Public transportation:
catch the #67 bus up
Spruce St. at Shattuck
and University.
Dharma Talk

by: Lama Kunga

The following is an excerpt from a longer talk by Lama Kunga Rinpoche concerning some problems facing those who attempt to carry out Buddhist teachings in daily life.

In our lives there are two types of suffering, physical and mental. We tend to deny physical suffering in modern society, and our whole culture works to overcome it with improved food distribution, transportation, medicine and so forth. However, our ability to overcome physical suffering has blinded us to the reality of mental suffering. The tools we use to overcome physical suffering cannot be used for mental suffering. Completely different tools must be used, such as love,
compassion, wisdom, understanding, and so forth. These tools are not bought and sold but must be acquired through experience.

Although every time, every place and every society has its unique physical sufferings, mental suffering is basically the same for all people. In Tibet and India where there is more physical suffering, people have made greater developments in overcoming mental suffering. The techniques they have gradually developed have been passed from person to person for many years, because for some people they obviously work. No one preserves a useless thing. It doesn’t matter if we are dealing with an ancient problem, it is still a problem! We are still trying to escape suffering. You can never escape suffering if you don’t understand the basis of suffering. It will follow you like a shadow follows your body. We are the source of our own shadow just as we are the source of our own suffering.

The source of suffering is an uncontrolled mind which allows the senses to indulge in excesses. This indulgence results in emotional attachments, which cause stupidity, passion, and anger. These are the real enemies in our lives, and the only way to overcome them is through increased awareness of our thoughts and actions.

Developing awareness is like bringing a light into a dark room. Though we cannot see what is in a dark room, with a light we can see what is there and can pick out what we need. After we start to develop awareness of ourselves we begin to realize that other people are like us, with the same problems and suffering. From this increased awareness arises compassion. The technique for developing increased awareness is to concentrate our attention on our situation and the situations of others. The compassion arising from this practice, since it comes from an awareness of suffering and is based on knowledge, is deeper than ordinary love. In Tibet and India, training for beginners is to meditate on the situation of a friend or member of your family and gradually increase empathy in this way according to one’s capacity. As development increases, the objects of meditation are multiplied and techniques are expanded into standard forms. These forms include discipline, guidance by teachers, and meditation aids such as mandalas, prayers, identification of yourself with deities, and so forth, all to increase and focus our awareness and compassion. It is only with this type of mental development that we can deal effectively with suffering in our modern society.

Another time in southern India Virupa passed through a Hindu country called Bimay Sara where King Narapa Di and his people killed many goats, water buffalo, and other animals as offerings to Shiva. Virupa and his disciples went to the capital city where the king kept five hundred yogis in the temple. When Virupa entered the temple he began loudly praying to Shiva in Sanskrit. This display of knowledge so impressed the king that he asked Virupa to remain in that city as master and teacher of the five hundred yogis, and Virupa accepted. The next day all the yogis gathered in the temple for their daily prayers and ritual, but Virupa refused to join them. Instead, he began reciting different Tantric texts and tied a copy of the Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines on top of his head as a sign of reverence for the wisdom it contained. This angered the other yogis and they complained to the king, but he accused them of being jealous of Virupa’s greater knowledge. When they kept insisting he finally agreed to go to the temple himself, where he found Virupa still practicing Buddhist ritual. The king interrupted him and urged him to worship Shiva as Universal Lord, but Virupa was reluctant, claiming that the intensity of his devotion would be too great. When the king insisted, Virupa faced the statue and began, instead of a Hindu prayer, a Buddhist prayer. The statue immediately cracked and fell into three pieces, amazing the king and all his yogis. They were badly frightened and after begging him to restore the statue, Virupa finally agreed to do so. But when he had finished, he placed a small image of Avalokitesvara on top of Shiva’s head and warned that the statue would remain whole only as long as that image was left in
place. After this, one of the five hundred yogis left Bimay Sara and followed Virupa as a disciple, later becoming known as the Siddha Nakpoba.

