early to spend the night in Santa Rosalia you will probably want to gauge whether or not you will be able to make it south to the eco-retreat of El Santuario 40 km south of Loreto. If not you might want to drive all the way to Ciudad Constitucion (215 miles) or even La Paz depending on your timing. Avoid Loreto. It would be a good plan to make it to Santa Rosalia the evening (plenty of hotels/motels) and drive the entire way to Ciudad Constitucion where there are also good and plentiful accommodations. From Ciudad Constitucion to La Paz it's another 191 km (118 miles). The web site for El Santuario is:

<http://www.el-santuario.com/>

Getting advance reservations is recommended, as they are very popular.

At any rate regardless of your schedule going south from the Baja Sur border you will want to drive the stretch between Santa Rosalia and Loreto in the daylight hours due to the extreme hazards of the mountain roads. Again, the lack of guardrails and narrow pavement makes night driving along this stretch somewhat dangerous. Another reason for the daylight drive is not to miss the spectacular views of both Sierra La Giganta to the west and the Gulf of California to the east which is a special biosphere preserve and worth taking some time out to ogle.

Just north of La Paz there is a beautiful monument and a final military check point. La Paz is a large city and has a sophisticated feel after the drive through Baja. You will want to pay for your visa at a bank here and perhaps eat at one of the many beach restaurants in town.

From La Paz it's under a 2 hour drive (108 km) to Buena Vista and Los Barriles.

FINAL NOTES

After driving Baja Highway One it could be said that enjoying yourself will prevent any problems. If you're in a hurry, take a plane. Driving after dark is not advised in some areas (south of El Rosario, just north and south of Santa Rosalia and north and south of Loreto). Rising early and making time in the morning is your best approach to a safe trip. Truckers almost always drive until 11PM and from 9PM until then is when they are the most tired and present a problem. Also if you stop before or soon after dark you're more assured of a room. Bottled water and a little intuition will also go a long way. We had no problems with gas (no pun intended) but you need to fill up when you get a chance and especially be aware that as the afternoon fades into evening the gas stations will close. Most maps have an accurate legend for gas stops. Very few that were on our map (Borders \$4.95) were closed.

Watching for cattle is also highly advised anywhere south of the border. Ganado is the local "sign term" for cattle and many drivers in Baja will flash their emergency flashers to let you know that you are approaching an area with cattle near or on the road. A good guide book for Baja is "Best of Baja" and is widely available. It's one of the most recent and is likely to be more up to date.

continued on next page



continued from previous page

Remember that with a little forethought and a lot of attention to safety you'll enjoy some of the most beautiful scenery and warmest people in the world.

Vaya Con Dios,

Los Tres Amigos -

*Topes are speed bumps.
*With caution

BAJA REPORT, AUGUST 2004: A Refugio and a Home Far From the Madding Crowd

We are entering a phase at "Tsegylgar West" in Baja of preparing for more involvement by Community members and welcoming them to this special place. Because the land is so large, we have found that rumors about among the local vaquero population about who now owns it and what it will be used



Andres Orvananos & Monique Izcovich

for (a motorcycle racetrack has been mentioned) abound, and we realize that it is very important to establish a gradual presence on the property, so that the neighbors, in addition to Domingo and Mauricio, who work for us, can begin to relate to what is actually happening and being planned on our ranch. This is the basis for establishing the pioneer program. In the broader picture, there are major themes of our work in Baja: the first is to establish a practice and retreat Center on the San Miguel property and also practice sites in surrounding areas, such as on the Pacific side and on the Sea of Cortez side of the peninsula (our property is more or less in the middle). The second is to insure ecological preservation of our property and provide opportunities for ecological education in Baja. A third emphasis is the establishment of a health center/spa at San Miguel in collaboration with providing services at the Hotel Buenavista on the Sea of Cortez and in conjunction with growing organic food and possibly producing organic plant-derived products. Underlying all that we do in Baja is community building - the creation of practice-based residential community sites for Community members in Baja.

Our first project at San Miguel will be the completion of the 19 unfinished casitas that we inherited on the land, and Andres Orvananos has obtained several construction bids to aid this process. Andres and his partner, Monique Izcovich, also live on the Pacific side north of Cabo San Lucas, where they partake of a unique serenity offered by the flower-filled Baja ranchland, views of the Pacific, and the sound of waves. Andres offers sweat lodges each week for spiritual growth and physical and spiritual purification. He and Monique have attended many retreats with Tibetan teachers and are expecting their first child in December. Andres is highly knowledgeable about land transactions in Baja and has put us in touch with a fine lawyer, Francisco Cossu, as well as with an engineer who knows his way

around the Baja bureaucracy. Andres has been essential in helping us work through our relationship with the current accountant and deal with various complex land transactions left over from the previous owner, which impact our land.

Gabriel and Kitzi

are well known in the world of permaculture, sustainable agriculture, and preservation of species diversity with their work at the Buena Fortuna permaculture gardens in La Ribera, on the Sea of Cortez side of Baja Sur. Gabriel has discovered 50 new species in the mountains of Baja, and informed us that our striking white fig trees on the land (Zalates) are in the Bodhi tree family and can live to be several thousand years old. Kitzi has created a Tara garden at Buena Fortuna. Gabriel and Kitzi offer ecological agriculture programs for school children and the local communities on a regular basis, as well as workshops in other countries, and conduct a Saturday produce market. Gabriel and Kitzi hosted Rinpoche and many Community members at a series of delicious organic lunches at their garden during the last retreat in April, and provided food for Rinpoche's visit to the land and the first Ganapuja with him there. They have joined our Community and the Baja Gakyil, and made it possible for us to purchase land across the street from them which is ideal for building 21 small houses for the shareholders, and for growing marvelous organic fruits and vegetables on 10 acres of prime farmland, 3 minutes from the beach on the Sea of Cortez, 45 minutes from the San Miguel land.

