

Saraswati Bhawan

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Summer 2006 Sangha Newsletter

Welcome to the 2nd edition!

The Saraswati Bhawan Newsletter is a tri-annual communication instrument for Acharya Dawa Chhödak Rinpoche's worldwide sangha.

It is dedicated to the dharma activities of all of the precious teachers, and their disciples.

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Leaving Home

Sophie Greenewalt

I'm not sure when I first noticed that I want to learn Tibetan, but I remember sitting at the Sechen guest house in Nepal with Tim Clark and Charlie Thomas talking about Tibetan Buddhism in America and Chogyam Trungpa and Chagdud Tulku and the 80s; the decade when I was born. Their memories were like a history lesson for me. It was inspiring to be with practitioners who have been around for a while. At one point Tim said how helpful it would be to know Tibetan and that he wished he had learned it. In that moment some determination grew in me and I decided to learn Tibetan while I have the chance. Later on I met some students from America who were studying Tibetan language and Buddhist philosophy at Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche's Shedra, which is a program at his monastery for
(cont'd pg. 6)



Kathmandu Dusk

In This Issue

"Leaving Home".....	cover
Golok Ser-Tang Rinpoche.....	2
Stages of the Yogi (pt. 2).....	3
Dharma Dates	5
Sangha forum	7
Sangha news	10
Forum (cont'd): Meril Dunn.....	11



Golok Ser-tang Rinpoche

from Saraswati Bhawan archives

(photo and text reprinted with permission)

Golok Ser-tang Rinpoche (1891-1963) was one of the greatest living Ngakpas of the last century. He was a Mahasiddha from the Dudjom lineage who was particularly known for his accomplishments in the Troma Chod. His life was a perfect example of the Ngakpa tradition that once flourished throughout the Himalayas.

Sertang Rinpoche lead a wandering community of sixty yogi and yogini families throughout Tibet, Nepal, and North India. They occupied caves along the mountainside and went to the local villages to beg for their food. They spent their lives practicing in the holy places, charnel grounds and snow peaked mountains, enduring the hardships of weather, famine and homelessness. The children were expected to participate in the rituals, were taught to read and recite prayers and mantras, and helped gather food and water. Some who had talent were taught thanka painting, sculpting or calligraphy.

Sertang Rinpoche was Lama Dawa's father's Root Guru, and was the one who recognized and named Lama Dawa Rinpoche when he was first born (see his bio. on www.SaraswatiBhawan.org). When Lama Dawa was a boy, his father took him and his family to wander with Sertang Rinpoche's community when they were traveling through the remote border areas of Tibet and Nepal. Lama Dawa recalls how Sertang Rinpoche would create springs of water in areas that were completely arid. He became famous through the northern are of Nepal as the 'Pani Lama' – water Lama, who created water in drought-stricken regions of the mountains. He convinced the local Hindu temples to cease their practice of animal sacrifice. He established many groups of Chod practitioners among the Nepalese, and became one of the royal Gurus for the King of Nepal. These groups of Chod practitioners are still active in the Kathmandu valley and can be seen performing their sacred feasts in the dakini spots and charnel grounds.

Lama Dawa remembers one particularly cold winter, when a hard blizzard came and the community became snowbound. The only food they had was to eat the tormas they had made



after the rituals were completed. When the blizzard ceased, Lama Dawa's mother and one other woman trudged through the snow to find a nearby village and beg for food. They wore sheep leather bags on their feet, which went up to their knees, and carried a long staff and large baskets strapped to their backs. No one knew when (or if) they would return. Eventually they came back and the community cooked soup from the food they had collected.