Continuing on his southern journey, Virupa visited Tambar Parti where King Dziki had made a huge eight foot bronze statue of Shiva to which many animals were sacrificed. When Virupa arrived in the city all the townspeople had crowded into their temple and when he tried to enter he was told to wait outside. This enraged him and he shoved and pushed his way inside until he was close enough to the statue to kick it. As soon as he had kicked it, it began moving and walked out through the temple doors only to fall on its face in the dirt. The people were frightened nearly to death and begged Virupa to return the statue to the temple. He agreed to do this only on the condition that they stop sacrificing animals and in the future offer nothing but fruit and grain. After this Virupa continued to travel throughout southern India doing the same sort of thing until everyone realized what he had in mind. In every village and town, whenever it was rumored that Virupa was approaching, Buddhist images were put on top of the Shiva statue for as long as he was in the area. In one particular village Virupa saw an image of Tara that had been placed on a statue, and entering that temple he circumambulated the statue as a sign of respect. As he walked around it, the Tara image turned with him and from then on it was known as "Turning Tara." Before leaving, he consecrated the statue and it dissolved into the body of Shiva.

At one place in southern India there was a temple where a group of Hindu Yoginis lived. In their temple there was a large, magic trisbula (trident) which protected them by impaling any one who entered the temple. Whenever intruders had been killed the trisbula magically flew back to its resting place and the Yoginis divided up and ate the bodies. During Virupa's stay in southern India there had been many killings at this temple, and hearing of it, he decided to investigate. When he arrived at the temple he instructed his followers to wait for him at the door and neither speak nor move while he was inside. Then he entered, and the Yoginis asked why his friends were still outside. Virupa replied that they should go outside and ask, which they did, but the men remained as silent and unmov ing as if they were dead. Meanwhile, Virupa had walked further into the temple and seeing the magic trisbula beginning to vibrate, he made a loud hand clap and it dissolved into a cloud of dust. Then he walked up to the large image of Shiva that was in the temple and hit the head so hard that it fell inside of the body. When the Yoginis saw this they all began vomiting blood and grew faint. They blamed their condition on Virupa and said he was an evil Buddhist for showing them no compassion, but he replied that his actions had in fact shown true compassion. From that time on,
killing ceased in the country and the Yoginis were all converted to Buddhism.

By now many years had passed since Virupa's first disciple, Dombi Heruka, had come to him. Under Virupa's guidance during these years Dombi Heruka had become a veritable equal in wisdom and accomplishment. For this reason, he was sent to eastern India by Virupa to spread Buddhist teachings in the country of Radeh, and to subdue the Hindu King Tehara in the city of Gamgana. When Dombi Heruka arrived in Radeh he captured a wild, man-eating tiger to be his steed. He used poisonous snakes for a harness and, holding another huge snake as a whip, rode throughout the land subduing King Tehara and converting all those people to the Vajrayana.

At a later time Virupa and Nakpoba travelled to southeast India to see a famous statue of Avalokitesvara. While they were there Virupa told Nakpoba the entire story of his past life and recounted his many victories over the Hindus. When he finished, the statue of Avalokitesvara magically began to speak, saying: "Even though you have the power to reduce a mountain to a pile of dust, it is now time that you stop your wrathful activities and begin showing compassion more obviously in your dealings with men." After this Virupa and Nakpoba went searching for a great Hindu scholar called Sowa Nata, to subdue him and allow Buddhism to spread in his country. Sowa Nata was a very powerful man, and since he had the power of foresight, he knew that Virupa was looking for him, but did not know why. To try and find out, he manifested himself as two Brahmins dressed in deer skins and holding bunches of kusha grass in the ancient style. These two Brahmins intercepted Virupa and Nakpoba on their way to Sowa Nata and, pretending not to know with whom they spoke, asked the strangers' names, destination, and business. Virupa, though he had immediately recognized the two Brahmins as manifestations of Sowa Nata, decided to answer honestly. He said that they were on their way to find and subdue the Hindu scholar Sowa Nata. The Brahmins pointed out that a Buddhist should exercise greater compassion, and should not be subduing people. Virupa replied that he subdued (and converted) non-Buddhists precisely because he had great compassion, though it was shown in a wrathful aspect. The Brahmins then said that Sowa Nata was no longer in that country, but had gone to the eastern continent of the world. That did not matter, said Virupa, for he would follow and subdue him wherever he went, even to the heaven of Brahma. These threats frightened Sowa Nata so badly that he could no longer maintain his illusion, and he appeared in his own form begging Virupa not to destroy him. Only by accepting certain conditions did he escape immediate destruction. He promised to become a Buddhist, to

establish monasteries, to put a picture of Virupa in the temple, to stop sacrificing animals and offer fruits and grain instead, and to offer all his food to the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, and Virupa before eating. Using his power over dreams he had the king of that country, Tsendra Deva, experience a frightful dream in which Shiva appeared and warned that if, within three months, Buddhist monasteries were not established and the slaying of animals abolished the great Buddhist Yogi Virupa would come and destroy the whole country. This dream warning, having come from the very mouth of Shiva, put great fear in the king. He invited Virupa to his palace and received him royally, giving him a reception worthy of a venerable and holy man. The king himself welcomed the coming of the Buddhist faith to his country, embracing it wholeheartedly and initiating all those things he had been warned to do in his dream.

