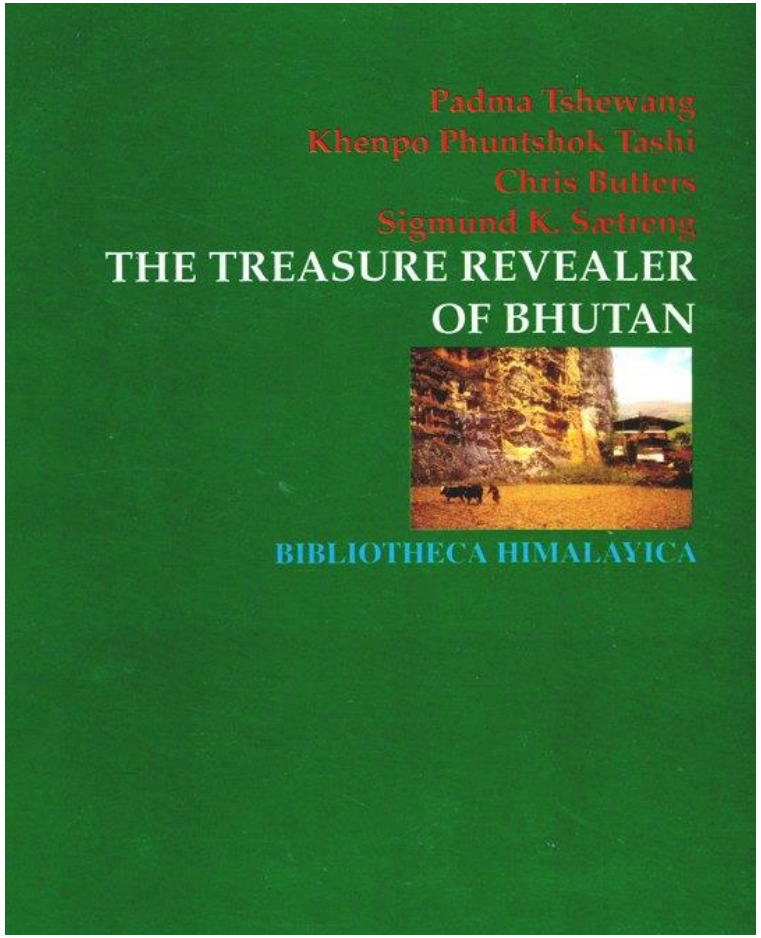
Bhutan, 1987-1998, publications - Chris Butters

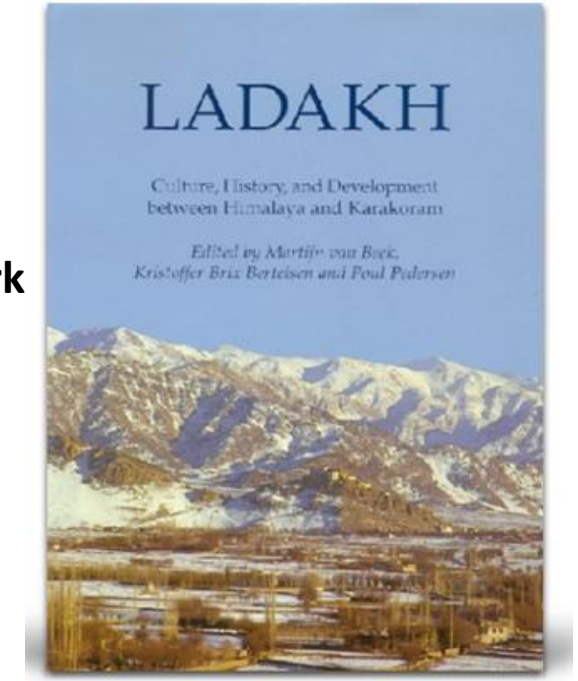


A book about Bhutan's great saint, Pemalingpa and the «Terma» tradition of hidden spiritual treasures or revelations.

Published by Bibliotheca Himalayica, Kathmandu 1995.

Book chapter (with John Bray) about Jamgon Ngawang Gyaltshen.