(contributed by Kunzang Dechen Chödrön)

**Stages of the Yogi's (Ngakpa) Training
According to the
Buddhist Tantric Tradition
Part Two of Three**

**Ngak- Tsog Stage – Generation
Stage (Kye-Rim) practices
Three levels**

- a. Ngak- tsog nam-lam chung
- b. Ngak-tsog lam -ding
- c. Ngak-tsog la-nam chen-po

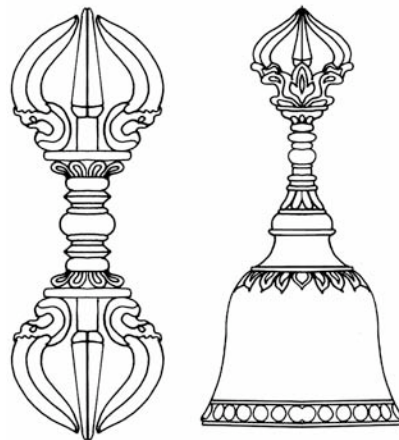
The practitioner is now moving in the Path of Collecting Merit or virtue. Practices includes *Ngondro* and the *Three Roots* recitation of the Lama, Dakini and Yidam, according to their lineage. This is traditionally completed in a three-year retreat, or a series of short retreats; either case being done under the supervision of the Root Guru or a qualified retreat master.

Preliminary Practice

- a. *Four Thoughts That Turn the Mind Towards the Dharma*
- b. *Extraordinary Refuge*, 100,000 prostrations
- c. *Bodhicitta Practice*; 100,000 recitations
- d. *Vajrasattva Practice* for purification; 100,000 recitations
- e. *Mandala Offerings* to accumulate ordinary and special merit; 100,000
- f. *Guru Yoga*; 100,000

Three Roots: Kye-Rim; Generation Stage (according to the Dudjom tersar)

- a. *Yeshe Tsogyal Dakini Practice*,
Nyen-pa: recitation. One to six months retreat. Or 1,500,000 recitations. *Or until you get the correct signs of achievement.*
Drub-pa: One to six months retreat, or 1,500,000 recitations or until you get signs.



Ley-shi: four activity mantras; 425,000 recitations each activity mantra. If you want to focus on one particular activity, need to recite many more of that mantra.

Jin-sek or Fire Puja

b. *Lake Born Vajra Padmasambhava Practice*

Nyen-pa, Drub-pa, Ley-zhi, Jin-sek

c. *Vajrakilaya Practice*

Nyen-pa, Drub-pa, Medlay (Activities)

Practices at this level are done to increase the two accumulations. This prepares and makes a solid base for further spiritual practices and development. This is the stage where most practitioners are hung up – they have not finished *Ngondro* or begun the practice of the Lama, Yidam and Dakini. Therefore, it will be impossible to move to the next stage of “applying siddhi or the generosity of Giving Dharma, according to the *Bodhisattva Paths*” A practitioner who has not completed these practices will not have enough siddhis to accomplish activity ceremonies such as *P’howa*, smoke offerings, offerings for the dead, hungry ghosts, elemental spirits, reversal of negative energies, healing ceremonies, purification rites, exorcisms, ceremonies to increase wealth, *lung-ta*, etc.,

cont’d page 4

(Stages: cont'd from pg. 3)

ceremonies to increase wealth, lung-ta, etc., or making amulets, protection cords, ngag-chu, etc., etc. If a practitioner engages in such activities before completing Ngondro and the Three Roots practices, they are only putting on a show which will have no real result. There are plenty of these 'artificial Lamas', so beware!

According to Patrul Rinpoche's "Words of My Perfect Teacher, under the chapter of Bodhicitta and the Generosity of Giving Dharma 2.1.2:

"To give empowerments, explanations of Dharma, transmissions of texts, etc. when one's own selfish desires have not yet disappeared would be nothing but a show. When Atisa's disciples asked him when they might be able to teach others, work for other's benefit by performing Phowa, etc., his response was:

"You may guide others once you have realized emptiness and developed clairvoyance. You may work for their benefit once for your own benefit there is no more left to do.

You may perform P'howa once you have entered the Path of Seeing."

He also said:

" This degenerate time is no time for boasting. It is a time for arousing determination.

This is no time for holding high positions, it is a time for keeping to a humble place.

