



Newsphere

March 2006

From the (caretaker's) heart

SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED since the last report! As well as a steady flow of people doing individual retreats in the huts and Hayshed, the New Zealand Diamond Sangha have had their annual retreat under the guidance of Mary Jaksch. It was lovely to have parents of young children included. The group set up a roster of child minders which seemed to enhance the group's experience as meditators. I found it interesting to see how another group, with already strict protocols and organisation is also using the tools of meditation practice to ask 'How, in practical terms, may we apply this to everyday life?'

The start of the 2006 School of Living Dharma was wonderfully supported by three visitors who came up for a few days on a work exchange basis to help get the kitchen, bedrooms and bathrooms spring-cleaned and ready for the long programme. They worked beautifully as a team and were very cheerful and thorough. The gardens around the main hall also got a much needed weed and prune. Though this cannot be measured in money, it has an invaluable supportive effect on the depth of calm and focus possible for those in retreat.

Leander Kane's Liberation through the Body was a wonderful success (as usual) and precursor to the School of Living Dharma. Most of the participants arrived early enough to do her retreat and settle in before the first Sangha Exploration week.

One joy has been the way our Teachers are participating as students in each other's segments. Terry Hagan and Mala Sikka attended Leander's



course to learn more about Liberation through the Body. Terry, Mala and Leander all sat in on Tarchin's first classes of this year's School of Living Dharma. Tarchin and Mary participated as students in Sonia Moriceau's classes. I find this a beautiful manifestation of accomplished wholesome minds remaining open to exploration.

There were a few people who came to the first weekend of the

School, but couldn't stay longer. One was Debs Hall who managed, in that short time, to prune all the apple trees on the slope in front of the main building, (as well as helping on the waterfall track and attending classes!) The trees look really vibrant and healthy again. Thanks on their behalf Debs!

A mix of newcomers and returnees, all deeply committed to this experiment in education and community we are calling the Wangapeka School of Living Dharma 2006, have settled in. This year's theme is 'Communication and Mind' and there is a beautiful sense of commitment, aspiration and co-operation in the whole group. We have been studying a wonderful pithy text written in the 13th century. Called *From the Zen Kitchen to Enlightenment: how to cook your life*, it truly inspires us to 'settle into The Way' and really be with what is present. Although the text is an instruction manual for the Tenzo (chief cook) it is really a recipe for living a wholesome life.

Upon reflection it is also a profoundly Mahamudra-ish text, if I may coin a mangled

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Complaints Procedure

If you want to voice concerns about any aspect of activities at the centre please contact the caretaker or the Board co-ordinator. Where appropriate the Board will then establish a sub-committee of people to consider the issue and take appropriate action.

Caretaker: Dawa Rowley (03) 522-4221
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Editorial

It's a really dense issue this time ... many thanks to Kathy, Thelma and Lynn for their interesting articles, as well as to our usual contributors.

In the last issue, some of the formatting went wrong and a bit of text got lost ... so you may not have read that we are saving up for a dishwasher, for health and safety reasons. Alma Rae has done a huge amount of research (thank you Alma) and we've decided to invest in a commercial machine. They aren't cheap, starting at about \$4,000. The Garden of Mindfulness committee has offered a very generous donation, and we're now working on raising the balance. If, say, 100 people were willing to donate, say, \$20 each, we would be able to buy one straight away. If you'd like to contribute whatever amount, please contact the centre.

I'm going overseas in May for about six months, so Graham Sandlant (pictured above with Tarchin and Mary) has agreed to edit the newsletter for a few issues. Please send any material to newsphere@wangapeka.org

Deadlines for the next few issues are
15 May, 15 August, 15 November

Photos on pages 1, 2, and 5 by Thelma Rodgers; pages 4 and 10 by Kathy Connor

From the Heart – caretaker's report

(continued from front page)

phrase! As you'll know from the programme published in the last issue of *Newsphere*, separate courses led by different teachers alternate with our sangha explorations led by Tarchin, with his usual inspirational mix of intelligence, humour and compassion.

A few weeks ago the horribly overgrown waterfall track (which is the path to our water supply) was cleared in an atmosphere of great goodwill. Mary and Ben went back and cleared out the reservoir after lunch the same day. As Tarchin pointed out before the team got together to do it, formal meditation is all fine and good but if we run out of water, then sitting practice pales into insignificance the first time we get thirsty! A much more unpleasant task was climbing into the roofspace of both Skydancer and the women's bathroom, to clear out the insulation which had made a very comfortable bed for far too many rodents, large and small. This winter is promising to be more 'ratful' than usual, so we're being very vigilant about keeping doors closed.

On the 'works' front, the brass plaque for the Memorial Wall has arrived and two more loads of rocks and stones have been collected with the help of James Mathieson. This should mean enough material to finish the wall now.

A new longdrop toilet has been dug and erected near Pema Ling hut - including properly built steps both from the hut and up from the track. (Thanks Ben)

Particularly noticeable at the moment is the wonderful sense of community and focused working together. There is a really strong emphasis on making every moment an opportunity to practise being open, spacious, and present to what is. Dana to the land is not being called that at the moment, with its implication of being something we (subject) do to something else (object) for an hour a day because it is in the timetable. For a while it was called, 'Doing that Which Needs To Be Done' then Bill Genat coined the phrase 'Land Caring'. And the centre certainly is looking well-loved and cared for. The long term participants in the School of Living Dharma are truly putting the Practice

into practice.

In sangha sharing the question came up of how to work more co-operatively with the tasks that need doing to keep the centre running smoothly. Each of the major areas of work, eg. cooking, veggie garden, land caring, etc., is now co-ordinated by one of the long-term participants. It is a lovely experience supporting, and being supported by each other as the core group welcomes each influx of newcomers. It is difficult to put into words the experience of being part of many individuals of good intention as they come together and somehow create a single new whole while at the same time retaining their individuality. The really exciting thing is the way a simple sangha sharing session, and the very first one of the programme, was able to quickly see a principle, analyse it and come up with a workable solution in an atmosphere of practising the theories of meditation. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment seemed to me to be flowering in that session, as were the Six Paramitas as well.