Published by Aarhus University Press Denmark 1997



An Eighteenth Century Bhutanese Lama's Journey to Ladakh

John Bray and Chris Butters

Jamgon Ngawang Gyaltshen was a senior Drukpa Kagyu (*'Brug pa bka'rgyud*) lama from Bhutan who visited Ladakh in the early years of the eighteenth century during the reign of King Nyima Namgyal. His visit helped reinforce existing links between the two kingdoms. This account of Ngawang Gyaltshen's travels in Ladakh is based on his biography, a copy of which survives in the National Library of Bhutan in Thimphu.

Bhutan, 1987-1998, Chris Butters

File name: Lhasetsangma Chris Butters National Library of Bhutan 1992

LHASETSANGMA

bod rje mnga' bdag khri ral pa can gyi sku mched lha sras gtsang ma'i gdung brgyud 'phel rabs dang 'bangs kyi mi rabs mched khungs lo rgyus gsal ba'i sgron me

-

Translation by: Khenpo Phuntshok Tashi and Chris Butters

Translators' Note:

The following is a brief summary of the contents of this book compiled by Dasho Tenzin Dorje of Tashigang:
Invocation (page 2).
Chapter 1 (pages 3-6): legends relating to the origin of the Yarlung dynasty and events in the time of Langdarma, including the story of the few monks who kept alive the Dharma during the suppression of Buddhism in Tibet.
Chapter 2 (pages 7-19): the story of Langdarma's brother, Lhasetsangma, his moving from Tibet to Bhutan and the various lines of his descendants in Bhutan.
Chapter 3 (pages 20-23): the Bumthang Dezhi Dung families and their descendants.
Chapter 4 (pages 24-25): the families of eastern Bhutan descended from Lhalung Palgyi Dorje and the clan of Zhal-Ngo Khenpo.
Chapter 5 (pages 26-27): explanation of the classes and clans of Lho-Mon.
Chapter 6 (pages 28-31): other descriptions, including the descendants of King Zhitritsenpo in Bhutan; and some notes on sources.
Colophon (page 32).

This translation should be considered as rough only. In many cases, names and place names are recorded according to old spellings and are hard to identify. Other parts are unclear. Some modern equivalents, and other notes by us, are given in brackets. This work deserves further research, especially since few such sources exist for Bhutanese history.

The work by Wagindra known in short as the rGyal-rigs, on which Tenzin Dorje draws most heavily, comprises about 85% of the present text. It is quoted directly. It has been translated previously by M.Aris, and Tashi Tshering of LTWA informs us that the Chinese have also recently published a version of the text. But in the original, the work is unclear in many places. There are many differences with MA, who got his copy from the author. MA's work has important notes, but some parts of the copy he obtained were unclear or missing.

Major textual and interpretation differences between the texts of TD and MA are noted, in footnotes. No attempt has been made to correct minor spelling mistakes and orthographic discrepancies. Our translation, though rough only, may be useful as a direct rendition of TD's collated work. The versions need to be compared, and also then supplemented by considerably more background research.