This is no time for having attendants and disciples, it is a time for living in solitude.

This is no time for taking care of disciples, it is a time for taking care of yourself.

This is no time for analyzing the words, it is a time for reflecting on the meaning.

This is no time for being out and about, it is a time for staying in one place."

Patrul Rinpoche goes on to explain in the text, "It is useless for a beginner with neither experiences nor realization to try to help others with the Dharma. No blessings can be obtained from him, just as nothing can be poured out of an empty vessel. His instructions would be insipid and without substance, like beer brewed without pressing the grains....This decadent age is therefore not a time for ordinary beings to help others externally, but rather a time for them to live in solitary places and train their own minds in the love and compassion of bodhicitta. It is a time to keep away from negative emotions. While a precious medicinal tree is still just a shoot it is not yet time to pick it, it is the time to protect it.

For these reasons it is quite difficult to really make the gift of Dharma to others. To expound a teaching to others without having experienced it oneself will not help them at all. As for acquiring offerings and wealth by teaching Dharma, that is what Padampa Sangye called, "Using the Dharma as merchandise to get rich."

Until you have overcome wanting anything for yourself, it would be better not to rush into altruistic activities. When your own selfish desires have been exhausted, the time will have to come to devote yourself entirely to others, without concern for your own peace and happiness and without relaxing your efforts for an instant."

(Stages: cont'd from pg. 4)

A practitioner at this level will have committed to a particular Path – according to the Guru and the lineage. They do not jump around, doing a little of this practice and a little of that, going to every empowerment by every Lama that comes to town. They are very focused on ONE lineage and practice, and have the perseverance to complete it before moving on. They are faithful to the path the lama has laid out for them and have confidence in it's effectiveness.

There are many signs of accomplishment that the practitioner will exhibit and that are verified by the Guru. If the practitioner is practicing correctly, miraculous signs often appear during retreat. In addition, the practitioner can demonstrate certain abilities and the diminishing of course emotional behaviors is seen by others. In other words, one should have less anger, less pride, less jealousy, etc. The practitioner will feel more inner peace, more self-confidence, and more devotion to the lineage and the Guru who is the source of the teachings.

This completes the First Stage: Accumulation and Purification.

This is Maha Yoga Level – the Nirmanakaya.

Part Three of Three - Next Issue:

Jor Lam Stage –

Completion Stage (Dzog-Rim) practices

Three levels:

Applying Siddhis for Performing Activities in the world to benefit beings.

“They’ll respect latos.”

“Working for their summer enjoyment”

“Naga’s collecting seeds”

“Taking Essence of Greens”

Naga Days	
June 1	3*
5	3
6	1
10	1
15	2
16	3
17	1
18	1
19	3
20	1
23	1
24	1
25	3
July 9	2
11	3
13	1
14	1
15	1
16	1
18	2
20	2
22	1
29	1
Aug. 2	3
9	3
11	1
12	1
18	3
22	3
23	3
24	4
28	1
Sept 4	4
8	2
9	1
11	3
12	1
13	4
14	3
15	4



Dharma Dates

Holy Days

Buddha’s Birth	June 3
Saga Dawa	June 11
Guru Rinpoche and H.H. Dalai Lama birth	July 6
Chökhör Düchen	July 29
Solar Eclipse	Sept. 22
<i>(link to iCal for Dakini, Guru days?)</i>	

Baden Days

(No prayer flags, sang, or tashi segpa, etc.)

June	9
July	17
Aug.	1
Aug.	13
Aug.	27
Sept.	8
Sept.	23

**Without going into more detail, the numbers after the Naga days indicate the relative degree of benefit of doing Naga puja on that day. Note: A date with a “1” next to it is more neutral, and Rinpoche says it’s better not to do naga puja then.*

Dates may not necessarily correlate with Rigpa and other calendars. Rinpoche transmitted this to Kunzang Dechen Chodron and Dechen Drolkar, Oct. 2005.