Eventually Nakpoba also came to equal his master in wisdom and ability. When he had reached this level of development Virupa gave him the oral transmission which he had received from Vajrayogini, including an explanation of the Vajra Verses and Path-Fruit instructions (Lam-bbras). This oral transmission is the same that has continued in an unbroken line through the Sakya school of Vajrayana Buddhism to the present time. Virupa gave Nakpoba his blessing and some final instructions: to go to eastern India and subdue the evil Hindu kings there, and to go to Urgyen (NE Afghanistan) and bring back to India five texts of commentary on the Vajra Verses.

After the departure of Nakpoba Virupa stopped spreading Buddhism by wrathful means and, according to some accounts, transmuted his body into a stone statue. The statue's left hand was held in a "giving" gesture, and on the palm was a small stone that turned any metal it touched into gold. Though the statue always seemed to be very large it magically became smaller if any one wished to place a garland of flowers around its neck as a devotional act. In front of the statue was a skull-shaped stone bowl into which people could pour any amount of beer without overfilling. The statue was always watched over by an idiot and an old-woman leper, who were actually emanations of Vajra-Pani and Vajra-Yogini.

One day, a passing Brahmin stopped and, politely addressing the statue, asked if he could borrow the piece of magic stone. B-
cause of the Brahmin's devout request Virupa let him take the stone and he rapidly became a very rich man. The local king, having heard of this remarkable stone, grew jealous and demanded that it be given to him, but the Brahmin replied it was not his to give, for he had only borrowed it from Virupa and must return it. He promptly took it back and, when he placed it on the statue's hand, the hand closed into a fist. This enraged the king, and as he began hacking at the hand with his knife he fell to the ground dead. The hand was never re-opened after this, and in later years only very thin wire which could be slipped into the closed fist could be turned to gold. This amount was so small that it served only to pay for temple upkeep. That statue still stands in India at a place called Sowa Nata and continues to cause miraculous and magical events.

Virupa worked many long years using what appeared to be magic and other unorthodox methods to spread, maintain, and preserve the teachings of Buddha. Of all the Siddhas he was the greatest in the practice of magic, Dharma Kirti was the most accomplished in debate and logic, and King Ashoka was the wisest in administration and exercise of earthly power.

**Shántideva**

Understand all things to be like space, O beings who are like myself! for, elated and angered by causes of gladness and strife, they who seek happiness for themselves toilsomely pass their lives away in grief, struggles, sins and gloom—cutting and piercing each other. Dying, they fall into the longlasting, unbearable anguish of realms of ill and, again and again, they return to sample various pleasures in happier realms.

In worldly existence are many precipices and there prevails such unreality; due, too, to their mutual contradiction there is no Real like this obtains. There, too, lie boundless oceans of exampleless, fearful sufferings; and there is strength so slight and the span of life so brief. There, with toils to sustain life and health, with weariness, hunger and tribulations, with sleep, misfortune and the friendship of fools, life vainly, swiftly passes away and wise discernment is hard to win.
How, too, shall one begin there
to ward off habitual distraction?
Mara strives there to bring about
downfall to the great realms of woe
and doubts are hard to overcome
for wrong paths there are manifold.
Again, this chance is hard to win
and a Buddha’s advent most rare;
hard it is to turn back the flood of passions—
Ah alas! the succession of sorrows!

Alas, the terrible sufferings of those
who dwell in the torrent of sorrows—
who, even in such a hapless plight,
do not perceive their own wretchedness!
Even as some, having bathed and bathed,
might again and again enter fire
and—though abiding in misery thus—
still harbour conceit for their happy lot,
so they who dwell, playing on
as if free from old age and destruction,
come first into the presence of Death
and then meet with fearful disaster.