Thimphu, September 1992 KPT and CB

EXPLANATION OF THE NEW KHAMSUM YULEY NAMGYAL CHORTEN IN YERPA, PUNAKHA

khams gsum g.yul las rnam rgyal gyi mchod sdong chen po'i dkar chag

---

translation by Chris Butters and Khenpo Phuntshog Tashi

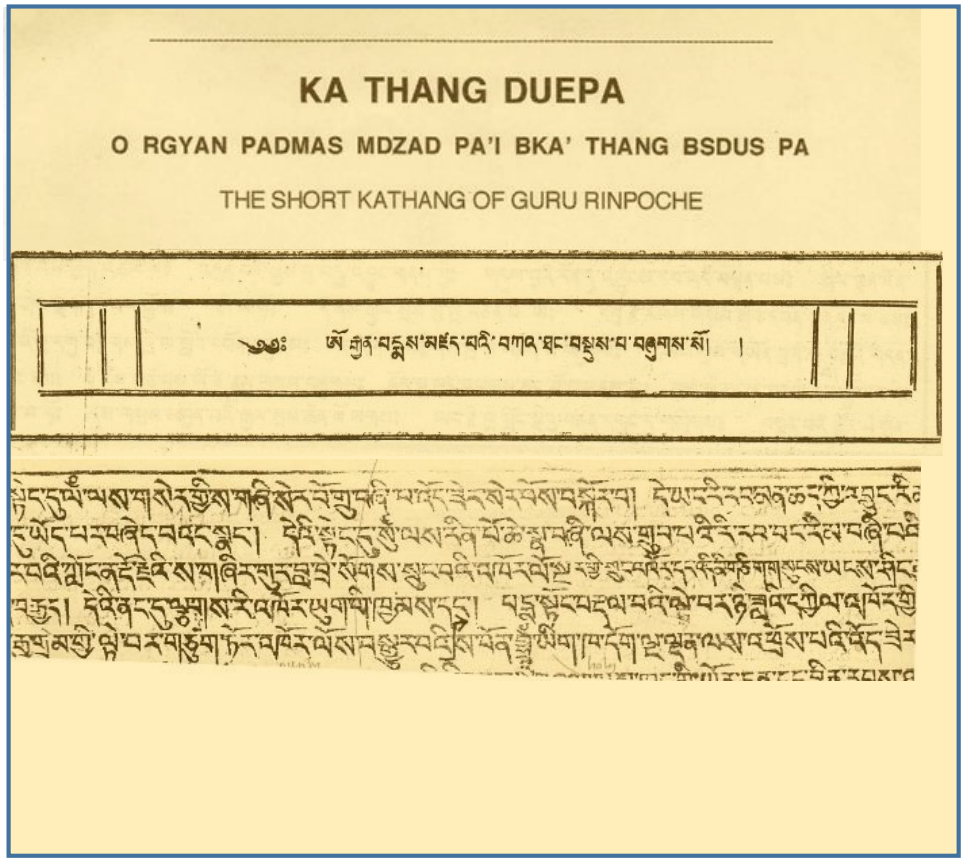
A large Khamsum Yuley Namgyal chorten is being established at Nyizergang in the Yerpa valley of Punakha district, in accordance with the gracious wish of Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Tshering Yangdon, . This brief description of the chorten will be in three parts: firstly, its purpose and background; secondly, the way of construction; and thirdly, the benefits of the chorten.

1. THE PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

It is written in the text *Phurpa Namchag Pudri Thugdrup Sangwaijachen* of Thragthung Dudjom Lingpa, Lord amongst the Siddhas and Treasure Revealers: "During the degenerate age, when the time comes to reveal spiritual Activity for the people, no deity other than Palchen Dorje Zhonnu will be able to assure peace and prosperity, and the fruits of spiritual practice will be exceedingly difficult to attain by any other deity's practice".

And again: "So, in order that fortunate sons in the future may achieve mastery over the Three Realms (the realms of Desire, of Form and of the Formless), I, Rigdzin Padma Wodbar, have revealed for the world this chorten with the name of Sangsum