(Home, cont'd from front page)

for English speaking students. They lived in a nice apartment with a small yard and they each had their own room with their laptops and cool music. It was like visiting my friends' college apartments only this one was in the middle of Kathmandu. I soon began to pepper them with questions about Tibetan class. It is hard, of course. I could see that they studied a lot, but they seemed content and I got along well with them.

I bought the Tibetan book that they use at the Shedra and attempted to begin on my own. It was fun learning to write the alphabet, but with no cd player I couldn't listen to the pronunciation. In Parphing I met a young nun who was very friendly and spoke English well. I asked her if she would help me learn Tibetan. She agreed, but only showed up one time for our meetings.

A few weeks later I returned to the States where I worked for a month in the vegetable garden at Karne Choling, a retreat center in Barnet, Vermont. I loved living with the staff and program participants. It was comforting to be surrounded by a Buddhist community and months after I left I realized how much I missed it.

When my time at Karne Choling ended I went back to Addison County, the area in Vermont where I grew up, I enrolled at Vermont College thinking I would try to get a bachelors degree and teachers license. Got to start doing something with my life, right? I was trying to do what "makes sense"; living in an apartment in a little town, working as a substitute teacher, visiting my family that I adore, and spending time with my boyfriend. Soon I realized I was unhappy.

One day I started crying thinking about how I missed living in a Buddhist community and how I wished all my efforts could be going into my practice and studies

rather than being spread out in places that fail to hold my interest. I knew that I had to come up with a new plan, but I had no idea what it would be.

A couple days later I was looking at Lama Dawa's web site when I noticed the on-line divination section. I thought a divination might help me figure out what to do next so I asked where I should go to learn Tibetan and study Buddhism. The reply said that Chokyi Nyima's Shedra is a good place for me. I was surprised. I had not thought of leaving the country, but at the same time it seemed obvious.

Within the next few months I applied and was accepted to a four-year program at the Shedra that begins in August. I will study Tibetan language and possibly Sanskrit as well as go to philosophy classes taught by the resident khenpos. I will live somewhere in Boudhanath which is where the monastery is located.

I know I will miss my family and Vermont, but I am bound to leave them at some point and this seems like the right time. I feel very lucky to have this opportunity and hope I will be able to use it well.

(Sophie Greenewalt has been studying with Lama Dawa for several years, and was at the 2005 Tse Chu in Boudnath, Nepal. She did retreat at the Asura Caves in Parphing - outside of Kathmandu. (See the Sangha photo page.)



Sophie (background) at Tse Chu, 2005

Sangha

for your contemplation Forum



renunciation

True renunciation is attained non-conceptually, and is a result of practice, with devotion to one's Guru, confidence in the karmic law of cause and effect, and faithful following of any / all of the Three Vows. With such supports to ordinary renunciation, one removes (in a fashion related to their own intrinsic and extrinsic abilities) the Two Obscurations, and has a complete understanding of the nature of dualism - including attachment and aversion.

(Please use authentic texts as listed below, and your Guru, to aid in contemplation.)

"To enter the path of the Dharma, it is not enough to adopt its outer appearances. We have to sever all ties to desirable things and to activities limited to this life. Without severing these ties, we may enter once the door of Dharma with an inconsistent mind, retaining some attachment towards our native land, property, intimates, relatives, friends, and so on; but then, this mind of attachment, creating the root cause, and the objects of attachment, providing the circumstantial causes, will be joined together by Mara as the obstacles. Becoming involved again with common worldliness, our destiny will regress.

Therefore, giving less importance to food, clothing and mere talk, without clinging to the eight worldly concerns, we should one-pointedly focus our mind on the Dharma. Otherwise, Dharma mixed with the eight worldly concerns is extremely dangerous, like food mixed with poison.