Mike Elliott recently went on a month's personal retreat with Bonni Ross in Canada. We missed him, his knowledge, his quiet, peaceful presence - chiefly noted in new and fixed things emerging from his workshop - like long-drop toilets, fixed doors, windows, hinges, roofs, seats, tables and so on. He also keeps track of machinery maintenance and repairs, organising those he cannot do himself - and that's not to mention the clearing and fixing and mowing he does with the machines! It's wonderful to have him home.

And of course the latest news is that Chris Petzold, our former land caretaker, and Louise Wilkinson have a new addition to their family: a baby boy was born on 26th March. He weighed 10lb 8oz (ouch!), and all are well.

Sarva mangalam

Dawa



Tibet is more interesting when you're conscious ...

by Kathy Connor



THE PROBLEM WITH ENGAGING in spiritual one-upmanship is that the minute you win, you lose. Last year I had the great fortune to go back to the Dzachuka region of Kham with Amnyi Trulchung Rinpoche. I and four others were given the special opportunity to stay behind at Ju Mohar monastery for

another retreat after the group trip. It amuses me to reflect that this has given me the best opportunity in my life to engage in the fruitless game of spiritual one-upmanship. We not only went 'on retreat', but in Tibet, in a monastery in Tibet, and not just an ordinary 'touristy' monastery but a remote spiritually significant one. The only way to top this would be to do the retreat in a cave, and we did have this opportunity. There was a cave above the monastery where a yogi meditated for 20 years keeping himself upright by tying his hair to a outcrop of rock, but unfortunately none of us had hair that was long enough.

There are so many things in this journey that amused or amazed or simply stunned. Returning to Yachen Gar, Lama Achuk's encampment was a highlight. While it would seem obvious and logical that when you see the conditions the eight thousand nuns and monks live in you should consider that things are very difficult for them. Yet being there you get a strong sense of being cradled and being in one of the most precious parts of the world.

There was huge relief when, this time, Diamox protected me from high altitude cerebral oedema and I discovered again that deep dharmic truth: that life is more interesting when you are conscious.

There was the experience you get only when travelling with an Abbot back to his monastery - the welcome. Being stopped one hour out of the monastery and given katas till they are up to your ears, and then led in by a cavalcade of cars, then half-an-hour outside the monastery stopped again and led by motorbikes decorated with flowers and coloured scarves up to the edge of the village, where Khampa cowboys on horseback holding flags whooped and yelled and led us to the camp village where everyone was lined up waving katas up and down.

We camped with the Khampas below the monastery for the summer festival and got to observe and participate in the Khampa Olympics. Lama dancing (*photo above*), horse racing (*photo of Rick on page 10*), motorbike agility for the modern Khampa, weight (rock)

lifting, tug of wars, relay races, sharp shooting and more.

The over-friendly Khampa who was moving his hand up my leg and was not responding to my very firm Lhasa Tibetan telling him not to do that. Probably my laughter at my dear friend trying to swap me for the guy's horse didn't help give a clear message. A growl worked surprisingly well.

There were deep understandings, eg. while yak dung glows well it does not hold much heat, and it takes three hours in a pressure cooker to make yak stew tender. Yak yoghurt is really Dri yoghurt and is really yummy when sprinkled with sugar.

My other big contemplation was when does a retreat start? Thinking conventionally I think this is very much like how long is a bit of string, and now I also wonder, when does a retreat end? When Amnyi Trulchung Rinpoche returned with the main group we ended up waiting not in the beautiful and entertaining Kanze but in Sershel - the town described in travel books not inaccurately as the arse end of Tibet. And we waited and waited. We got messages saying Rinpoche would be there tomorrow but was waylaid by broken vans and requests for ceremonies. And we waited some more.

All our usual avenues of diversion were lost to us. The few fiction books we brought were long ago read. There was no power so the dubious entertainment of Chinese TV commercials was not available to us. The internet connections were unreliable and anyway Sershel was the one place that didn't inspire gushy emails.



Altitude tends to dull your appetite which was fortunate because after four weeks most of us had developed a strong aversion to Chinese food. Also after four weeks while we still liked each other we found we didn't have anything new to say. Shopping opportunities were limited and so were finances, as our credit cards had gone back to Chengdu to replenish our cash supplies. One of the group had a bad cold and we got to play nurse and mix up re-hydration sachets and gently encourage him to drink these with a threat of a visit to the local health clinic where yellowing intravenous

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Exploring the Heart

by Thelma Rodgers

The year of 2005 was very full for me – three months' teaching on the architecture of Buddhadharmā at Auckland University; involvement in the Wangapeka website and archives; other volunteer work at the local school; family and friends; but by far the strongest thread of development and interest was an exploration of 'matters of the heart'.

It started with a casual - and I thought somewhat frivolous – encounter with the Wild Divine, a biofeedback/meditation computer game that promised a diversion – a meditation 'training' with a large sugar-coated pill of entertainment. To my surprise it became a springboard into a major exploration, eventually encompassing Western technology, biology, philosophy and scientific research; the beliefs and writings of

Buddhism; and opening to new understandings of traditional Buddhism, meditation and myself.

The interconnections are myriad, and it soon became obvious when I tried to set things down that one article just couldn't do it justice - the music of the heart** was only one of the amazing things that emerged. So this is a first instalment, and each thread will eventually have their own article!

This is also a personal journey, a story, an interpretation, a ... "what if ...?", and a process. This article is an attempt to outline the process, so on page 15 there's a link** to information and discussions on the web that contributed to my journey, for you to explore and develop your own understandings and experiences.