Bhutan, 1987-1998, Chris Butters

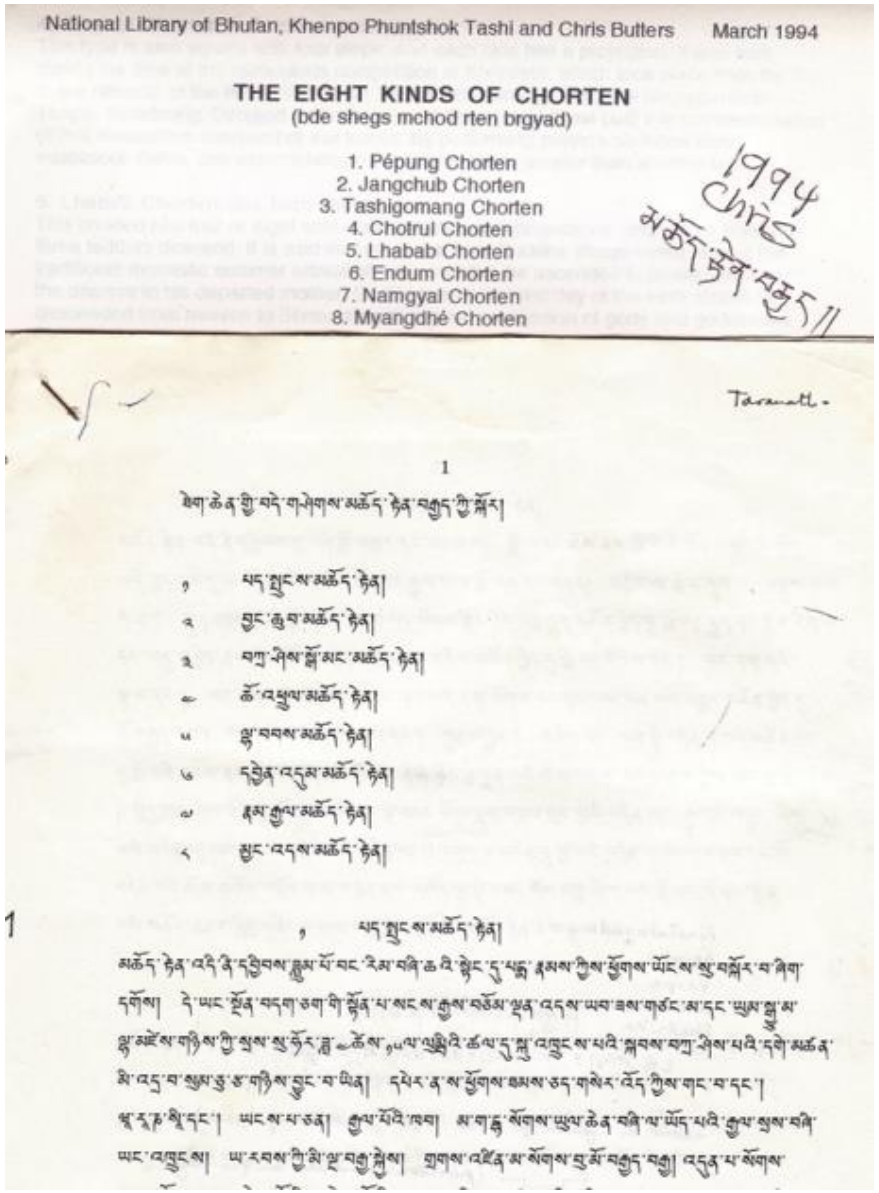


KA THANG DUEPA

O RGYAN PADMAS MDZAD PA'I BKA' THANG BSDUS PA

THE SHORT KATHANG OF GURU RINPOCHE

The Short Kathang of Padmasambhava, Guru Rinpoche



National Library of Bhutan, Khenpo Phuntshok Tashi and Chris Butters March 1994

THE EIGHT KINDS OF CHORTEN
(bde shegs mchod rten brgyad)

1. Pépung Chorten
2. Jangchub Chorten
3. Tashigomang Chorten
4. Chotrul Chorten
5. Lhabab Chorten
6. Endum Chorten
7. Namgyal Chorten
8. Myangdhé Chorten

1994 Chris

Taranath.

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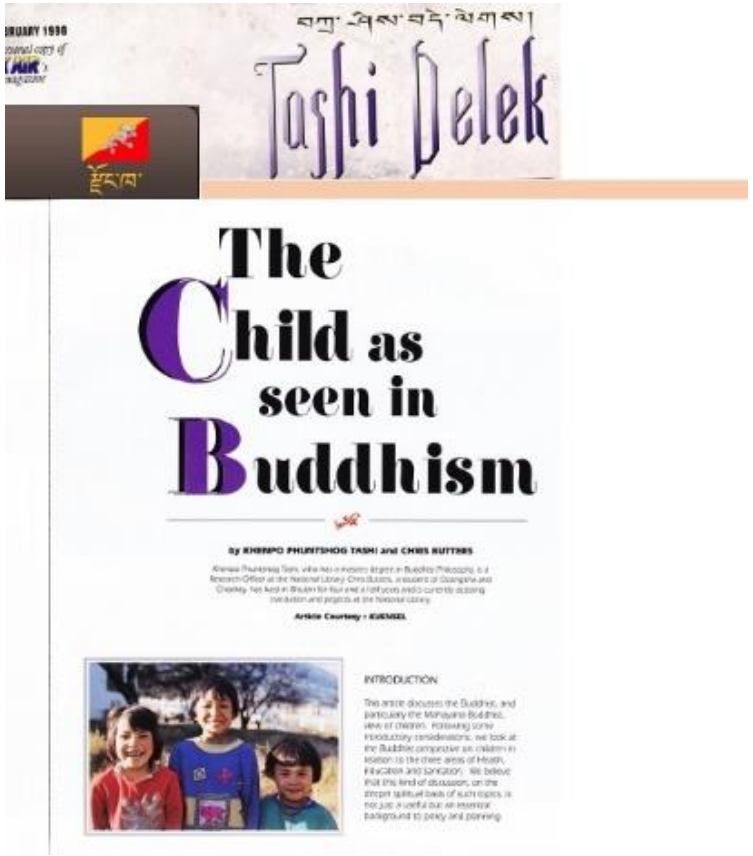