The eight worldly dharmas can be condensed into hope and fear, which basically mean attachment and aversion. Internal attachment and aversion take the outward disguise of the demons Senmo and Gyalpo. As long as you are not free from attachment and aversion you cannot get away from Senmo and Gyalpo, and obstacles will not cease. So, is there any conceited attachment to the things of this life and to the eight worldly concerns in your innermost thoughts? Examining yourself again and again, you should be diligent in giving up these defects. To retain these eight worldly dharmas in your nature and adopt an artificially religious exterior to deceitfully obtain whatever you require is a wrong way of life."

H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche, 'Extracting the Quintessence of Accomplishment'

"Not to keep yourself from evil actions
Is to have no pratimoksha
Not to work for others' welfare
Is to have no bodhicitta.
Not to master pure perception
Is to have no Secret Mantra.
If illusions don't collapse,
There is no realization.....

...Those who have a sense of shame are careful
how they act;
Careful in their actions, they are self-possessed;
Self-possessed, they keep their vows and pledges;
Keeping vows and pledges, they will have
accomplishment."

H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche 'Counsels from my Heart'

" Without fettering with the rope of addiction to what aids renunciation, the free and unrestrained procession of what is free in its rising, vision, perfect as a great surge, is preserved in its wide openness, and the world of appearance, perfect in its great creativity, rises as Dharmakaya."

and...

" Fools hate the world and seek nirvana, but never reach it. Having cast away the real jewel, they take up some substance that has to be cleaned, and when they have removed the dirt, they have merely found a glass trinket.

*Longchenpa
'Chönyid Rangdrol' or 'Natural Freedom of Mind'*

more Forum

Sealed

A scorpion secret
landed between my breasts
to reside in hiding, protective and warm.

A brush stroke pierced my heart,
and touched the scorpion,
awakening this dormant, pensive energy.

A double seal
has been evoked
within my being,
binding my fate
to follow these blessings.

The way is still unclear to me
but the path well laid out at my feet.
Moving forward with confidence
in these blessings alone
I move into the unknown
as I am going home.

Champa Chödrön

For Lama Dawa

Tear drops rain drops
Mingle into snow
Flakes of rainbow light
Illuminating-reflecting
In oceans of sound.
Prisms trapped on airplane wings
Soaring into the skies
Proclaiming a brilliance
Vast and strong
Yet ignored in common day light.

They call this the cry of a lion,
I call it a heart song,
Song of beauty and
Tenderized love
Gently beaten with golden mallets
Laughing within the soft center of sadness
This cries out into the night
Above the hushed silence of starkness.

My path revealed
In hues of blue, gold, red and white;
Reflections of a moment
Recognition at the core of my being
Knowing, deep enough to evoke a tear drop
In the form of a rainbow
Sparkling as the glint in your eye,
You smile at me
Through the eyes of another.

Champa Chödrön

Memory

Sitting by the screen door
parted briefly with the wind...

..Was that a memory I smelled,
a trick of deluded lifetimes?

It's gone.

Dechen D.

About my addiction to Dharma practice

I have been practicing Ngondro since 2001. Since the beginning I set up my mind to finish this preliminary practice despite the great number of accumulations it requires. I never felt that this was going to be hard, painful, or impossible to accomplish. I guess this attitude helped me to get started without delay.

During these years I have been through a slow process of understanding and feeling Dharma. Since the first year I started enjoying my daily practice because of what I was feeling. It felt like going back home. When I began, I was alone and had nobody to ask advice or instructions from, so I read at least a couple of times *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* by Patrul Rinpoche, *Ngondro Commentary* by Jane Tromge, and *Guru Yoga* by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, as support for reflections, contemplations, and visualizations. I understood the importance of taking my practice seriously and decided to spend as much time as needed to carefully do all the required stages. Since that time, my practice has extended for more than two hours.

More and more I have understand the different stages or sections of the practice, so the impression that Dharma is alive has been increasing. During these years, teachings received by Lama Dawa Rinpoche have clarified doubts and enlarged the motivation, from doing it for my own benefit, to doing it for the benefit of all sentient beings. So I have learned that I am not all that important. What is important is what I can accomplish for all those who can't do the practice at this moment and are suffering.