When then shall I rain peace on those
burnt thus by the flames of their unhappiness
with provisions of my own joyfulness
well sprung from clouds of merit?
When shall I explain emptiness
reverently to those who view supports,
through conventional ways and also the gathering
of merit in ways beyond support?

Verses 150 through 163 of Chapter Nine (entitled ‘Wisdom’)
of the Bodhicaryāvatāra of Shāntideva (7th cent. AD). Translated by Acharyas Lozang Jamspal and Manjushrdhartha.

Ngor Ewam Choden

by: Hiroshi Sonami

Ngor Ewam Choden is a monastery in the Shigatse district of western Tibet. This monastery was founded in 1429 by a well known lama named Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo (1387-1456). Kunga Zangpo had spent many years at Sakya monastery in western Tibet, but wanted a reclusive place to practice and study the Dharma. So he left Sakya monastery to find a quiet place.

Zangpo had a dream one night
which revealed to him the name for
his new monastery. Zangpo’s dream
was about Ewam. He dreamt that
all Dharma comes from Ewam.
Ewam is a Sanskrit word which is
made up of two syllables, E and
Wam. The syllable E stands for
prajñā, wisdom. Wam stands for
upāya, skillful means. Choden is a
Tibetan word which means “to
have Dharma.” Ewam Choden is
the Dharma place of prajñā and
upāya.”

Ewam Choden is located in the
area called Ngor. The monastery rests
on the side of a hill, facing
the south, and looks down into a valley
and upon the surrounding mountains. The rolling hill area of Ngor is
very beautiful throughout the seasons.

In early spring, the hills are covered
with white wildflowers. The March winds blow and the delicate
white blossoms are scattered in the wind. There are many streams in
the area, which are used for drinking
water. The fresh melted snow water is very cold and delicious.
The spring is followed by a light
rainy season in May and June and
then a mild summer. Many highland
flowers and wild roses bloom in the
summertime. There are not many
trees in the area, just a few scattered
willows, mainly along the
riverside. Two small rivers flow
from the top of the hill, along the
left and right sides of the monastery,
into the valley below. Many
young lamas gather along the
riversides for picnics during the warm
summer days. In the autumn there
are often hail storms, which are
harmful to the crops. The winters
are mild except for the strong cold
winds that blow in January and
February.

Ngor Monastery is very famous
in Tibet and many lamas come frequently to visit. The elevation of
the monastery is only 3,700 m.
above sea level, but transportation
there is difficult because the roads
are not very good. There is a Tibetan proverb which refers to the arduous journey to Ngor: "Ngor is a place for lamas, but for donkeys and horses it is a cemetery."

There are a few small villages near Ngor Monastery. Most of the villagers are lay devotees of the monastery and many of the people spend time working at the monastery building housing and doing other jobs. The monastery also provides a school for the village children, where they are taught mathematics, reading and Tibetan grammar.

The monastery is made up of many buildings. In the center, there is still standing a building that was built during Kunga Zampo's lifetime. There are four different lama residences and eleven residences for the monks of different branch monasteries who come to Ngor to study. Usually, there are four to five hundred monks residing at the monastery.

The monastery is supervised by an administrative group of monks. It is headed by the general abbot, who has full responsibility for the monastery and also teaches Buddhist philosophy and meditation. There are two prayer leaders who lead the chanting for all religious services. One takes care of special ceremonies and the other conducts the regular religious services. There are also two judges of conduct and their assistants, who keep order in the monastery by their constant watch for anyone breaking the monastic rules.

If any of the monks are caught drinking beer or fighting or breaking other rules, they are taken to a cell for the night. The judges then make a decision about the seriousness of their offense. The next day, the offending monks must appear with the judges before all the monks in the main hall after the morning chanting. The misconduct of the monk is described and then a penance or punishment is given according to the seriousness of the offense.

If the offense is not considered very serious, the monk is given a penance of work for the monastery lasting from a few days up to three weeks. When the offense is considered a serious one, the monk is punished. He is whipped twenty or thirty times with a special leather whip and is also given a penance of three weeks work for the monastery. The whip contains mandalas and sutras written on paper which are wrapped in three loosely woven leather balls at the end of it, and is considered to have a special curing effect. Sometimes the villagers come and ask to be beaten to cure a psychological problem, a sickness, or just as penance. The most severe punishment is given when one of the four main vows are broken. These vows are to abstain from killing, stealing, lying, and sexual misconduct. If the monk is found guilty of breaking one of these, his robes are changed and he must become a layman. He can no longer
live at the monastery. He is still allowed to continue his practice at the monastery if he wants, but not as a monk.