Tashi Delek

The Child as seen in Buddhism

by KHENPO PHUNTSHOG TASHI and CHRIS BUTTERS

Artiste Courtesy : KUENSEL

INTRODUCTION

Dharma

Kuensel June 3, 1989 7

Environment : West and East

A series of four articles (the author's views) looking at selected environmental issues, their relation to Mahayana Buddhism, and the problems of applying Ecological principles in practice

Text and illustrations by Chris Butters, Thimphu

1:Environmental Philosophy

THE ECOCRISIS

The damage which is being done to Nature on a worldwide scale is probably the greatest threat humankind now faces.

Above all is the risk of global climatic changes: a process which, it now seems likely, is already underway and can only be reduced, not stopped. The crisis may be catastrophic or it may not be - opinions differ. In purely technical terms, remedies are possible; and it may be so that humankind is extremely adaptable. But these two optimistic arguments just don't help. Firstly, because the *speed* of environmental and climatic damage will render it impossible both socially and politically for governments to make such radical changes: secondly because the costs will be simply too high.

For example, the cost of reducing pollution and of cleaning toxic wastes are already a significant percentage of GNP-billions of dollars- in the West.

The scenarios being studied at scientific meetings worldwide are alarming. The matter has also been put high on the UN agenda by the recent report "Our Common Future" from the Environmental Commission chaired by Norwegian premier Ms.Brundtland. The message is clear; the world has to change very fast that this "shallow" approach is not enough, and that a complete change in *attitude* to Nature is needed. Some, like my Norwegian colleague Sigmund Kvaloy, think that Buddhism provides such a model. Other new movements, such as "New Age", are often also based on Quantum Physics and the like But still contain a Cartesian-Western way of thinking.

I would insist that an inner change in attitude is desirable even if there were *no crisis*: because the present approach is illusory and out of harmony. Change should not be motivated by fear, rather by an inner realisation that, as Kvaloy puts it, our attitude to Environment and Development has been "based on a vast error". Or, as the Hindu Upanishads express it, not because we are anxious for the results of actions, but out of earnest concern for Right Process (the Buddha's norm of selfless action).

THE BUDDHIST VIEW

Buddhist thinking seems to offer a radical alternative. However, neither Buddhist philosophers nor politicians have addressed the questions of nature and environment directly in any detail - in the Buddha's time, "Environment" was not a burning issue, and in modern times it has become so, mainly in the Western, ie non Bud- "Tantric Practice in Nying-ma"). This implies the essentially *qualitative* and *concrete* nature of experience, as opposed to the quantified and abstract Western way of seeing.

This was one of the first principles of the "Deep Ecology" movement led by westerners like Sessions in America, Naess and Kvaloy in Norway - although often, at that stage, not yet with reference to Buddhism.

Thirdly, the general idea of *middle way*, so common in Asia and in Mahayana (Madhyamaka), is also deeply foreign to the Western mind - which constantly strives for "logical" and "consistent" ideas, and dislikes paradox and compromise. "Quantifiable" and "technically feasible" goals are put first, while non-quantifiable aspects (such as, precisely, environmental qualities) are neglected *because* they cannot fit the technical-mathematical models of the planners. The Western mind seeks refuge in the illusion of fixed plans and "hard facts" because it is afraid of impermanence (another central Buddhist belief).

A DOUBLE LIFE

In both West and East, everybody supports the idea of nature protection, healthier foods, and so on. But in practice, many of us are split in two: whatever the spiritual quality of the user. In Buddhism on the contrary, enlightenment is from within; mantras and mandalas, for example, "do not bestow magic powers from the outside, they draw forth and focus forces within" (Bernbaum, 'The Way to Shambhala'). So, too, Nature and Gods are to be visualised in meditation *as aspects of oneself*.