I don't get up every morning to do my practice just to increase the number of accumulations, although I keep track of them. I get up early because I want to help release the suffering of all sentient beings before going to my office to do my ordinary work. I can only do this spiritual work while I am alive, so I better hurry up because I don't know until when I will be around, and there is a lot of suffering everywhere. This is my real motivation.

I have become addicted to Dharma practice because it takes me to a luminous space where everything is all right. Nothing is needed, nothing is missing. I feel relaxed and joyful. There is no time, so there is no hurry. I want this feeling to persist, so I extend my practice as much as possible. As a complement, I repeat mantras during the day, read Dharma books before going to sleep, and get up early the next day to start a new cycle. Without being aware of, Dharma is taking over my life!!

I have also noticed that what I experience during practice has nothing to do with the number of accumulations I did that morning. My experience is profound, spiritual. It can never be reflected in the number I write down in my copybook every day. So this is another good reason for not having accumulations as the focus of my practice.

So yes, I confess that I have become addicted to Dharma. My addiction seems to be increasing without remedy. Through Dharma practice I have found the same peace and joy that others find in drugs or alcohol. Dharma has the advantage of being free, while a lot of money is spend in drugs and alcohol. Not only that, but the side effects are completely different. While alcohol and drugs can lead to sickness, destruction and death, Dharma makes life worth living, through the development of love and compassion for the benefit of others.

So, for all the benefit that Dharma brings to one's life, I think that everybody should give it a try!!



Rinpoche and El Centro students

Sangha News

(send your photos/news for next edition to editor@saraswatibhawan.org)

Ananda exclaimed to Lord Buddha that half the spiritual life consists of spiritual friendship, or friendship with what is lovely. The Buddha replied, 'Say not so Ananda. Say not so. It is the whole, not the half of the spiritual life.'



from Sophie's Parping abode

Movers:

Dawa Chhödak Rinpoche and Kunzang Dechö:
to *Amana Colonies, Iowa*

Allan Ma: Now living and practicing (Buddhism, and Law)
in *New York City*

Sophie Greenewalt: to *Kathmandu* this August

Charles Pitetti: to *Bangalore, India* for 1 year of study



Vermont Tsog Lu: Dakas vs. Dakinis



from Kunzang Decho

Losar/Tse Chu 2004

Check it out!!

Edible playdough: (i.e. non-toxic for whatever critters are eating it) for torma! Sophie and Dechen have tried it, and it works great. They even make white now per our request.

<http://stores.ebay.com/Earths-Treasures>

more Forum

Remembering Meril Dunn

Excerpted from Dechen Drolkar's email letter to Dawa Chhödak Rinpoche and Kunzang Dechen Chödrön shortly after Meril's death in 2004.

Dearest Lama Dawa Rinpoche and Kunzang Dechö:

I'm writing from our mountain gumpa, looking at the mountain - the mountain with the presence of the Three Roots. I've just returned from Maryland, and wanted to share some of my experience with you, partly because you were so strongly present, and partly because I hope that it might be useful.

I have had the great fortune to be with many people as they pass through death. I have had the great fortune to receive Dharma teachings about death, and to be able to share teachings by founding and coordinating a mindfulness based Hospice in a community where I worked.

I have never witnessed a death such as Meril's. From the moment I arrived in his room in the hospital,

and continuing now in these moments, I experienced Meril's process as incredibly Clear, Stable, Purposeful, Relaxed, Determined, One Focused, Unwavering: I believe I was in the presence of Ma Gumpa Sangye.

I had very much wanted to come be with him, but hadn't wanted to interfere with family, etc. The message to go kept coming to me strongly, so I went. He was asleep, or something, when I arrived in his room at 11pm (from the airport). I was sitting quietly there in the dark room when the respiratory therapist woke him up for a treatment. He watched me until the RT left, and gave me a huge smile around the ventilator tubes that filled his mouth. I just sat with him for several hours, holding his hand, sometimes looking at each other, and then just being there (not touching him).