This project in La Ribera, titled "Lumbini Gardens," is our first community-building project in Baja, fully endorsed by Rinpoche, and at the present date, there are 10 shares remaining available at a cost of \$6,400 each. (Contact Tana Lehr at greengaruda@mac.com if you wish to have more information.) We will be completing our purchase of the land and convening a planning meeting of the shareholders in February, to plan the building process and layout on the site. The projected cost of building a small-to-medium-sized home on the site is between \$15,000 and \$25,000. We will also be building a house for Rinpoche there, as well as a practice palapa, and of course, a swimming pool, which will then irrigate our crops. This

will be an ecological development with composting toilets, use of grey water for irrigation, use of local materials for building, and attention to energy use. The garden will be an asset for all Community projects in Baja and managed by the Community. Also a Gakyil member and currently hosting a growing number of boxes of our land's legal history in his office, engineer Rodrigo Villalobos works at an electrical lighting company in Cabo del San Jose, and has been assisting us in every way possible, helping to plan practices, meeting us at the airport, interacting with neighbors at the land, providing technical advice, and giving all-around encouragement and enthusiasm. To sum it up: we have a vibrant, young, enthusiastic, and talented group of spiritual practitioners helping to establish the Baja Winter Gar. We look forward to offering a composting toilet workshop in early November with Carol Steinfeld, a world-

renowned authority on waste disposal and to have one or two Yantra Yoga workshops with Jey Clark in early December.

The Baja Gakyil has scheduled a planning meeting for mid-September in Baja and holds monthly conference calls.

Our blessed anonymous donor has pledged a \$25,000 matching grant for the Baja project this year, and has released \$10,000 so far. If we can quickly raise another \$5,000 from the Community to help match this \$10,000, we can obtain the release of the remaining \$15,000. PLEASE send your donations to the Dzogchen Community West Coast, Winter Gar Fund, 755 Euclid Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94708, USA. All US contributions are fully tax-deductible. Obtain bank wire information for direct transfer by writing: carolmfields@aol.com Check out the website: <http://bajasangha.org>

Thanks to the Generous Contributions to Baja Winter Gar, Tsegylgar West

WITH TREMENDOUS GRATITUDE, THE BAJA WINTER GAR (TSEGYALGAR WEST) GAKYIL ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING GENEROUS CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS PROJECT. YOU HAVE HELPED US TO MATCH \$20,000 IN ANONYMOUS CHALLENGE GRANTS IN 2003 AND QUALIFIED US TO RECEIVE ANOTHER \$25,000 TO BE MATCHED IN 2004. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!!

- Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- Anonymous Challenge Grant Donor
- Tsegylgar
- Joan Casey
- Jonathan Culshaw
- Judy Daugherty
- Glenda Delenstarr
- Igor Devetak
- Tom Garnett
- Urban and Minoo Geiwald
- Natalie Gougeon
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- Tana Lehr
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- Susan Pottish
- Elizabeth Pretzer
- Terry Satterthwaite
- Stephanie Scott
- Will Shea
- Jim Valby
- John C. Walker
- Rosanne Welsh
- Daniel Winkler

WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS LIST GROW VERY LONG WITH DONATIONS OF ALL SIZES - WE HAVE SO FAR RAISED ONLY \$3,300 TOWARDS THIS YEAR'S CHALLENGE. WITH SEVERAL PIONEERS ARRIVING THIS YEAR TO LIVE AND WORK AT THE GAR WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Please send donations (which release and are automatically doubled by our challenge grant) to Dzogchen Community West Coast, 2748 Adeline, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94703, USA. All donations are fully tax-deductible in the U.S. Bank account wiring information available by writing: aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org See the new Baja web site at: <http://bajasangha.org>

WE ALSO THANK THE MANY OTHERS WHO HAVE ATTENDED THE RETREATS IN BAJA, PARTICIPATED IN THE AUCTION AND RAFFLE, AND WORKED ON THIS PROJECT FROM THE BEGINNING.

The Baja (Tsegylgar West) Gakyil

book review mom continued from page 9

precious hours of the day when my home is quiet. After each reading session, almost by osmosis, I found myself becoming more mindful in my daily routines. It was fascinating to me how even these slight changes in thinking could make my experience of life so much more enjoyable. The chapter on Self Love is a must read for every mother. In it she shares that it took being diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome for her to start loving and taking care of herself. Here she realizes that she cannot give to her child or anyone else what she doesn't have, and quotes the Buddha thus: "A mother best serves her child who serves herself". Yes, something we have all heard before, but it deserves repeating.

The basic tenets of Buddhism that Kramer uses as her moral compass are similar to those of many of the great religious and spiritual traditions of the world. Anecdotes and inspirational affirmations abound as she draws from an eclectic mix of sources, including Zen Masters, Jewish Mystics, Arabian folklore, and her own mother, Rose. Interestingly enough we discover later in the book that she is also a practitioner of Religious Science. Of this she says: "I learned from Buddhism to look within; I learned from Religious Science how to heal the negative trends I found while looking within."

Kramer's writing is fluid and lyrical at times, but can get a bit flowery (remember the dreamy pregnancy sequence?). Generally her writing tends to take a backseat to the breadth of wisdom she shares from her decades of inner reflection and healing.

All in all Buddha Mom accomplishes what it sets out to do: it is a gentle guide for any woman, regardless of religious orientation, who is trying to connect her spirituality with her mothering. It offers comfort, reassurance, and hope. After all, when was the last time you read anything that encouraged you to view changing a dirty diaper as a vehicle for enlightenment? As someone who has been there, Jacqueline Kramer reminds us that mothering is indeed ripe with opportunity.

Sarah Raleigh Kilts is a writer, poet and mother to one daughter—a "highly spirited" toddler. She and her husband Tom (a Buddhist Chaplain and Pastoral Educator) share a deep commitment to their Buddhist practices and living a contemplative life.

by Sarah Raleigh Kilts

lama

you are the terma

and we

discovering you

feel

miracle miracle

how could we be

so fortunate

by Kathy McGrane



south america tashigar north & south

**Santi Maha Sangha
Base Level Teacher
Training**

Margarita Island,
Venezuela
June 12th, 2004

by Ingrid Lücke

On June 12th, 2004, Rinpoche gave an Introduction to this year's Teacher Training. Sixty-five people attended the training.

On the first day, Rinpoche spoke about how a real teacher should be: with the knowledge of the three series as the base, being a teacher means your knowledge and experience corresponds to your existence, you know how to enter into the dimension of others and have good communication skills. The main point is that the teacher should know how to work with circumstances and to understand chödpa (behavior).