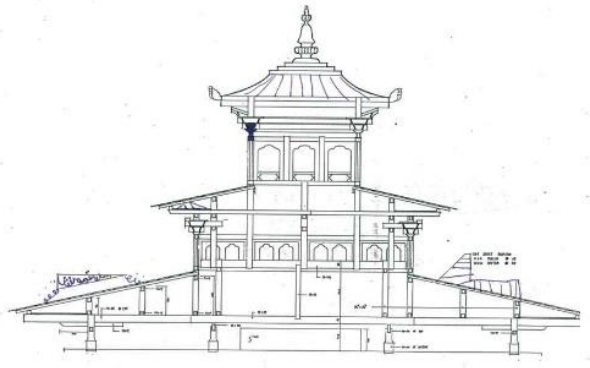
This is not Pantheism but a psychological process of "becoming whole" It shows Buddhism's concern with process, and how mush closer it is to an integrative understanding of Nature, and of our participation *in Nature*.

quered, controlled and transcended. This leads to repression of oneself- especially the feminine element-and of Nature too.

In this way, also, talk of meditation as *transcendental* misunderstands its function as an integrating, unifying process.

SIGNS OF CHANGE

There are in the West already many signs that basic attitudes are starting to change. For example, the trend in Planning Theory towards more flexible, process-oriented plans stressing qualitative goals, not only quantified,



Bhutan, 1987-1998, Chris Butters

THE DEMCHOG MANDALA:

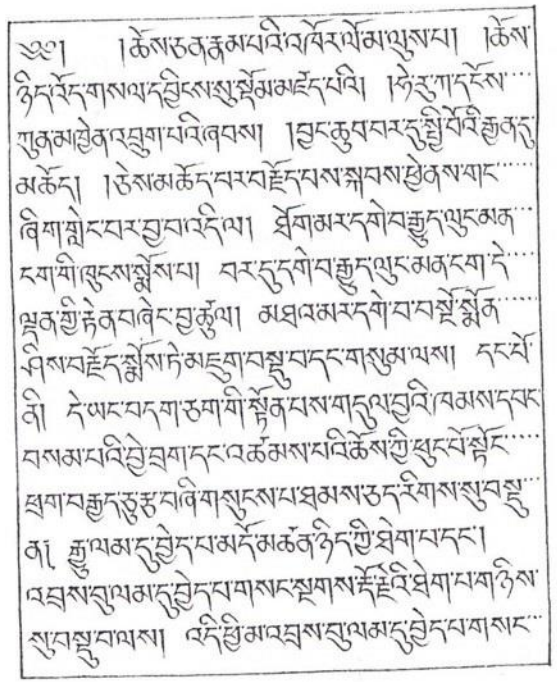
(Cakrasamvara)

A brief introduction to the Demchog Mandala in Tashichodzong, Thimphu.

National Library of Bhutan

Translation by Khenpo Phuntshog Tashi and Chris Butters

Thimphu, 1996



Environment : West and East

The final part of the author's views looking at selected environmental issues, their relation to Mahayana Buddhism, and the problems of applying Ecological principles in practice

by Chris Butters, Thimphu

4. Education and Ecology

I have discussed the growing ecological crisis and some basic attitudes in the rational-scientific World View which are at once responsible for the imbalance, and incapable of correcting it. The Buddhist View of Nature, with its concepts of interdependence, impermanence, and intrinsic value of all phenomena, can be seen as deeply ecological.

But in practice, one still has to reconcile two *apparently* different realities. People aim for "intelligent, rational and efficient" actions: it is seldom stated that a wise action, on the other hand, can never be fully consistent or purely efficient, because that is always some kind of compromise or "middle way" between conflicting aspects and goals. Explicit methods for approaching this are inconceivable in the dualistic West; but are well recognised in Buddhist training.

Regrettably, one sees the same split appearing in Buddhist countries, where western thinking (production, efficiency...) is superimposed on local philosophies without an effort to connect the two.

Can attitudes be changed only by crisis as in the West or can Bhutan avoid this ? Environmental damage is increasing , and general concern for nature remains poor. Even so, all those facts is not thought about, how can the result be meaningful ?

Whole Thinking

The modern world is run by brilliant specialists who have little understanding of each other and thus no idea of the *whole*. A typical example is the man who makes his factory chimney higher to solve his pollution problem-the smoke just goes further away and pollutes some other towns.