His consciousness was still very much there with him, and in the room. He appeared comfortable, said he didn't need any more morphine at that time. I adjusted the pillow to keep his heels off the bed, and after getting permission, briefly gave Reiki to his feet (in particular bubbling stream). Within a few moments, I could feel energy passing through him similar to my Kundalini awakening - being plugged into a cosmic wall socket. He had minor Kriya at first, and then it felt completely clear and I stopped shortly thereafter.

I asked if he wanted to listen to Lama Dawa chanting, and he said yes. I played him Lama chanting the Dudjom Tersar Phowa (just through the visualization part) with me chanting softly along, starting with Calling the Lama from Afar. He looked like he had a few tears, and then just rested quietly. I stayed for an hour or so longer.

The next day was a day for goodbyes - mostly family, and a number of sangha members. Meril was alert. The night before the family had decided not to take him off life support, but then that late afternoon, decided that they should (that was when I phoned you, after the family contacted us with that information. I'm not sure who the email you got was from, but it probably came from information someone had gotten the day before). During that day, sangha stayed in a room down the hall meditating and saying many many prayers and mantras, while the family (Meril's mother, sister, brother, ex-wife and Ian and Andrew, and his boss Chris) stayed with Meril. I spent a little time with him and asked if he would like more Reiki. He said no - and it made complete sense. He was ready, and already moving beyond that level of manifestation of his body.

When it was decided to remove the ventilator from Meril, Meril requested that 4 people be present in the room with him - Lama Gyaltshen from TMC, Linda Hilliker, Sharon Perkinson, and myself. The ventilator was disconnected at 10:30 pm our time, without difficulty. Meril appeared to have consciousness to this world for about an hour after that.

Lama, Linda, Sharon and I stayed in the room and prayed - Amitabha prayer/mantras, Copper Mountain prayer.....at one point Lama asked us to join him in a Bardo prayer. During the prayer, Meril suddenly lifted his right arm and gave us a waving motion, as a traffic control would wave to get someone to slow down. We were near the end of the prayer, so we finished, and then just sat quietly with him. I'm not sure what the hand motion was, but I

believe he was telling us that he was fine, he was clear about what he "needed to do" (words are so inadequate)...I think you know what I'm trying to say. From that point we concentrated on the prayers/mantras, and keeping the supportive container around him strong so that he would not be disturbed.

Meril - Meril's body - kept breathing through the night while we and his family stayed with him, through the next day, through the next night, until 3am. The hospital staff were incredibly accomodating, even with practices that didn't fit their protocol or understanding. One night nurse was upset when I suggested to the family that his IV fluids should be discontinued with the ventilator, but understood when I explained the physiology of dying/hypoxemia. The doctor gave the order, and she continued to be very caring of Meril's process and the family.

At one point Meril had to be moved because the ICU was full and another patient in the ED that needed to be there. We asked that he be moved while he was still alive, that it could be more difficult for him the closer he was to the moment of death. On the new floor, once again the staff was very accomodating, asked very appropriate and caring questions, and otherwise just left us alone. During the move, Linda and I noticed a very different odor emanating from Meril's body - I can't even describe it; it was nothing like any odor I've smelled from a dying person.

We were all in the room with Meril again when at the same time several of us realized that we shouldn't be in there with him. Lesly (ex-wife) verbalized it, and we left....Meril had said that he wanted to die alone in a cave in Nepal. We had a gatekeeper at his door, the nurse would go in briefly to check him periodically and see if it looked like morphine would be helpful. After a while Linda and I went back to my hotel room to wait (it was 11pm, and we'd had no sleep for a couple of days), slept for two hours, and awoke to Sharon telling us he had left. I called you immediately after receiving that call.

One other interesting note - the nurse caring for Meril at the time of his death was an Indian woman named "Pushpa".