It started with the Wild Divine game – and exploded in many directions! The game itself? – wonderful, beautiful, absorbing, a pleasure to be playful about meditation. There are definite benefits, but I also have reservations! A separate article is definitely needed to do it justice. But the path on for me was not so much the game itself.

It was my first encounter with biofeedback, and I found it fascinating. The Wild Divine game uses a 'Lightstone' to measure data – of skin resistance (like a lie detector), and of the heart. It combines them in various ways for different events. Some events are purely calming, while others raise the energy – these use the skin resistance data. Others focus on the heart. Most of the 'heart' events use a 'heart breath' practice – unlike our practice of following the breath it's very prescriptive – you breathe in for five seconds and out for five seconds, focussing on the heart. The Wild Divine game directly links heart breath with compassion.

All this raised a number of questions for me – why that particular breathing pattern and why was the feeling of compassion connected with it? How are heart and breath connected? What was this thing called HRV and why was it important? And why monitor the heart rather

than brainwaves in determining meditative states? At first I found the paths diverging, but eventually they reunited again. The following is a summary; each thread a potential article.

My first stop was the Heartmath Institute – they developed the heart breath, and investigated the connection to compassion. They also provided the basic biological information on the physical role of the heart in monitoring the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems and mediating with the limbic part of the brain. Their research ranges from entrainment to HRV to health to practical techniques – one exercise is very like the Tibetan practice of tonglen. They present a 'scientific', rather than philosophical or meditative, frame to their work – in fact their name for it is freeze-framing. It's all quite complex!

So on to researching papers on meditation and health, especially those using heart measurements – found some, but of different meditations from the ones we practise. So I started to do my own measurements – after all I now had my own heart monitor! Free 'open source' programs have been written using the 'Lightstone' as a monitor to record and analyse heart readings. A short personal experiment looking at the HRV – the heart rate 'responsiveness' – before and after a meditation course led to an involvement in testing out some improvements for the programmer – he in Texas, and I in NZ – the wonders of the internet! I've brought it all to the School of Living Dharma this year to do some longitudinal testing and analysis of a small group of meditators, before and after each retreat section of the School. The project won't be very scientific as the Lightstone isn't very accurate, but the results should be interesting. I'll report back later.

The third thread was why heart rather than brain data to measure meditation states? Up till now most of the current scientific studies I had seen, eg. those by the Mind and Life Institute based on the conferences with the Dalai Lama, have been concerned with the effects on the brain. The shift also seemed relevant to a longstanding conundrum for me - that the Tibetans locate the mind in the heart! Mind/emotional states frame our experience and our thinking, and the heart is intimately connected with these states as it monitors and controls the autonomic system. It also has its own 'heart brain' in the limbic part of the brain, where everything is processed before being articulated as thought. It all started to make sense – as did other Buddhist writings such as the Seven Factors of Enlightenment with its active and passive factors. Eastern meditation and Western science agreed! I hope to tease out some of these connections and their implications in another article.

(** see foot of page 15 for links)



Bill Genat, wired up to the computer

Heart Sounding

This article is taken from Tarchin's booklet, *Sangha Work*

HEART SOUNDING IS a meditative exploration to be done by two people who already have a reasonably well established practice of mindfulness. It can be a wonderful tool for reconnecting when our relationship with someone has become awkward or has fallen into a repetitive pattern of assumptions and take it for granted-ism. In essence, heart sounding is a meditation that encourages us to appreciate, in a deep experiential way, the myriad life processes that weave together our being, while in the presence of another person who we know is doing the same thing. In this way, heart sounding is a profound remembering of the vastness that we are – two people meeting each other in a space of openness and wonder.

When teaching heart sounding to a group of people, I first get them to sit in pairs. Then I verbally guide them through the steps, while they actually do the meditation together. If you are learning the method from this [article], I suggest both people familiarize themselves with the following instructions and then, not worrying about getting things exactly right, trust in your good intentions and experiment. After the session, check the instructions again to see if you left out anything that is important and then, next time you do this meditation, try to include them.

If they are new to heart sounding, it's not unusual for people to feel a little anxiety. It may be the first time they have meditated with another person in such an intimate way and the ego can wriggle around with its various judgmental concerns. After the first session though, most people find that a lot of the unease drops away as they discover heart sounding to be very supportive and interesting work.

It's worth keeping in mind that heart sounding is a meditative exploration. It's not psychotherapy and it's not a time and place for confronting anxieties about openness, vis à vis another person. Although your reasons for doing this exploration may have been triggered by some kind of dissatisfaction, it's best not to approach a session with the hope that it will resolve a particular problem. Heart sounding can be very healing, but in a quiet and subtle way. It provides an opportunity to meet each other in a space of ease and deepening appreciation. After the session, the shared experience will often lead to new ways of being together. What is most important is that both people really aspire to let go of dysfunctional ways of interacting and to meet each other in a fresh and

immediate way.

Method

1. Arrange your seats so that you are facing each other and your heads are approximately at the same height. The distance between you needs to be close enough to feel in contact with each other, but not so close that you feel crowded by the other's presence. I sometimes suggest that people begin with their knees almost touching and then move apart until it feels just right.
2. Sit in a posture that supports a quality easeful relaxation and alertness.
3. Become aware of your breathing and body sensations. Touch whatever is arising in your experience with a quality of friendliness and interest. Take a few minutes to relax into this.
4. With open eyes, gaze in a gentle, natural way at the area of your partner's chest. Notice the rise and fall of their breathing and realise that, seated in front of you, doing the same exploration as you are, is a living, breathing, human being. In heart sounding, we don't make eye contact, though it may occur towards the end of the session. Holding a prolonged period of eye contact is not a natural way of relating to another. It often brings up aspects of challenge and confrontation which is not the intent of the heart sounding method. At this point, the main thing is to be peripherally aware of the presence of a living, breathing being who is sharing your aspiration for openness. At the same time, you are closely attending to your own breathing and the sensations that are arising in your body. Essentially, it's as if you are each doing your own breathing and body scan meditation while appreciating that you just happen to be sitting together.
5. Take a moment to silently reflect on your aspiration. 'Why am I doing this meditation?' Remind yourself of your desire for healing and wholeness. Determine that for the next twenty minutes you will try to meet the sensations and feelings arising in your body with a quality of friendly, merciful, forgiving and engaged interest. Realise that your partner will be doing the same. If it helps you might recite the Refuge and/or the Bodhisattva Vows together.
6. Now, having touched your aspiration, really begin to settle into your breathing. Deepen your awareness and explore the shifting and changing