The monastery is most active during the winter months, when a teaching session is held from the end of October until the end of January. There are always new student monks for this session who come from different branch monasteries. Sometimes the enrollment reaches as high as seven hundred students, with ages ranging from 18 to 30. Now and then there are a few rough and wild students, but once they enter the gates of the monastery they must abide by the rules.

During the winter session, the traditional Sakya teaching, “the Fruit and the Path” (lam, 'bras) and other Buddhist philosophies are taught. The student monks also take the vows of the Hinayana Shila, Mahayana Shila and Tantra Abhisheka. When the teaching period is finished the new monks return to their respective district monasteries.

In the spring, there is a special festival for Kunga Zangpo. Since he passed away at the end of April, the monastery holds a memorial ceremony in his remembrance from April 21 to May 1. While religious austerities are practiced, five tantric mandalas are drawn with colored sand on the floor of the main hall, sutras are read and other traditional services are performed.

On the twenty-fifth of April, from 8:00 AM until noon, a special service is held. Three silk applique tankas with images of the Buddha are hung from the main building in the center of the monastery. The large tankas cover most of the facade of the five story building. A large table with many offerings on it is set up in front of the building. The monks spend this time chanting sutras and many villagers come to circumambulate the monastery. The many lay devotees from the villages who come for the special service bring their tents and camp around the monastery for several days. The monks' families and relatives also come, and the young monks are allowed to visit with their families for a few hours in the afternoon. Many beggars come also because food, meat and tea is given away at large tents set up by the four lama residences. Usually in all about 3,000 people from the small surrounding villages attend the festival.

During the summer months a session is held for bbiiksbus, fully ordained monks who have taken special shila vows. They spend the time from June 15 to August 31 in religious confinement. This exclusive period is called yar nas (sbyar-gnas). Preparation for the yar nas begins on June 10 when all the monks meet to elect a manager and assistant to be in charge of the summer session. The names of the 10 or 15 senior monks are presented and the monks then separate into their residence groups to de-

cide who to vote for. When the manager and assistant are chosen a count of those monks who wish to participate in the yar nas is made. Usually only fifty to sixty monks take part.

During the yar nas the bbiiksbus are together every day and spend their time reading sutras, meditating, studying basic Hinayana and Mahayana philosophy and literature. Rules of fasting are observed and meat is not eaten all summer. Also, nothing is allowed after the main noontime meal except a light soup in the evening before the monks return to their residences to sleep.

The bbiiksbus and the other monks are together only two days a month. On the fifteenth and thirtieth days of the month, the days of the full moon and the new moon, everyone gathers in the main temple for so jong (gso.sbyongs), a confession of sins. The older monks and bbiiksbus line up on the right side and the younger monks on the left so that they are facing one another in pairs. They then tell each other their sins and ask for forgiveness. On August 30, the evening before the religious confinement is ended, the bbiiksbus have a special so jong. They try to recall any of the vows they have broken during the summer. They confess these to the other monks and ask for their forgiveness, and they pray to Shakyamuni. The yar nas is ended on August 31 with a recitation of prayers to end the summer vows.

This is followed by a picnic near the monastery where a tent has been set up with various foods and teas. All the monks gather together and pass the day eating and chatting.

to be continued . . .

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Hiroshi Sonami (orig. Sonam Gyatso) is uniquely suited to describe daily life at Ngor Ewam Choden. Born in 1935 in Lhasa, Tibet, he left home at the age of 6 to begin studies at Ngor Monastery. At the age of 19 he was made General Abbot of the monastery and held that position until the Chinese occupation in 1959. In 1960 he moved to Japan and lived there until his recent arrival in California.
Tibet Today
News of Tibet and Tibetans in the 1970's

NEW HOSTILITY: Systematic and intensive Chinese propaganda has been launched among Tibetan refugees settled in Bhutan and Nepal to return to the 'motherland' closely following the authorities in the two Himalayan kingdoms having virtually declared them "undesirable elements" according to informed sources.

Leaflets being distributed among the refugees in Tibetan language promise friendly reception with gifts, good treatment and better facilities. The Hindustan Standard reports that one such leaflet even predicts that India will soon follow the example of "small neighbors," presumably Bhutan and Nepal, and chase the refugees out of the country.