A person must know the sense of the teachings and integrate - that means evolution. This person also needs to participate and collaborate with the Dzogchen Community. For example, you can have a problem with a person and solve it, but you cannot have a problem with the whole Community. The necessity of a correct attitude is indispensable.

The second day, the first participant was Jey Clark from California, USA. He was asked to explain the difference between

Mahayoga and Anuyoga. Every candidate had one hour to speak about the theme that they chose from an envelope.

The second participant was Elio Guarisco, from Italy, who had to speak about the three aspects and three classes of Tantra.

In the afternoon, the third participant was Alexander Poubants, from Russia, who talked about the Ancient and Modern Tantras. Rinpoche sang the melodies of the practices of the Base Level to teach us how to do so in a perfect way.

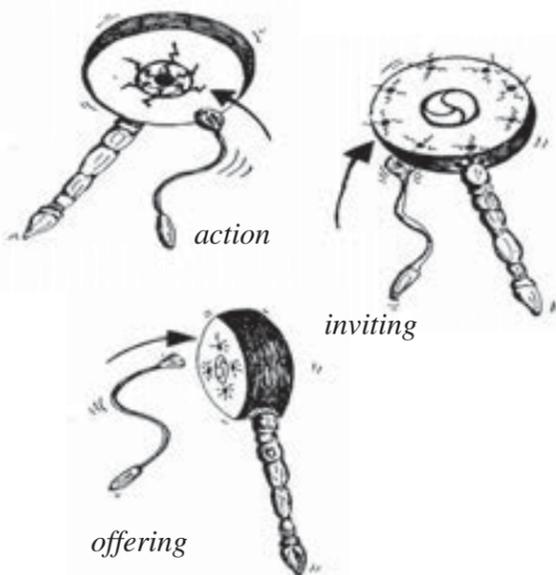
On Monday, we had the training in the comedor because the workers had to continue with the new, big and very attractive Gonpa.

Fabio Risolo, from Italy, had the topic of the 5th Paramita. Fabio also lead us through a Base practice.

Rinpoche emphasized that we must be careful and use the correct singing, mudras and playing of the instruments. For example, when we finish the Ngagkong, we should not do several final drumbeats. That is an invention. Rinpoche demonstrated how to play. Rinpoche also said that we have to respect the voice of the leader, not to sing louder, but to listen well to how the practice is being done, and not always to practice in our own way. At the end we had a Ganapuja. We had also several practice sessions with Igor Berkhin, including explanation and practices, so the training was very complete.

Playing the Ritual Drum Revisited

The Mirror printed the lovely drawings by Prima Mai demonstrating the playing of the ritual drum incorrectly in the last issue, Mirror 68. Here are the correct drawings.



Winner of Mirror Camera Raffle!

Lilliane Busby of Montreal, Canada won the beautiful thanka of Dorje Yudronma authenticated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and painted by Glen Eddy, with lucky number 46. Congratulations and thanks to everyone!

classified ad

**LAND FOR SALE NEAR
TASHIGAR NORTE**

2000 meter square lot for \$7500US.
Contact: rekragen@hotmail.com

The Gakyil of Tashigar del Norte in Margarita is happy to announce the following courses

**Yantra Yoga Advanced and Teacher Training
Vajra Dance Teacher Training**

**Yantra Yoga Teacher Training 2nd level
with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico**

Dates: 3rd to the 12th of October (just before the Kalachakra retreat)
Duration/times: The course is for 10 days every morning
Cost: \$125US with no further discounts

Advanced Yantra Yoga course
with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico

Dates: 3rd to the 12th of October (just before the Kalachakra retreat)
Duration/times: The course is for 10 days every afternoon
Cost: \$125US with no further discounts

Discounted Price for people who want to attend both courses i.e. the morning and the afternoon sessions will be: \$200US with no further discounts.

Please register as soon as possible by writing to our secretary
Michela: tashinor@dzogchen.ru
as places are limited.

**Vajra Dance Teacher Training Course 1st level
with Adriana dal Borgo and Prima Mai**

Dates: October 31st to of November 6th (immediately after Kalachakra Retreat)
Duration: 7 days
Cost: \$200US with no further discounts

Please register as soon as possible by writing to our secretary
Michela: tashinor@dzogchen.ru
as places are strictly limited.

We are looking forward to seeing you here in our beautiful Gar.
Please check out our new and updated web site: www.dzogchenvenezuela.org
It is full of helpful information. If you have any further questions or need any help, write to our secretary
Michela: tashinor@dzogchen.ru

Tashigar Norte has a New Web Site!!!

Another example of successful international collaboration within Dzogchen Community.

For a long time, we struggled to find the needed skills in our own Community. Many people helped, donated their time and energy, but for some reason or another, they had to move on. So, finally we decided to "go international" and put a competition on Norbunet offering a free Kalachakra retreat to the lucky winner.

The Gakyil of Tashigar del Norte in Margarita is happy to announce the winner of the web site competition. Max Corradi, from Italy, put forward a number of beautifully designed web pages. Come and visit the site and see his work at: www.dzogchenvenezuela.org.

From now on, we hope that we can always provide our Vajra family with accurate and up to date information about Rinpoche's teachings, the daily program and all the necessary help you may need to come and join us here.



new gonpa under construction

tashigar norte

mandarava retreat

july 2004



aloe sales at margarita



Tashigar North
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Valle de Pedro Gonzalez
Municipio Gomez, Isla de Margarita
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Tel/Fax: 61 02 4473 7668
Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au
Web site: www.dzogchen.org.au

Tashigar South's Mandala

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Here in Tashigar South, Argentina, there exists an outside Mandala built at the first retreat that Rinpoche gave in this wonderful land, in the Christmas of 1990. This Mandala was designed, financed and built by Rinpoche with his own hands and by the hands of the practitioners from many countries who came to this faraway place to take teachings about the text of the Song of the Vajra. In those days, Rinpoche chose the location of the Mandala under three leafy pines (Lebanese cedars). He drew the Mandala on the earth with a handsaw and demonstrated the first steps of the dance of the Three Vajras in front us, singing the mantra OM AH HUM.

With Rinpoche and under his direction, we cleaned the area, cut the lower branches of the pines creating a green dome, made the brick foundations, placed the structural wood and the floor, prepared the surface and finally drew and painted the Mandala with the five colors.