sensations that are arising in your body. Just allow whatever is happening to happen. After a minute or so, very softly begin to make an 'ahhh' sound on the exhalation. You're not singing to your partner. You 'ahhh' softly within your body, just loud enough for your partner to hear your sound. In the same way that we did the ah-ing exercise (*outlined in the book Natural Awakening*), inhale with a great sensitivity. Really study the texture and quality of the inhalation. Feel how it is being shaped by the current matrix of muscle tensions throughout your body. On the exhalation, allow an 'ahhh' sound to gently vibrate within you as the air cascades out. Sometimes the breath releases in a great sigh, like a great letting go. Eventually this might become a wonderful letting be. Using the 'ahhh' sound, continue to breath in and out with exquisite attentiveness. If any emotions or feelings arise, touch them and be touched by them in a gentle, caring way. Bring friendly enquiry to these moments in the same way you did with the body scans and the sounding work (*described in earlier chapters of Natural Awakening*). If difficult states arise and you notice a tendency to push them away or to control them, just 'Ahhh' into this need to control. It's okay to be this way. May you be well and happy. I'm here for you. Simply allow the situation to be as it is, while enquiring into it in a sensitive and intimate way. Breathing gently, settle into the ocean of your own heartfelt knowing.

7. When we explore heart sounding in a group we usually do the ah-ing part for about twenty minutes. If making the sound audible becomes too much of an effort, let it fade and become internal for a few breaths, just feeling the 'ah' silently. Then allow it to be come audible again. Heart sounding is not supposed to be a marathon race. After the twenty minutes, or however long you have decided to sit, let the 'ah' sound gradually fade away and simply rest in a deep awareness of your own breathing. Sit with the breathing for another five minutes. Then begin to expand your field of sensing to take in the room and the other beings in it. Breathing in. Breathing out. Feeling present. Allow your eyes to gently look around. Notice your partner. Notice the place you are in. Stay with the breathing and the overall quality that is present for you. Now there may be eye contact

with your partner, but let it be natural – learning to be natural in the presence of another being. When you feel the meditation session has come to an end, have a stretch and change your posture if you wish.

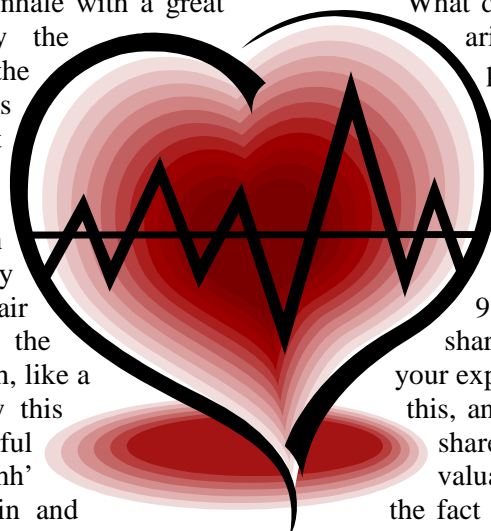
8. Without speaking to each other, take a few moments to silently review for yourself what happened during the session. What took place?

What did you learn? Did any insights arise? How did your partner's presence affect the meditation? When you have finished reviewing take a moment to share the merit, aspiring that any benefit arising from doing this practice be for the good of all beings.

9. Finally, if it feels appropriate, share with your partner something of your experience. It's not necessary to do this, and it's certainly not necessary to share everything that happened. The valuable part has already occurred, the fact that both of you have done this healing work together.

Though deceptively simple, heart sounding can be a wonderful process that leads many people into a new degree of openness. It often deepens their sense of contact with the world at large and gives people a taste of relating to another person in a profoundly intimate way, without the usual habitual associations that go with intimacy. This can feel quite strange to people the first time they try it. Many have commented that they felt they had discovered something exciting and new; to be so close to another and yet at the same time so detached. One often feels that it is an incredible privilege to be able to be with a person in this way, as if they have given us a most precious gift.

This practice can be done again and again. It can be practised with the same person or with many different people. It's a wonderful way to get to know someone in a very new way. At the end of a two-week course in heart sounding, one participant observed that he wouldn't have believed it possible to have come so close to people that he knew so little about in conventional terms. Although the participants were talking about where they lived and what they did, all these details seemed much less important than the direct meeting that had taken place in the heart sounding work itself. There is something very special about being in the presence of another who is completely engaged in deep healing.



Religious Freedom in Tibet

This is the first of a two-part essay written by Lynn Charters submitted as part of her Massey degree. It has been adapted for Newsphere. For the full text and references, please contact Lynn.



TIBETAN RELIGION IS ABSOLUTELY CENTRAL to Tibetan culture. The Tibetans are united by and take their identity from their religion, and changes that are occurring in the religion are occurring in its broader culture and identity.

From 1949, when China invaded Tibet there was, at first, a gradualist policy towards Tibet by China. From 1966 to 1976, the Cultural Revolution took place. Most of the monasteries in Tibet were destroyed, lamas and teachers were killed and imprisoned and Tibetan Buddhism almost destroyed. Genocide took place in Tibet and according to the Dalai Lamas Government-in-Exile, one million Tibetans died. In 1980, Hu Yaobang, under Deng Xiaoping, brought a period of relative liberalisation. In the late eighties a period of repression began again. Today Tibetans consider the level of repression as the worst it has been since 1980.