This sort of Chinese propaganda has been continuing for the last few years but remained at a low level until recently. That it has now been intensified with the help of Tibetan collaborators outside Tibet introduces a new element in what would otherwise have amounted to a usual Chinese stunt.

NEW-TIBET

DALAI LAMA TO LEAD BUDDHIST RESTORATION: A two day Buddhist leaders' conference was held in Darjeeling on May 24 and 25th. The conference was attended by over 200 delegates, scholars, and political leaders from India, Nepal and Bhutan. Besides the Dalai Lama, His Holiness Gyalwa Karmapa, Kazi Lhendup Dorje (Chief Minister of Sikkim), Mr. Siddharta Shaker Ray (Chief Minister of West Bengal) and monks representing the various Buddhist sects in the Himalayan region attended the conference.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama addressing a colorful 20,000 strong crowd said Buddhism has always been deeply rooted in the Himalayan region and it should continue to be so. At the conference the leaders decided to support the "restoration and upliftment of Buddhism in different parts of Asia and Tibet under the spiritual leadership of His Holiness the Dalai Lama."

A communiqué issued by the All India and Himalayan Regional Buddhist Leaders Conference has stressed the necessity for promoting education, secular and religious, in the Himalayan border areas. It decided to open primary and high schools in the remote places, particularly in the backward Buddhist areas. The conference also resolved to establish monasteries in the border areas with a view to propagate Buddha's teachings of love and peace, as well as the eradication of illiteracy.

This was the second visit of the Dalai Lama to the region, the first being in 1956 on his way from Tibet to Bodh Gaya for the celebration of the 2,500 birth anniversary of Buddha.

Tibetan Review

MRS. GANDHI ON TIBET: The vehement Chinese criticism of the recent Indian action in Sikkim has provoked the Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to criticize the Chinese action, though obliquely, in Tibet. It is a distinct departure from her past silence on the subject.

When asked by reporters what she thought of the Sikkim referendum as a "fraud," Mrs. Gandhi replied: "China has been saying many things. They did not say anything when Pakistan moved into Hunza (in occupied Kashmir)." She then went on to ask: "What have they done to Tibet?"

Tibetan Review

CHINA SELLS TIBETAN ANTIQUITIES: According to Moscow Radio Peace and Progress the Chinese authorities in Tibet have traded jewels taken from palaces, temples and monasteries in Tibet to Nepalese businessmen in exchange for commodities. Many Tibetan art objects were used directly as foreign exchange, or were sold in Hong Kong and Macao.

News

TO INDIA: On November 29 Jim Flanagan, one of the main supporters of EWAM CHODEN, left for India. Jim will be staying at the Sakya Center in Rajpur for about three months. He made the trip to study under His Holiness Sakya Trizin, head of the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism, who is giving a special presentation of the Sakya Lam Dras (lam.'bras.chogs.bshad), the core teachings of the school. His Holiness underwent a long period of strict retreat in preparation for giving these teachings, and it pro-
mises to be an auspicious event. Also at Rajpur for these instructions are several other westerners from Sakya centers around the world.

After completing the Lam Dras instructions Jim hopes to accompany His Holiness to Ladakh and receive instructions and initiations there in a collection of Sakya Tantric Saddhanas (sgrub.thaps.kun.btus). Hopefully these instructions will be given in a part of Ladakh that is not off-limits to westerners, and it is quite possible they will be given at Matro Gompa. Our best wishes go with Jim, and we all look forward to his return.

DANCE: The Dance of Tibet, which EWAM CHODEN sponsored on October 23, was a great success. In spite of a delay in the arrival of the costumes, the show when it did get started, went very smoothly. The audience was generally very impressed with the performance, as the unusual music and lavish costumes combined in an atmosphere quite foreign to most westerners. We wish these artists success on the remainder of their world tour.

In connection with the show, thanks go especially to Jim Flanagan who worked singlehandedly for many long weeks arranging the performance and handling all legal, financial, and other details. Without his efforts the show would never have materialized.

Thanks are also due to:
- Lama Kunga Rinpoche who, when the costumes failed to arrive, managed to speak extemporaneously to several thousand people on the nature and origin of Tibetan religious dance.
- The members and friends whose efforts enabled EWAM CHODEN to host the dance troupe on Friday and Saturday, particularly the kitchen and laundry crews.