All the participants of that Retreat collaborated with the work in the construction of the Mandala, so that we all became full of happiness, because we were all working with the Master. We all chanted mantras and sang sacred songs. Rinpoche took that opportunity to transmit to us many times that this work was also practice.

When the work was finished, on a beautiful morning, Rinpoche began to teach us the music, the syllables and the steps of the Dance of the Three Vajras. When Rinpoche finished the teaching, he put his book of notes on the center of the Mandala and in a matter of minutes a ferocious storm of rain, hail and thunder came - as sign of powerful energy in movement.

This long introduction is to explain that today we have, for all the practitioners of Dzogchen, the great necessity to protect this original Mandala as a precious relic in our Community. This Mandala has been outside for fourteen years, exposed to all of the elements. From year to year we have added new flooring and painted it again according to our possibilities, but this hasn't been enough to preserve the Mandala. Not until we build a roof and enclosure will it be properly protected? This is what Rinpoche has suggested that we do.

Concretely, Tashigar South asks the rest of the members of all the Dzogchen Communities of the world to collaborate generously to the defense and covering of this sacred Mandala.

This project will cost \$12,000US. The Gakyil will begin with this work on September 1, 2004, with the total trust that the necessary resources will arrive on the part of our brothers and sisters of the Vajra from all over the world. For all of those who have contributed money already to this project we thank you and appreciate the efforts you have made.

Please send your contributions to:

Greenfield Savings Bank
P.O.Box 1537

Greenfield, Ma. 01302

In the name of Glen Eddy (this account was established by Glen for Tashigar South)

Routing/ABA : 211870799.

Account: 1500024631.

Many thanks for your collaboration

Martin Bortagaray, President Gakyil of South Tashigar.

Tashigar South
Rosa Altamirano – Secretary
Comunidad Dzogchen
Tashigar
Calle pública S/N
Tanti 5155
Pcia. de Córdoba
Argentina
Tel & Fax: 0054- 3541-498 356
Email: tashigar@dcc.com.ar

Namgyalgar Gakyil Update - July 2004

The Gakyil welcomes Bob Gardner as the new Geköes of Namgyalgar. Bob, from the beautiful islands of Aotearoa (New Zealand), is a long-time practitioner of Rinpoche's teachings. He will be here during some important building development work at Namgyalgar.

Retreat Cabins

The small retreat cabin behind the coral tree is now complete. Installation of a small combustion stove has made the cabin very warm and cosy. Solar lighting and one power point have also been installed making it easier and safer to read at night. Local practitioners inaugurated the cabin on May 29 with a Ganapuja.



Rinpoche has named the cabin Tsamkhang 1 and it is now available for personal retreats to registered members of a Gar. A huge thank you to the generous contributions towards this project.

The dark retreat cabin is progressing very well with Stage 1 almost completed. The roof went up on May 29 and everything looks beautiful. Peter Hellman (the builder) placed an acacia cutting on the roof to signify the traditional tree blessing when raising a roof. Elise Stutchbury had previously performed a Sangqöd practice at the site. Joanna Tyshing and Jean Mackintosh did some Ngagong practices there and tied five colored silk ribbons to the roof. Building will stop for one month to plan the fit-out and test the insulation and ventilation.

If you wish to do a personal retreat at Namgyalgar please contact Jean Mackintosh at jeani@sci.net.au Tel: 02 4473 7049. In her absence please contact the Secretary.

Geköe's House

Construction of the Geköes house is expected to start soon after the completion of the dark retreat cabin. Donations for stage one of the Geköes's house are being sought. Contributions from Australian taxpayers are tax deductible, please get in touch with the secretary or directly to peter.phipps@rmit.edu.au for details. Approximately \$60,000 is required for stage one of construction and another \$60,000 may be needed for completion.

Gar Beautification

Local practitioners have begun beautifying the Gar entrance by



clearing the drive of sticks and debris. There is a proposal to do more planting along the front drive. We have been donated some *Cedrus Deodar* Himalayan cedar trees which could be transplanted in September. Jacaranda trees are planned for the front paddock to line the drive.

Business Committee
The Business Committee has concluded its term and handed down a final report. While the models and guidelines

for future business ideas are still being developed, it has been agreed that the expansion of the bookshop's activities should 'test the water' for any future ventures. The Bookshop committee is examining the feasibility of an on-line business and it is intended that the plan will be completed and presented to the Gakyil for consideration by November 2004.



SMS Scholarships

Information regarding eligibility and applications for the SMS Scholarship Program are being prepared. Ngawang and Rabten Lamas have discontinued their SMS scholarships. They have left Namgyalgar and chosen to stay in Australia to pursue their own activities independently of the community. Rabgyi Lama has taken a vacation from the scholarship; he has the option for further study on the SMS scholarship upon his return.

Housing Cooperative

A group of practitioners in Melbourne have formed a housing coop as part of the Melbourne Community Housing Plan. It has

generated interest from five households to pool resources to buy a place to live together independently.

Membership

Membership at Namgyalgar is due for renewal as annual membership extends from July 2004 to June 2005. Please renew as soon as possible to ensure your continued receipt of The Mirror and to ensure the continuing maintenance and development at Namgyalgar.

Dream Yoga & Tibetan Medicine
Further activity in the Namgyalgar region in the last few months has included planning the tours of Michael Katz in August and Dr Nida Chenagtsang at the end of the year.

Video History

Graeme Horner's video history of Namgyalgar and the Dzogchen Community in Australia is progressing well. If you have any photos, stories, ideas, or historic items to contribute to this history please contact Graeme at grahorn@optusnet.com.au.

Proposed 2004-05 Namgyalgar Retreat program

Spring 2004

25 September - 1 October
2004: SMS Base retreat with Elise Stutchbury

December 2004

Tibetan Medicine Mantra Healing Level 2 with Dr Nida (only for those who have completed MH L1 or undertaken MH weekend seminar

with Dr Nida)

January 2005

Namgyalgar 10 year anniversary celebrations
SMS Base, Level 1 & 2: 1 - 2 weeks depending upon interest

Autumn 2005

25 March - 2nd April 2005: (Easter): Mandarava Retreat

This program is not yet confirmed. Retreats and events will be publicised on Namgyalnet, Norbunet and in the Mirror when confirmed.