Monasticism is central to Tibetan Buddhism. The Drepung Monastery in Lhasa is one of the foremost monasteries in central Tibet. During the Cultural Revolution, Drepung was nearly destroyed. In the early 1980's a revival of Buddhism took place at Drepung. Despite considerable opposition to reviving the

monastery, monks began practising their religion.

Another vital factor was that the revival of Buddhism in the 1980's accompanied a heightened political consciousness among monks and nuns. Lhasa is the heart of politics in Tibet. In 1987, and during the later demonstrations, large groups of monks from Drepung were

present at anti-government demonstrations. Many of the monks protesting were gifted young scholar monks who were either arrested or forced to leave the monastery. Since then, the government control of Drepung and other monasteries has increased. The nationalistic and political influences in Tibet detracted from strictly religious issues. The Drepung monks along with the majority of the Tibetan people support the Dalai Lama and want a free Tibet.

Consequently, in 1996, Beijing began a major new patriotism education campaign aimed at the monasteries. If monks did not comply, they could not remain at the monastery. Chinese authorities introduced work teams – a group of government-supported officials, sent to override political dissent in monasteries. The political views of monks and nuns were questioned and the work team attacked the Dalai Lama and his photographs. His photograph was taken from monasteries. They insisted that monks and nuns must denounce the Dalai Lama as 'splittist'. Many monks and nuns were sent to reform at labour camps. Some fled to India and others left the monastery. All monks were examined on the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party and opposition to 'splittism'. Monks who passed

the political education program could remain at the monastery but the management committee comprised of secular cadres who lived at the monasteries replaced the staff committee. These cadres were given government control over the monastery. Often the cadres were seen as spies by the Tibetans. These policies were typical of all monasteries and nunneries.

Now Tibetans need permission from Chinese authorities to enter into religious life and the number of monks and nuns entering is controlled by the Chinese. Many monks and nuns flee Tibet so they can lead a life of religious freedom in India and the West. Many monks and nuns have been imprisoned for pro-independence sentiment, and taking part in demonstrations. Many remain in prison today; some have died from torture and ill treatment. These are human rights abuses and Tibetan people are denied most rights guaranteed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Maybury Lewis the anthropologist speaks of the opponents of indigenous people, saying that indigenous demands for their rights are divisive and a threat to national unity. This is the Chinese attitude to those speaking out against the Chinese Government and in favour of a free Tibet. They are called 'splittists' by the Chinese.

One of the most prominent religious leaders in Tibet today is Khenpo Jikphun Phunstok. He was a terton, a treasure finder of sacred scriptures and objects. This movement known as Ter has been dramatically revitalised around Kham, in eastern Tibet, in the Sichuan province.

A vital factor, present in Khenpo Jikphun's teaching, is a traditional focus on nationalistic literature, for example, The Gesar of Ling epic (which is the Tibetan Camelot) and dynastic period mythology. This revival strongly emphasises Tibetan identity within a sacred landscape. Khenpo Jikphun has managed to bring about institutional revival of monasteries with relative religious freedom. He has avoided political lectures and has emphasised the purely religious. There was little control over disciples from distant areas, joining the academy. The Khenpo has held several political positions, and at political disputes he was a mediator.

However, in the mid 1990's, when the Khenpo refused to support the government's candidate for the Panchen Lama reincarnation, he came under pressure and suspicion. Since

then he has been restricted in religious authority, being allowed authority only over his own institutions. He has founded a few teaching institutes outside Tibet and a nunnery. These institutes involve large numbers of monks and nuns. He has his teachings translated into Chinese, and has Chinese disciples, who often have a superior attitude towards the Tibetans. He maintains that the key to revitalising Buddhism is strict ethical standards and monastic revival. He sees learning as an antidote to colonialism and stressed education in traditional Tibetan language which is vital to the continuation of the culture. In Tibet, however, education is generally in Chinese.

Additionally, Khenpo has brought to light sacred pilgrimage networks and this with the revelation of treasures of Ter. His reinventing of the sacred landscape is vital to his form of revitalising the Tibetan religion, which connects Buddhism with the land. The Tibetan landscape, like other indigenous cultures, is said to be inhabited by Buddhist deities and ancestral spirits. They are central to Tibetan cultural history, connecting Tibetans both with the present and their past.

Lastly, this unique integration of personal charisma, nationalism, and Buddhist ethics, and a Tibetan cult of magic, deities and miracles, is a form of revitalisation movement, sharing similarities with other indigenous revitalisation movements such as the Ghost Dance of the North American Indians.

However, although for many years there appeared to be a degree of religious freedom, in the late 1990's difficulties increased. Khenpo and the community were seen as a threat and the Chinese feared a nationalistic breeding ground. The Communist Party began expelling residents from Larung Gar community, and the government wanted to limit the size of the institutions and settlements and place them under strict party control. In 2001, police and officials moved about 2400 homes and evicted several thousand residents from Larung Gar. Khenpo was ordered to stop teaching. This indicates the increasing restrictions placed on religious life by the Chinese. It is also another instance of abuse of human rights by the Chinese, not allowing freedom of assembly, travel, expression and speech.

In the next issue, Finding the Panchen Lama

Tibet is more interesting when you're conscious
(continued from page 4)



glucose given with questionable needles was the one treatment for all conditions.

And while we were waiting and waiting all the usual crap came up – boredom, frustration, anger, feelings of abandonment, sadness and then when all other avenues were explored and found to be wanting and there was nothing left to do, out came the practice books and then great appreciation of the depth, richness and beauty of the practice.