The Editor and EWAM CHODEN wish to thank all those readers who were kind enough to help cover the production expenses of our last issue of VIRUPA. Lama Kunga has often reiterated that he wishes to continue offering VIRUPA on a free-for-the-asking basis. We would therefore ask that our readers remember nothing can be free without full community support.

THE BENEFITS OF REICITING THE SIX SYLLABLES

Once in a very ancient time, 991 kalpas ago (in Indian cosmology a kalpa is 4,320,000,000 years) there was a planet called "Greatly Exalted Light of Buddha." On that planet there was a being who had attained a very high degree of spiritual development, and who became enlightened. Upon reaching Buddhahood this being, called Avalokitesvara (Tib. spyan.ras.zigs), manifested himself as six
Buddhas, one in each of the six realms of beings, in order to save them all. In the realm of the gods he appears as Thubpa Gyachin (thub.pa.brgya.byin); in the realm of the demi-gods as Thagzangrig (thag.bzang.rig); in the realm of men as Shakya Senge (shakya.senge); in the realm of animals as Senge Ngamtan (senge.ngam.bratan); in the realm of spirits as Namkhajo (nam.mkha'.mo); and in the realm of hell beings as Choky Gyalpo (chos.kyi.rgyal.po). In addition to these manifestations Avalokitesvara also appeared in numerous places as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, arhats, pratyeakabuddhas; as Brahmās, Shivas, nāgas, spirits; as suns, each of the four elements, the sky, birds, deer, boats, bridges—in other words, in all forms which could possibly help other sentient beings.

At one time Buddha Sangye Marpo explained to the Bodhisattva Tribpanamsel (sgrib.ba.rnam.sel) some benefits of repeating the six syllables. Among men and women, sons and daughters, whoever touches by hand or even just sees the six syllables written on walls, rugs, etc. will be reborn only one more time, in a life that will be without suffering and unfortunate karma. Moreover, by repeating or seeing the six syllables just one time the door to rebirth in the three lower realms will be closed. By seeing or repeating them twice, one will be born as a spiritually developed human being, well on the path to enlightenment. By seeing or repeating them three times the three poisons of passion, hatred, and ignorance will be transmuted into the three bodics (kāyas) of Buddha and enlightenment will be attained. Passion will be purified, becoming pure speech, which represents the Nirmānakāya. Hatred will be purified, becoming pure body, which represents the Sambhogakāya. Ignorance will be purified, becoming pure mind, which represents the Dharmakāya.

Therefore we can see how the six syllables contain within themselves all mantras, dhāranīs, and yantras, and are the essence of all the Buddhas. Those beings who meditate on Avalokitesvara and repeat the six syllables, wherever they go and whatever they touch becomes purified. Meditating on Avalokitesvara is equal in energy to studying the 84 different teachings of Buddha. Making an image of Avalokitesvara is also very beneficial. Upon death, the person who has done so will be seized by the Buddhas and taken to Sukhāvatī, the western Paradise. Each of the six syllables protects the sayer from specific types of inner and outer spirits and malfunctions of the body. For example, OM protects the sayer from hot-and-cold diseases, MA from fevers, NI from nervous diseases, PAD from diseases of the lungs, ME from intestinal diseases, and HUM enables the body to expel bile. The six syllables can also subdue impending plagues, fires, starvation, poisoning, war, and uncertain death. It changes the outcome of unfortunate astrological predictions, gives various siddhis (energy) such as longevity, wealth, power, a healthy and wholesome body, success, and removes all other obstructions to the proper development of body, speech and mind.

Each of the six syllables correspond to one of the six paramitas and it is possible to perform the paramitas by reciting the six syllables as follows:

1. By concentrating on benefitting all sentient beings one performs giving.
2. By concentrating on the confession of hidden guilt by self and
others one practices morality.
3. By concentrating with a steadiness of mind and body one de-
velops patience.
4. By keeping a steady mind while reciting the six syllables and
doing prostrations one develops effort.
5. By developing a restful but not idle mind one develops con-
templation.
6. By reciting each of the six syllables distinctly with a clear and
alert mind one gains wisdom.

VISIT TO LADAKH, "LITTLE TIBET"
by: Moke Mokotoff

Moke Mokotoff, EWAM CHODEN's photographer and business-
man-extraordinaire, has been traveling in the remoter parts of India and
recently sent the following story on Ladakh—Ed.