Family. Parenting & the Teachings

Family and Parenting A Group of People Related to Each Other

My Collins dictionary describes 'family' as 'a group of people who are related to each other, especially parents and their children'. In other words, a social unit. In times past, families were very extended social units in which they counted numerous offspring, armies of cousins, aunts and uncles and a full set of grandparents in the background. But more important than size, I think that there was an interdependency among family members, support for the elderly and the sick and care for the young. Essential services that are today often provided by the State were taken care of within the family. The members of these families lived and died, married and were born usually within a radius of a few miles. The family in this context has practically disappeared. A modern twenty-first century family in a developed country is quite another story. Yes, there are parents and children, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, but while the mother and children may live in London, the father lives in Edinburgh with the rest of the 'family' dispersed through Great Britain and the rest of the world. We are related by 'blood' although we may only see each other once a year and share nothing in common apart from our blue eyes or upturned noses. Our twentieth century nuclear family is small, unable and unwilling to carry out all those services of caring for the sick, the elderly and the young. Today we have hospitals, hospices, nursing and retirement home and kindergartens. Young or old, we tend to live our lives as individuals, each aspiring separately to his or own goal or path. That quality of caring, of giving of oneself, of making some sacrifice that was intrinsically a part of being a 'family' member has become something alien in our brave new world of ambition and self-esteem. In fact, how can we even begin to consider what a family might be.

And then there are, naturally, the children in a family – the *raison d'être* for the existence of the family social unit – as a means for continuation. In today's nuclear family, however, it sometimes seems that children have simply become the products of people's passions, the end-result of a passionate relationship, an accident or even a lever to try and hold a sagging relationship together. Whatever their reason for entrance into this human dimension, children need caring for until they are old enough to look after themselves. This is when the job of parenting steps in. At the very beginning, it is a basic job of fulfilling a small individual's basic needs - cleaning, feeding and giving affection. Learning to care for a tiny totally dependent individual at any time of the day or night. This is when the first inkling of 'giving of oneself' may arise in the parents. But

this is just the first step on a long and at times arduous path which becomes more challenging as the child grows.

So while we may find it difficult dedicating our waking and sleeping hours to a tiny individual's every need (baby size circumstances), by the time we have followed his or her teetering first steps with anxiety and joy, supported him in his first agonizing day at school, we find ourselves with a strapping teenager bouncing around the house – circumstances that are infinitely broader and more complex.

This requires considerably more skill and awareness. In this day and age, parenting has become a multi-faceted job requiring a variety of skills that continually need to be developed. It requires sensitivity towards another individual, to society and what it expects from our behavior. Of course, every parent loves their child and tries to do their best for him or her but frequently, the attitude of parents is colored by their own experience and upbringing. If a parent lacked something during their youth, they often want to make sure that their child does not suffer from this lack. Sometimes it may not be the most educational attitude.

The best advice I have ever received on parenting came from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who suggested that we make our children be responsible for their actions. This principle of taking responsibility could be considered to be the cornerstone of not only how to educate children, but of how to be a member of our own family, whether it is our tiny nuclear one, the international family of practitioners or the global family spread across our planet.

Liz Granger for *The Mirror*

Parents and families are something we all have in common, have experience with on a day to day basis and absorb so much of our daily lives. Family and parenting certainly provide infinite circumstances to work with as practitioners, so for this reason, The Mirror chose to include it in this section of Daily Life in The Mirror.

Please feel free and encouraged to participate in writing for future topics. The next six issues' topics will be:

<i>Politics</i>	<i>October 1, 2004</i>
<i>Addiction</i>	<i>December 1, 2004</i>
<i>Money</i>	<i>February 1, 2005</i>
<i>Madness</i>	<i>April 1, 2005</i>
<i>Fear</i>	<i>June 1, 2005</i>
<i>Creativity</i>	<i>August 1, 2005</i>

Thank you,
The Mirror

words of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Educating Children Teaching them to Understand their Dimension

Some excerpts from a teaching by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu The Mirror, Issue 17, 1992

There are many ways in the world of educating children. People of all kinds, of different social categories, and above all parents, know very well that children represent the future of the world. Just thinking of a single country, we can see how its future depends on its children and how they grow, how they are brought up. So everybody considers that it is very important for children to be well educated.

When they are born, children have their own ideas that are fresh, innocent, beyond dualistic concepts and limitation. Then they have to grow up with their parents who love them and try and do their best, teaching them what they have learned, not only through education but also through their experience in society, through how they have lived, knowing what one has to face, how many problems there are. On the basis of all this, parents try and do their best, and then many of them try and limit their children's dimension, telling them

what they must and mustn't do, considering that it is important that children be educated and that parents also have an important responsibility and a role to play in this.

This is certainly important. If parents did not take responsibility, children would surely find many problems because of their lack of experience. So, it is true that until children are capable of reasoning enough – i.e. until they are about ten years old or even less, even seven or eight, since it also depends on the children and their individual capacity – parents try and explain, teach, follow them, to defend them from all the problems.

There are some theories that say that children should be totally free and be left free to do anything they want. I don't think that this is a good idea, because children have no idea of freedom or "non-freedom", they simply don't understand because they lack a precise idea, and so they may have a lot of trouble. In this case, leaving them alone means abandoning them, failing to give them help and collaboration. Giving them assistance from the beginning when they are still very small means we are helping them. This is a very important part of education.

Above all, when parents are practitioners, they know very

well what to do when children start reasoning, because the principle of the Teaching is to find oneself in one's dimension and through this to be able to respect other people's dimensions, too. And if children feel this, then they also understand what it means to find oneself in one's dimension. Finding oneself in one's dimension also means being responsible. In this way, explaining everything and collaborating, parents make children feel that they themselves are responsible.

They can do this not only through explanation, but by giving them a chance to be responsible as they grow up, instead of always cuddling them, saying, "Oh, my little one!" reminding them of how it used to be when they were in mummy's lap, as if they were their parents' toys. Some parents like to think of their children in this way, even when they are adults. They may have fun like this, developing their attachment to the children, but children can't always live in this way, as if they were on their mother's lap. They have to live their own lives, be able to face all the problems in society and those relative to their condition. And to be able to face all these problems they must be aware and responsible for themselves.