Of course our inbred drive for amusement and distraction still came forward. A generator went on at night and charged laptops and we played pirated DVDs of the Sopranos, and then assigned roles to our fellow café patrons. We hired DVDs from the local shopkeeper who had a similar but not identical DVDs in the pack to the one advertised on the cover. After all what's the difference between Pirates of the Caribbean and Cut Throat Island (about four stars really)? We bought one packet of every colour of the seven types of potato crisps and played 'name that flavour' – some favourites were Sichuan duck and mushroom, sweet chilli and raw sewage, and industrial waste and chicken feet. One of the group hadn't lost his appetite completely and would go to the local market – not too early or you would see dinner still walking there – and buy a prime piece of tender yak (or as tender as you can get). We cultivated a relationship with a local barbeque restaurant. We wanted steak and chips. What we got was the yak cut up into small bits and threaded with chunks of potatoes on skewers, and if we kept a close eye on things and managed to veto the chilli, MSG and sugar we got a reasonable meal – that didn't include rice. While our favourite restaurateurs tried to teach us Tibetan dancing we taught them how to make fried egg sandwiches and introduced them to the dubious joys of instant coffee. We made them a sign in English so they could corner the tourist market. We expect to see them in much fancier premises this year. Tibet really is a place where you should just stop and look at the wonders around you – even at its arse end.

I could write more about the actual retreat but see I've written a lot already. Travelling to this part of the world is very special. Recalling and writing about the trip gives me great pleasure. Planning the next trip also brings me pleasure (and helps me cope with having no leave for an entire year). We are going to Kham again in July this year and I'll use this as an opportunity to slip in a little ad. If you are interested in joining us contact me at kathy@rigdzintrust.org or call 03 548-1404.

Fundraising Seminar with Mary Jaksch, Roshi Tuesday, 25th July

For a long while now we've been aware of the need to be more efficient and organised in our fundraising efforts. Over the years we have always managed to find the money we've needed for major projects, because of the enormous generosity of donors. Mary Jaksch, Roshi, has kindly offered her expertise in an informal training session.

Mary writes: *In my name by marriage, Mary Grodd, I used to be Director of the School of Music in Nelson and worked closely with a professional fundraiser when we rebuilt and renovated the School of Music. This fundraising drive netted over a million dollars in three weeks and I was involved in all the strategic meetings and planning sessions.*

Hopefully I'll be able to help kick-start your process of fundraising by outlining and discussing various strategies. Of course a professional fundraiser would be able to give you a much better picture - and it may be wise to contract to such a professional at some stage - but in the meantime I may be able to help you with breaking down what may seem like an impossible task into manageable steps.

If you would like to be actively involved in fundraising for Wangapeka, or would just like to know more about fundraising generally, do come to hear what Mary has to say. Contact the centre, (03) 522-4221 or e-mail retreatcentre@wangapeka.org for details.

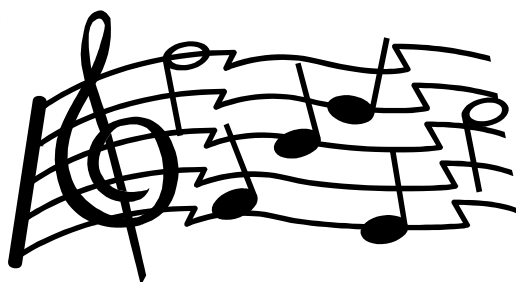
Bloom of Books & Music



My Journey to Lhasa, classic reissue of the Alexandra David-Neal epic journey in a free Tibet that no longer exists. First published in 1927 it tells of her amazing adventure, disguising herself as a male pilgrim and ascending to the ancient Tibetan city of Lhasa. Often humorous and though scholars and historians today would challenge many things in the book, it perhaps should be seen more like a lost horizon – a classic portrait of Tibetan culture, its religion and people. *Published by Harper Perennial 2005.*

The Tibetan Art of Positive Thinking, skilful thoughts for successful living by NZ Christopher Hansard (now based at the Eden Medical Centre, London) where he practises Tibetan medicine. Christopher is a Bon of the Ngagpho and his present work underpins every aspect of Bon teaching and belief, a tradition that began 17,000 years ago and was predominant in central Asia and Tibet. The book deals with the power of thought, your daily work, value of money, freedom, helping others, well-being, in fact everything! A practical resource of wisdom treasures. *On Hodder & Stoughton 2004.*

Dhafer Youssef – Digital Prophecy, the latest work from the Tunisian composer, singer and oud player. His 2001 record *electronic Sufi* started the journey rooted in the Sufi tradition, embracing jazz to create an East-West crossover - with Arabic vocals, jazz beats, state of the art programming and the ancient strings of the oud. This is beautiful and tender music that transports us to many realms. *On Enja 2005.*



Off the Beaten Track – music from the Rough Guides. This is a stunning selection of traditional roots music, contemporary style and modern fusions from Ethiopia, Sudan, Israel, Peru, China, Madagascar and even the Thai Elephant orchestra! A snapshot of remarkable music that can be found off the beaten track and take you on a musical exploration – happy travels! *On World Music Network 2006.*

Kiran Ahluwalia – born in India and raised in Toronto, this is wonderful contemporary ghazal (light classical Indian song form introduced from Persia) (Iran). Joined by the Cape Breton Celtic fiddler Natalie MacMaster, it reminds of the origins of Celtic music in India. Kiran uses the poems of Urdu & Punjabi poets who live in Toronto, making these perhaps the first recorded ghazals to be entirely created in North America. *On Triloka 2005.*

Salif Keita – McBemba – the pioneer of West African music (think *Soro* recorded in 1987, a ground breaking release). Salif now concentrates on more acoustic music with the dazzling McBemba (Ancestor) and traces his roots back to the 13th century, with Toumani Diabate (Heart of The Moon) on Kora. It's a mix of gorgeous African acoustic, funk, samba and Islamic prayer music. One to make you fly. *On Universal 2005.*

“Strive onwards with diligence!” – Namgyal Rinpoche

Leopold Bloom

Small Bites

Caring for the Centre

Thanks to the many people who have offered practical support since Chris and Louise left. As a result we've got stacks of firewood organised, as well as the work mentioned in Dawa's report. If you're interested in work exchange or in longer term caretaking, please contact the centre.