We arrived in Ladakh planning to and least populated province of
stay about two weeks. That was India, but only a dozen or so are in
two months ago and we still have areas where foreign tourists are per-
no definite plans to leave. That is nimated. Fortunately these dozen
comprise the largest and oldest
gompas (monasteries) in Ladakh. We have visited most of these in-
cluding the famous Alchi Gompa
found in c. 1050 AD by Lobsawa
Rinchen Zangpo. Here the art work
was done by artists brought from
Kashmir shortly before the general
extinction of Buddhism in India by
the Muslims. The 15 foot statues of
Rig Sum Gompa (the 3 principle
Bodhisattvas: Avalokitesvara, Man-
jusri, and Vajrapani) and the amaz-
ingly intricate and fluid frescoes of
buddhas, bodhisattvas, and siddhas
make up a most interesting example
of Buddhist art. Here one can see
the ancient Indian iconography and
composition from which Tibetan
art draws much of its inspiration.

We were guests of Dungtse
Rinpoche, the senior meditation
tutor of the Drukpa Kagyuutpa and
son of the tenth Drukchen, at
Hemis Gompa. Dungtse Rinpoche,
whose gompa is in Darjeeling, is a
most revered personage here in
Ladakh and is presently a guest of
the local government. Hemis is the
most famous Ladakhi gompa, ac-
cording to western sources. This is
because the Hemis tulku in previous
times had the highest political rank
of any lama in Ladakh. The present
tulku was undergoing education in
Lhasa as a young boy when he was
captured by the Chinese in 1959.
So Hemis is now without an abbot
and the general maintenance of the
place is beginning to bear the signs
of the lack of leadership. Hemis
also has received a great deal of
attention in western publications
such as National Geographic be-
cause it is the only gompa that
holds its "mela" (yearly festival) at
a time when the climate is suitable
for western journalists. Part of
Ladakh is the second coldest place
on the planet and the average
winter temperature in Leh, the
capital, is 35° below zero!

Our longest and most impressive
stay has been at Matro Gompa, the
only major Saky Gompa in
Ladakh. Matro Gompa is 450 years
old and is presently headed by
Ludig Ken Rinpoche, a previous
abbot of Ngor Monastery, Tibet.
Comprised of 64 monks, Ladakhi as
well as refugees from Ngor, Matro is
the only monastery we have seen
where new works are being insti-
tuted. For instance, for the past
two years a new main temple has
been under construction and is now
nearing completion. Instead of the
fresco technique usually utilized in
gompas this new temple has a series
of ten foot tankas (paintings) done
on linen and framed onto the wall
behind clear plastic. This technique
was devised by Ken Rinpoche to
limit the water damage and color
fading that is common in most
Himalayan temples. Two master
painters brought from a Sakya

Matro Gompa, seen from the
village of Matro

Practicing Tibetan calligraphy
monastery in Bir, India, have been laboring for two years painting and decorating this new temple. We are told by the Tibetan refugee monks here that the monasteries and villages in Tibet were the same as this except in Tibet the monasteries were larger. One of the most impressive aspects of the lifestyle here in the monastery is the ecology of the community. Nothing is wasted and ingenious methods have been devised for the re-utilization of wastes. For instance, the run-off water from the small water tank used for washing is directed down a wood pipe onto the ground below where it nourishes a recently planted chu shing (water tree), a very straight-growing tree indigenous to Ladakh.

The monastery is supported by the village of Matro and the local people seem to be happy to do work for the monastic community. Every day a half dozen villagers would trek up the steep path to the monastery bringing offerings of food, water, and cow dung for winter heating. At this time the monastery is supporting a number of young monks, ages 5 through 12, and is experiencing some trouble in doing so. All of the young monks are in need of further financial support to provide additional food, clothing, and fuel and thereby enable them to continue their studies. Any readers interested in making a monthly pledge to help support one of these monks, or help provide necessities for the group should contact the Tibetan Relief Fund, 254 Cambridge Ave., Kensington, CA 94708.

Wise men are able to remove evils while fools cannot; Venomous serpents are slain by eagles and not by crows.

So long as a wise man is not sought out and his acquaintance made, his depths remain unfathomed. Until a drum has been beaten with a stick, what difference exists between it and others?