Confessions of a Buddhist Mum

by Ilona McGavock

Thirteen-year-old: "Mum can you stop singing (the Song of the Vajra) when we get near my school?"

Me: "Why? No-one can hear me in the car."

Thirteen-year-old: "But my friends will see your lips moving!"

Isabella is winding me up, but I still have a little episode that demonstrates the inverse of all the paramitas, sulking about how much I have to do for my children and how little time I get to practice and how I am begrudged air play in the car. (a little bit of self-flagellation), If I was really integrated then the whining sound of the (imperfectly serviced) car engine could be my Song of the Vajra and I could be completely with my children when I am driving them to school instead of thinking I have to sing, and probably it is unfair of me to impose the Song of the Vajra on them (even though as I said the car engine is very noisy) and maybe I could just run away from home.

I have a dream memory of another life, a monastic life, protected, almost silent. It is simple and I contemplate my own universe. Now some pragmatic wisdom has thrust me into a chaotic and noisy universe. This one involves three children (one of the barking kind), full-time work (caring for others) and a partner. This is the cauldron of my practice, this is where I discover how much there is to integrate.

"The best practice is to be in a state of contemplation or at the least try to be aware" (I paraphrase). Despite the best efforts of Sogyal Rinpoche, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and myself, I am not in a constant state of contemplation. For me, parenting is very much in the category of "at least try to be aware". It happens at that subtle interface between the "rising" of your

moments are self-liberating), there are two possibilities, reaction or awareness. Err on the side of habitual conditioned reactions and family life is doomed, choose awareness and you have greater success in moderating behavior AND you model a way to be. Naturally we are talking percentages here; I have my share of knee-jerk responses. It is probably healthy for children discover that you too have foibles, but own up, all is forgiven and everyone moves on. My children (including the butter-stealing, black, furry one) teach me the value of wrath over anger. The boundless energy of my children and their capacity for manifesting in a rebellious way when I am at my lowest ebb has been an important dynamic to observe. This is



Ilona and children

child's behavior, your reaction, and your interaction with the rising. It is the string of these moments that creates the family culture, the boundaries, and the conditioning that propels your children into life.

I am sure children come into the world with a little booklet, "1001 Ways to Completely Provoke your Parents." Other people experience your children as charming, even well behaved, but parents know otherwise. Kids save their most boundary-pushing behavior for a safe environment, for the people who love them the most. There is some rule that says children will reveal your shadow side, demonstrate just how much incomplete business of your own exists. This is where there is potential to cut through both at the level of family karma and for yourself. When children confront you, (given that not many of my

where wrath cuts through. Wrath has the energy, demeanor and voice of anger, without a skerrick of the emotion. Play-act anger and the kids stop dead in their tracks. Tip over hysterically into real anger and you lose credibility, at the same time depleting your energy.

Standing back from the usual myopic view of family life, I observe that my children are natural and expressive, while (usually) respecting other people's rights. I notice a confidence and a humor that is not the childhood heritage of either of their parents, and I have to concede that parenting-awareness practice is probably doing OK.

I have been doing weird Tibetan stuff since Isabella was two. She would sit on my lap as a two and three and four year old as I practiced and invent plausible definitions of Bodhicitta. Every now

continued on next page

and then we trekked off to retreat, a fifteen-hour drive from Melbourne to Myall Lakes, (north of Sydney) in a dodgy student car. Now we trek from Perth to Tilba Tilba (four hours in a plane, five in a bus).

At a retreat as a five-year-old, she drew lots of pictures of maidens and stakes and dragons (responding to the mood of the retreat?) and ran feral with the other kids. As a twelve year old, she spent lots of time reading, made a mobile with Gracia (from Italy), and discovered there are other kids out there with strange parents. This time the other child ran feral. (Ranging through an open natural environment with a mob of kids is not an activity to be underestimated...) Both my kids love the ambience and food of a Ganapuja. Sometimes (not enough) we have children's meditation with yoga, shine and stories of the Buddha. Three months after returning from a month at Namgyalgar, Rosie, the six-year old requested a return visit "It's been about a year since we were at the Gar!" Isabella echoed the sentiment.

I (re) discovered The Teachings eleven years ago when my father died unexpectedly. On reading "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying" I discovered page after page of truth, answers to inarticulated questions about Guru and lineage, and the surprising realization that I was already a Buddhist. Nothing for it but to launch into practice. The following year (first born now three) I commenced five years full time study of a Masters Degree. Rosie was born at the beginning of my final year of study. We had moved to a new city, my partner studied concurrently for nearly four years, we were impecunious and I had undiagnosed but symptomatic colic disease.

Most would recognize enough stress factors to have one reaching for the heavy medication. Instead my partner and I performed above average at university, raised our kids with little mishap and none of us developed new emotional scars. My ground was the Dharma, (secretly) forming the foundation of my university study of osteopathy and providing a methodology for surviving. The option of turning towards suffering and obstacles rather than rejecting them and an awareness of impermanence conveyed a stoical endurance to our family. We developed a capacity for taking one day at a time, an hour by hour juggling of one child at school, the baby in class with me, grueling 6-8 hours of lectures every day, city traffic, 10 exams per semester, dharma classes two evenings a week and all the samsaric necessities of life. When I started to feel limited or overwhelmed, I had only to bring Sogyal Rinpoche to mind as an example of limitlessness.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu appeared in a peripheral kind of way early in my involvement with the Dharma. I had been to a teaching he gave in Melbourne, I think in 1997. However recognizing my connection with him was a bit like turning around a large boat, requiring the completion of my degree, a change of city and a new life for the whole family. Over a period of years I had begun to understand there was a different View between Tantra

and Anuyoga (although I didn't know the name). The truly thrilling moments in the Teachings for me were the Dzogchen pointing moments, the simple paradoxes that turned my mind inside out. By conditioning I am a perfectionist and dualistic striving is my frequent companion on the spiritual path. The only real path for me, cuts through striving, a path to teach me to relax and open to what is, rather than trying to get there. I began to see that I would have to move beyond the obstacle of a whole new language and a change of gear. Now I revel in this profoundly pragmatic and compassionate path requiring nothing less than the total integration of my primordial condition with every moment!