Laundry

Just a reminder to everyone coming to the centre ... please remember to bring your own bedding, ie. sheets and pillowcase and duvet or sleeping bag. Over the last year or so there seems to have been a greater reliance on bedlinen being provided, and that makes for a huge amount of extra work on the part of the resident team. Think backpackers rather than motel!

New Charities Commission and the Charities Act 2005

This is a brief summary of new legislation regarding charitable organisations, and how it will impact on the Wangapeka Education Trust.

In April 2005, the Charities Act 2005 established the Charities Commission, which came into being on July 2005. The Commission's functions are:

1. A registration and monitoring system for charitable organisations.
2. Support and education to the charitable sector on good governance and management.

Registration of charitable organisations with the Commission is voluntary. However, only those who register with the Commission will be entitled to retain their tax-free status. Registration with the Commission will require W.E.T. to:

1. Submit a copy of our rules. (Our Constitution.)
2. Provide information about our current and proposed charitable activities.
3. Register the names of the Trustees, i.e. members of the board.
4. File an annual return.

These requirements seem straightforward, and obviously registering would be advantageous to W.E.T., so that we can keep our tax-free status. The Board is in possession of all the relevant information pertaining to this new legislation and the requirements that it involves. The Commission will contact us when we are required to register.

Pierre Mitchell (Treasurer)

Wangapeka Muesli

By special request, here's the recipe for that old favourite, the Wangapeka Toasted Muesli, without which breakfast at the centre just wouldn't be the same for some! It's adapted from the book *From Tauhara's Kitchen* compiled by Cathy Stevens and published by David Bateman in 1992



- 10 cups rolled oats
- 1½ cups finely chopped nuts
- ½ cup sesame seeds
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- ½ cup pumpkin seeds
- ½ cup coconut
- 2½ cups dried fruit
- 1 cup honey
- 1¼ cups oil
- 1 Tbs molasses
- 1 Tbs cinnamon

Melt the honey, molasses and oil in a saucepan. Mix together all the other ingredients except the dried fruit. Add the honey mixture and stir well. Pour into shallow baking tins and bake for about an hour at 150°C or until muesli is golden brown. Stir frequently as it burns easily. Add fruit after baking. You can soak it overnight in water as an option to the dry version, which makes it more easily digested. (Makes enough for 30-40 servings)

Bodhisattva Boot Camp

on the Sunshine Coast of Canada

What's a Bodhisattva?

A human being who can see far enough beyond her or his own struggles to realize how thoroughly other living beings are caught in negative patterns ... and to want to help. A bodhisattva can see how the planet and every living being that arises from it suffers because of this blindness ... and to aspire to make a difference.

A bodhisattva-in-training is willing to take responsibility for their own new learning: to free the body, cultivate wholesome emotional states, and develop skilful ways of interacting with others and the world.

What's a bodhisattva boot camp?

Think along the lines of a summer camp rather than some gruelling GI training program. Unlike the standard model, this boot camp focuses training on becoming a calmer, happier, more joyous human being with a genuine interest in being a source of positive inspiration for others and practical change in the world. Summer camp is a truly Canadian tradition that combines new learning, social interaction with others from many different backgrounds, and having fun. This year, Bodhisattva Boot Camp will be a day camp - we don't have residential facilities yet - but we encourage participants to camp out in local campgrounds, and we'll be facilitating lots of shared meals and other group experiences, outside the formal learning program.

When?

June 2 to August 28, 2006

Where?

Various locations on the Sunshine Coast (40 minutes by ferry from Horseshoe Bay in West Vancouver) in beautiful coastal British Columbia.

Program

Details from retreathouse@dccnet.com. There will be many ways to participate ... weekends, weeks, months or the whole three-month boot



camp adventure. The program will include weekend teachings by Bonni Ross on Seeds of Peace, Cultivating Serenity Inside and Out, Speaking and Listening from the Heart, Compassionate Action in the World; a week with Robert

Sinclair entitled Art full Heart, Mind Full Art; work with other teachers including Dr Eddie Berinstein, Matthew Eades, Heather Gordon, Lynn Hauka, Rik Jespersen and Kathleen Thacker.

Who can participate?

People who want to learn to be more effective as individuals and in the world ... and don't mind having some fun while they are doing it! People who are clear-seeing enough to understand the value in following basic guidelines to help the camp unfold in a peaceful fashion and mature enough not to need supervision (it's not that kind of camp!) Participants will be willing to take responsibility for their own actions and their effect on others.

Bonni writes:

Since we are making this happen with *no* resources to speak of, we would appreciate it if you would:

- share your energy by participating in this venture if you live in, or plan to visit our part of the world. Register today!
- If you live far away, remember us when you share the merit of your practice with others. Thanks to all of you for providing a good part of the motivation for Path of Peace ... and all that it will create for the well-being of the world in the future.
- Consider purchasing the whole program and giving gifts of individual weekends to your friends and family!
- Help support financially by sending a cheque to Path of Peace Study Centre, PO Box 273, Roberts Creek, BC V0N 2W4.

Teachers' Schedules

Tarchin Hearn

February 11 - July 2, Wangapeka School of Living Dharma

See www.wangapeka.org or e-mail retreatcentre@wangapeka.org

July - August, Teaching in the North Island

August 31 - September 7, Grand Canyon expedition

September 23 - October 1, Boise, Idaho, USA

October 7 - 15th, Edmonton, Canada

October 21 - 29th, Winnipeg

November 4 - 13th, Calgary

Late November and early December, Vancouver area

Mark Webber

22nd April - 13th May, West Coast, NZ

Meditations on Space, Light and Mind; it may be possible for you to come for a shorter time; contact qtn dharmahouse@yahoo.co.nz

20th-21st May, Queenstown (evenings)

Understanding Depth Psychology and Symbolism through Buddhist Tantra
Contact qtn dharmahouse@yahoo.co.nz

15th-18th June, Wuppertal, Germany

Science and the Art of Meditation

22nd-26th June, Hvar, Croatia

Awakening from the Day and Night Dreams

July 2006, Galiano Island, BC, Canada

Family workshop followed by Diamond Dakini/Milarepa retreat

August 2006 - January 2007, Kinmount,

Ontario, The Lucid Mind, a three to five month retreat.