One of the most powerful things about this experience for me was recognizing the perfection of the Mandala, it's wisdom, it's everpresence, connecting all of us. It seemed as though there was no distance at all between Maryland and Nepal - Lama Dawa, Kunzang, Rinpoche...all of you practicing and holding Meril in that strong container as well...I felt you so strongly. Meril even kept looking more and more like Lama Dawa than he already did. His yogi energy was very strong.

The Mandala - that included this strong and beautiful threesome of Sharon, Linda and I as midwives for his spiritual process. Each of us represented the same, and slightly different aspects of Meril,

and could assist in different and perfect ways. When we left the hospital after he died, immediately there were three ravens flying overhead and calling out.....

Dechen Drolkar

Editor's note:

While searching the web for Meril's obituary, I discovered this snapshot of Meril's mind (bold format mine):

....."While sifting through mud, muck, silt and dirt in rainy, snowy and cold weather, Dunn and his colleagues found scores of artifacts giving us a glimpse at Colonial life in Chesapeake during the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

One of Dunn's most amazing discoveries would have eluded any other untrained eye.

He found a few specks of gold filigree, that probably came off some local's expensive coat or dress. We're talking specks here, not huge deposits of gold. These were tiny traces of the shiny stuff, uncovered in gross mud and clay.

"I guess it's a kind of archaeological reflex," Dunn said in a matter-of-fact manner. "We constantly keep our eyes open for whatever may pop up."

Dunn said he was busy digging when he spotted a slight glint of gold in all the mucky gray and red clay.

"You develop a sense to notice unusual things like that, no matter how small," he said.

Mr. Meril Dunn Jr.

Mr. Meril Lee Dunn Jr., 55, of Frederick, died Sunday, Feb. 29 (2004) at Frederick Memorial Hospital.

Born Aug. 10, 1948, in Laurel, Del., he was the son of the late Meril Lee Dunn Sr. and of Madeline Dryer Arnold Dunn of Laurel, Del.

He was an archeologist and logistics manager at R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates Inc. of Frederick, where he worked for the past 10 years.

A professional archeologist, Mr. Dunn conducted numerous archeological projects around the United States, including the excavations at the Birely Tannery in Frederick, archeological survey for the Buckeystown Sewer Interceptor project, and archeological study for the Harvey Point Defense Training Activity, in Virginia. He also is remembered for his work in Burkittsville in 2001.

He served for years as an archeologist with the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control. A recognized expert in the archeology of the Delmarva Peninsula, he was widely published in both prehistoric and historic sites archeology.

He also was renowned as a model maker, and his 1/48th-scale model of the 1798



brigantine HMS DeBraak, which sank in the Atlantic, is on display at the Delaware State Museum. His model of the 1st and 3rd Delaware Regiments at the Battle of Antietam is on display at the Fort Delaware Museum.

He was a devoted Tibetan Buddhist monk and Ngagpa teacher of the beloved Sangha; his remains will repose in Nepal.

Mr. Dunn was a graduate of St. Paul's Episcopal School for Boys in Bartonsville, of The American University, and of the Defense Language Institute.

A veteran of the U.S. Army, he served with the U.S. Army Security Agency from 1967-1971 in Southeast Asia. Fluent in Mandarin Chinese and in numerous other Asian languages, he was among the first forward-based analysts to detect the Tet Offensive

through language intercepts and air photo data.

He was a third generation, life member of the American Legion Post 19 in Laurel, Del.

In addition to his mother, he leaves his two sons, HM3 Ian Flemming-Dunn, U.S. Navy, of San Diego, and Andrew Flemming-Dunn of Frederick. He is survived by his sister, Madeline Elizabeth Dunn of Dover, Del.; and his brother, Michael James Dunn of Laurel, Del.

A memorial reception will be held at the offices of R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates Inc., 241 E. Fourth St., in Frederick, Thursday, March 4 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Saraswati Bhawan Newsletter

Please print and share

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(photos, articles/essays, letters, questions, corrections...single spaced)

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