In the moment by moment practice of mothering I aim for awareness, I try to remember dedicate my work, do formal practice when I can, and look forward to retirement years as a yogi. I may be back for another life! "Work with your circumstances," says Rinpoche simply and repeatedly, for me, THE most profound teaching. Boundless love, compassion, joy and equanimity, generosity, morality, patience, perseverance, meditative stability and discriminating wisdom; every moment of my day is a reminder that the perfection of these qualities in immeasurable portions would make life a lot smoother!

Two days later

Six-year-old: "Mum can you stop singing (the Song of the Vajra) when we get near my school, you're embarrassing me! My friends can see your lips moving."

Me: (Sotto voce) "So much to integrate."

Family & Parenting "If you have a goat, you have the problem of a goat"

by Giada Manca

The family is the cell of society, where everything begins. You are born and once you realize you are there, you are there, there is no way to escape, choose, change.....you're a little helpless thing that can only hope that those big beings around can understand you. Have you forgotten what you have done in previous lives? Of course there is no 'because' telling you why you are there. The big beings must have always been big, they are a different race, and they are very mobile and communicate in a very different way. They are strong and forceful. They also have this ability to hide and disappear when you are in need. So you start to suffer when mama and milk, cuddles and warmth are not there. There you are, trapped. That's where it all begins (in this life you are conscious of, at least); the craving and the time it takes for fulfillment and straight afterwards the clinging to things just in case they disappear again.

So it all starts off with the wrong apprenticeship. Nobody to tell you that you are lucky, that the cat that seems to have no problems whatsoever is in a much

Children & Karma

by Paul Bail

I think I must have been born at the wrong moment of history, squeezed in the crack between two opposite worldviews. As a child, I was told that I should be grateful to my parents for feeding me, and clothing me, and not beating me severely. When I became a parent I tried telling my children these same things, but they informed me it was my moral duty and legal responsibility to feed and clothe them, and that if I were to beat them severely the police would come and take me to jail. The culture must have changed while I wasn't looking! Whereas before I was expected to be subservient to my parents, now I am expected to be subservient to my children? Is this fair, I ask you? I put my foot down and shout, "No way!" but no one listens.

Chögyam Trungpa said the role of the guru was to insult the ego. Does that mean that my teenagers are a kind of guru for me, forcing me to go more deeply into practice? There are many lessons that children teach you. They teach you the nature of true commitment, because there's no way you can get rid of the pesky creatures. You can't divorce them, and they will probably outlive you. You are stuck with them, so make the best of it now.

Children also teach you about karma, because there are definitely strong karmic relations between children, their parents, and each other. No matter how difficult the situation becomes, at

worse situation. You adapt to this way of life, get more sophisticated, learn the right speech to ask for what you want, the right movements to get where you want to get, you try to be more and more like those big beings that seem to be the kings and queens of your world. A difficult task as they seem quite out of reach, things are never really smooth, you think that what the big powerful beings say or do is right, and it can't be wrong even if they are not always friendly.

But things, oh yes, things - those must be friendly. So you touch the stove and get burned, run in the rain and catch a cold. Basically that's all there is about being a human child in the family nest, being trained to refuse and to want, to be rewarded or punished. The big beings (that we are now) seem to have this awkward attitude of forgetting what it was like and repeating the same scenarios with their own children and the story starts all over again. Books, manuals, TV shows about how to raise children might give intellectual understanding, but doing it the right way is another thing completely!

We know we should avoid telling them what they are or that they behave just like auntie Maria because they will feel to be just that or take auntie's identity, but we do it nonetheless. We know we shouldn't tell them all the time, "Do this and don't do that ..." or "Couldn't you be just a bit more like so and so, a bit more tidy, punctual, respectful ... less lazy, casual, demanding ..." but it continues slipping out of our mouths. We know we should never be harsh or tell them off in front of other people but we get

times, you know that the unfolding of it is definitely your karma. Often the things that disturb me the most about my children when they copy my negative personality traits!

Children teach you about not being attached to the fruits of your actions. They require all kinds of nurturing, from waking up in the middle of the night to feed them, when they are infants, to working an extra job to help finance their education, when they are older. Yet, for all the effort you put into doing the right thing for them, there is no guarantee of how things will work out. You cannot truly control the behavior of a teenager or young adult, as many a parent has found out after recovering from nervous breakdown. For one thing, teenagers have much more energy than their parents do. They could stay up till 4 a.m. arguing - long after the parent has given up and gone to bed, too tired to care anymore.

Another thing is, the more you try to control a teenager, the more rebellious they often become. So, from your children you learn prudence, patience, humility, a recognition of the limits to which you can control things, and the wisdom to choose your battles carefully. And, they teach you that you need to practice a lot, in order to develop deeper and deeper compassion, deeper and deeper wisdom, and to retain your health and your sanity. Children can definitely help to break down your selfishness and your rigidity, if you use the situations that arise as an opportunity to observe yourself.

worked up and we do it. We know we should give them the optimistic feeling that any weakness or defect can be transformed into its opposite, that life is fluid, rich and challenging, but are we able to do it? The list is endless! There is a certain amount of frustration that builds up in parents with not getting it completely right although we might start off with the best intentions.

It was quite strange to hear that for the Tibetans, children are karmic debts, whereas in the West things seem to work the other way round; children are considered karmic credits - exclusive property to be molded following one's own inspiration and desires. It takes a life span of therapies to elaborate the karma of being born from such and such parents.

Maybe this has to do with the great cultural difference highlighted by H. H. the Dalai Lama. His Holiness notes that in the West, we say to our children, "I love you if you are good" as if there were an unspoken business transaction between parents and children, whereas in Tibet one would just say, "I love you because you are my son".

As we have the luck to be part of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Community and to be in touch with a completely different point of view, we can at least cultivate the intention to avoid this materialistic attitude and, although the society in which we live promotes us in the direction of its own models of behavior, we can at least be aware of different ways and possibilities and do our best to apply them.