For information on all of these courses and retreats, see www.markwebber.org

Leander Kane

For information on Leander's work, Liberation Through the Body, see the Wangapeka website and follow the link to teachers.

These dates could be changed so please contact the appropriate person well in advance, or e-mail leanderkane@clear.net.nz

17th - 28th April, Katikati

Workshop Saturday 22nd 10am - 3pm

Contact Marion (07) 552-0270 or

marionfeasey@xtra.co.nz

30th April - 6th May, Te Moata

Contact Te Moata (07) 868-8798 or

temoata@xtra.co.nz

20th -26th May, Wangapeka as first week of the annual autumn retreat

17th - 25th July, Melbourne

Workshop Friday evening 21st July, Saturday and Sunday; contact Bill +61 (3) 8344-9375 or bgenat@unimelb.edu.au

1st - 7th August, Wales

Contact Mala +44 (2920) 711214 or

malasikka@onetel.com

9th - 15th August, Hanover, Germany

Contact Peter info@combi-nations.de

1st - 10th September, Edmonton, Canada

Contact Don don.mackenzie@shaw.ca

13th - 20th September, Rossland, BC

Contact Mela mela@netidea.com

22nd September - 9th October, Vancouver

and Sunshine Coast; contact for Vancouver: John john.wellwood@tellus.net

Contact for Sunshine Coast:

retreathouse@dccnet.com

End of October or beginning of November, possibly **Boise, Idaho**

7th - 28th November, Ottawa

Contact Karen karenmere@earthlink.net

Wangapeka Diary

April 7-16	<i>Karma, Biology and Glimpses of Abhidhamma</i> , with Mark Webber
April 17-20	Sangha exploration - Tarchin
April 21-30	Womb Retreat - Tarchin
May 1-16	Sangha explorations - Tarchin
May 16-18	TERM BREAK
May 20-June 23	Annual Autumn Retreat, <i>Foundations of Awakening</i> - Tarchin (first week <i>Liberation through Breath and Body</i> , led by Leander Kane)
June 24-30	Sangha explorations - Tarchin
July 1-2	Education and Dharma and Sharing with all Beings - Hui with the Wangapeka Sangha, to end the 2006 School of Living Dharma
July 25th	Fundraising talk with Mary Jaksch, Roshi

For more information, please contact the centre,
ph. (03) 522-4221, e-mail: retreatcentre@wangapeka.org
or visit the website, www.wangapeka.org

Board Meetings

These dates could change ... if you have any issues you would like the board to
discuss at a meeting, please contact Kathy Connor - see page 2

14 May

25 June

A.G.M.

Sunday 9 July

For all who are able to come to Wangapeka.
You are welcome to stay for the weekend - hang out,
socialise, catch up and reconnect - please contact
the caretaker in advance so we can make sure you're fed!

** from page 5: '*Music of the Heart*' based on real heart recordings, is available on the
Wangapeka website, www.wangapeka.org/buddings/articles/heartmatters.html, together with links
to websites mentioned in the article '*Exploring the Heart*'

Wangapeka Education Trust Aims and Objectives

The Wangapeka Study and Retreat Centre is located 80 kms southwest of Nelson in the foothills of the Southern Alps, overlooking the Wangapeka River. Tranquil and ruggedly beautiful, it is a wonderful place for healing and meditative unfoldment. The centre is owned and operated by the Wangapeka Educational Trust, a registered New Zealand charity.

The Trust is dedicated to:

- supporting all beings in awakening to Wisdom and Compassion through the cultivation of non-clinging awareness
- fostering open-hearted inquiry into the profound interconnectedness of all manifestations of life
- encouraging healing of body, energy and mind both for individuals and for the community at large.

With roots in the great traditions of Buddha Dharma (the teachings of awakening), the Trust aspires to:

- be free from any sectarianism
- encourage the development of many appropriate expressions of these teachings of healing and awakening, in ways that are meaningful to beings from all walks and persuasions of life.

Facilities

The facilities comprise a main building with large dining hall, well-equipped kitchen and ablution facilities, a teaching/meditation hall, octagonal healing room, sleeping accommodation for 28 in two and four-bed units, as well as four retreat cabins. Tent sites are also available. The retreat cabins can be booked for individual retreats and the main facilities are for hire.

Prices

Accommodation

Members (to qualify, you need to have been a member for one year): \$14 per night base rate

Non-members: \$20 per night

Prices will rise by \$1 per night from 1 August. A subsidy may be available for those experiencing financial hardship. This will be \$16 per night. Special rates for families.

Camping

Members: \$10 per night

Non-members: \$12 per night

Food

You may bring your own food or use the food available for an additional cost of \$15 per day.

The caretakers will answer inquiries, make bookings and orientate visitors, who are most welcome. Please phone before coming.

Membership

An annual subscription or donations can be paid to the Trust by cheque, by automatic payments, or direct credited to our account: Westpac Nelson 030703-0156597-03. If you choose this option, please put a reference so we know who the money is from and what it's for.

Friends of Wangapeka (Newsphere only): \$25/yr

Full Membership (Newsphere, plus discounted accommodation after one year): \$60/yr

Family Membership (Newsphere, plus discounted accommodation after one year): \$75/yr

Wangapeka Study and Retreat Centre, RD2, Wakefield, Nelson, New Zealand

ph: (03) 522-4221 fax: (03) 522-4980

e-mail: retreatcentre@wangapeka.org website: www.wangapeka.org

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