Anyway, quoting Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, "If you have a goat, you have the problem of

The Dawning

You won't believe me
but I'll tell you anyway

I called to her
beckoned her becoming

Made known to the universe
my waiting womb

Invited the crowds
of bardo beings
to gather
at our love making

Sent out to them prayers
of passion

Hoping for the One
whose time it was
to be swept
from the in-between World

Blown by karmic winds
into my welcome chamber

Whoosh! (and it happened, it happened)
millions of lifetimes

Converged
to create this
One

and then
a million more

Growing already
within her
within me

You may not believe it

But as I cradle her
this sweet girl child

I do

I do.

by Sarah Raleigh Kilts

a goat". Once you are born, you have the problem of life, so you have to cope with whatever culture or family you are born into and maybe it is also thanks to all the obstacles that you have to overcome as a child and subsequently as a parent that you meet the Teachings.

passages

BORN:
Congratulations!!!!
To Jennifer Peters and Jinesh Wilmot, Indigo Ireni Montgomery Wilmot was born at home in Melbourne, Australia, at 3.45 PM on Sunday June 20th, 2004 weighing 3426 grams. Everyone is very well and happy!

HOW I MET CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

by Rosemary Friend

I was born in Australia into the family of Joy and Derek, two beautiful people who were very loving and attentive to the needs of the three of us, my sister, brother and me. They devoted their time and energy to our development in all ways. During a chaotic parental separation during my adolescence, I found cannabis to be a worthy soother of my new found anxiety, which (I just can't seem to escape that old pattern of causal thinking sometimes) seemed rooted in the complete breakdown of family structure and a temporary solution of boarding school. A few years later, my venture to university to study medicine was a journey toward the notion of healing which, in retrospect, was as much about the wounded healer as a deep feeling of altruism.

In the mid 80's I embarked on a new adventure to the country of my mother's childhood, New Zealand. Within two weeks of arriving there, I was naively surprised to find myself imprisoned for three months for possession of hashish while catching up with an old friend, a woman of the underworld. This 'behind bars' experience felt like my first retreat, as I was blessed with a friend's gift of Yeshe Tsögyal's life stories. They consumed my body, speech and mind so completely that she has remained one of my great inspirations.

Throwing away the return portion of my plane ticket back to Australia initially felt difficult, but was in fact a gift in terms of my life having any real meaning. Several long retreats with Lama Zopa Rinpoche and Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, in the exquisite Coromandel Peninsula /north island New Zealand, wet my appetite for more. Almost ready to leave down south for Dunedin to study with Geshe Dhargyey, Jerri (my now husband & Geköes of Tashigar Norte) spied an advert for a cook for our Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, at his first retreat in New Zealand in 1988. When listening to Rinpoche for the first time, I knew I was receiving the most extraordinary teaching I could imagine and had little capacity to do justice to this most precious space jewel.

I did my time in Dunedin, not very far from the Antarctic ice shelf, and am forever thankful to the Community there for the opportunity to live and work in a beautiful environment and the time to begin to integrate my body, speech and mind with presence.

An overwhelming desire to immerse myself in the Dzogchen teachings led to several retreats with Rinpoche in Australia, New Zealand and Japan. However, in the mid 90's, I realised that I was in a place where I needed to stop just continually going to teaching retreats and actually do something with the practices I had received.

Relaxation, collaboration, becoming aware of and respecting my limitations and yet developing my capacity became the themes of my life. I had no doubt about my con-



nection with the transmission because of several dreams I had. I felt strongly the need to develop the practice of the night and was attentive to develop my awareness in the dreaming state.

Dreaming, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu puts his hands on my head and a diffused light energy filled my body from on top of my head and I experience ecstatic bliss. Dreaming, there is pure water flowing and nearby a river of faeces which is beginning to mix with the clear stream. I am aware and feel uncertain but realise not to worry. Everything is fine. Dreaming, there is a

very big wind almost causing the plane I am in to crash. I sound A, and breathe. The plane pulls out just before crashing and stays close to the ground. Elemental dreams of breathing under water and breathing air from rocks also occur during this time of attempting to integrate the teaching into my daily life.

A personal retreat at Gawaling in Namgyalgar in the late 1990's was a point where I felt it was time to do some Longde and work with Garab Dorje's second statement of no longer remaining in doubt. The retreat was very important as I had become passive and allowed myself to be damaged energetically in my work and life. However I was so charged when I arrived that I had to spend the first few days just doing Yantra Yoga, Vajrasattva and walking gently around the house in order to relax and be in a fit state to do any other practice.

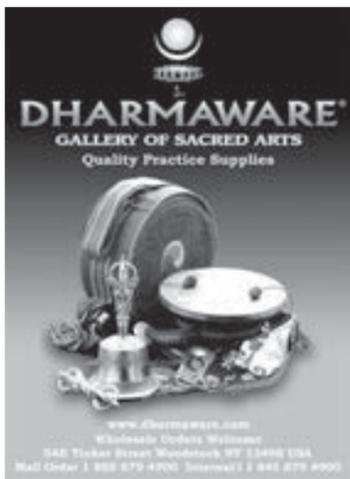
I don't think, at this point, I had still really met Rinpoche. But I think I was beginning to develop a base, a place in myself from which to meet him. I only really met Rinpoche around the time of the Longsal retreat in Margarita in early 2002, when I had several experiences and dreams.

A year later, last year, I enjoyed the emergence of play in my dreaming. I am making a cake and it has faeces in it. I am aware that others may find it difficult but I am ok with it. It

is my samsara nirvana cake. Rinpoche signals and calls me to play. He says, "what colour do you want?" I reply, "yellow". He says, "I've already chosen yellow". I reply, "red then".

And so now that I have met Rinpoche, I find myself in the strangest situation. Having spent the last two years working to sell up New Zealand life and move to live in Margarita and be there for the whole of 2004, especially the *Mandarava retreat*, I find myself in an idyllic island half way between Jamaica and Cuba, here for three months (their hurricane season), swimming in the clearest waters I have ever known, working in the GP department of a government hospital with great people, living in a gentle community that has a strong presence of Africa, receiving the teachings of a lifetime via *web-cast* and experiencing the profundity of this transmission beyond my wildest dreams, beyond time and space.

What to say? How fortunate we are, no? There are no words that come close to expressing the deeply, loving gratitude I feel towards our precious Master, lineage, Buddhas, dakas, dakinis, protectors and all of our community. As I finish writing this, I am with the beautiful metaphor from *The Supreme Source*: "And vision becomes like a vast sea and the non-discursive state as immense as the sky, the sphere of experience of Samantabhadra."



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