If the aim of education is to develop the capacity for "seeing whole", then special methods are needed. Study then concentrates on the interconnections between parts more than on isolated subjects: awareness of conflicts and polarities is focused on rather than avoided; associative thinking is given higher priority than specialist analysis.

It should be clear that the above mentioned relate closely to Buddhist concepts, but are largely avoided in the West. Such aims also seem close to those of Madhyamaka teaching: that is, the inner development of the ability to see whole and intuitively: not only with the head, and not only with the view of individual ego.

The following examples may help to illustrate these ideas.

On our planning and architecture courses in Norway, we chose real is that if one applies oneself to a motivated and creative process, then the end-product will take care of itself-and be far *better*.

"Hands on" Education

The modern world thinks (!) that learning is a mental process. Human Ecology, like Buddhism, stresses the importance of dynamic life-process: in education this means involving the whole person in concrete learning, by including practical work and "hands-on" methods. We can learn far more through our *hands* than through our heads...

On two courses, for example, the students built Solar Greenhouses: learning in practice and theory simultaneously about the whole process from natural resources (going to cut trees) to finished buildings (energy-saving carpentry details).

By integrating (not alternating) mental and physical activity, one relaxes and thereby helps to concentrate both sides. It is a powerful way of developing balance, and of creating the "spontaneous" awareness of the interdependence of mind and body, of humans and environment.

I should add that these courses were not well accepted by most university staff. Looking back, it strikes me that the features of that education which most disturbed my Western World View which are at once spiritually alienating, and, ecologically, simply impossible.

New Approaches

The one-way communication of the typical classroom is of limited value. There is therefore a growing trend towards more varied and creative ways; from new types of room, to a wide range of participatory and "hands-on" methods. There is also a growing effort to make more of the curriculum really relevant to the lives and surroundings of the pupils.

This kind of approach is applied extensively in the field of Environmental Education, which by it's nature raises issues that concern us closely; *both* as individuals, *and* as members of a wider, even global, community. The question of environmental ethics should be a central part of such courses.

Education or Instruction

In his commentary to the Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation, C.G. Jung notes that "the development of western philosophy during the last two centuries has succeeded in isolating the mind in its own sphere and em science and education are extremely efficient; but they lack this Oriental understanding of *process*. They also need to discover educational methods where all those facts can be constantly related both to the inner person and to the Whole.

Intuition or Machine

An analogy between Education and Ecology is that both are living, learning processes and that neither can be treated by clear-cut and quantifiable formulas. The wholistic "higher standpoint of Intuition" of the Madhyamaka, is that which computers cannot have and which distinguishes humans from all the machine processes we are relying on today to a dangerous degree.

The scientific-technical world is trying to "manage" the environmental crisis, by applying even *more* intellect and technology - and, more technical education. Though under the surface, there is a growing wish for a more creative philosophy. This is what the Emptiness Teachings seem to offer. But they are *directed* at transformative human processes, which the West hardly recognises as being relevant to the problem.

The Week Ahead

according to Bhutanese and gregorian calendars

Month	Su	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
June	25	26	27	28	*29	30	1
V	21	23	24	25	26	27	28

* Ta shi ga cha (not auspicious for travel)

Environment : West and East

Part two of the the author's views looking at selected environmental issues, their relations to Mahayana Buddhism, and the problems of applying Ecological principles in practice

Text and illustrations by Chris Butters, Thimphu

2:Energy and Development

Mahayana Buddhism offers, I believe, a profoundly ecological philosophy, in an age where Environment is becoming the world's greatest challenge.

A new synthesis of scientific and spiritual insights is necessary; and in this sense, the West may need as much "Aid" as the East. But in practice, it is going to be extremely difficult for Buddhists to confront the enormous power of the technical-rational world.

THE ENERGY QUESTION

Energy is at the source of everything we do. Fossil fuels like oil, gas and coal, are powerful to the extent that in the industrialised countries, the average person has the equivalent of 200 slaves, if all the energy he uses is calculated in terms of physical human work. Without energy, no material progress is possible: but the conventional sources of energy will be virtually used up within 100 years. Equally important is the growing agreement that the pollutative Planning tools, such as statistics, projections and economic models (handling both nature and society like machines). In this way of thinking, Nature is virtually opposed to Culture - and Nature loses: but it is forgotten that if Nature loses, so eventually do we.

LOW ENERGY FUTURES

In practical and technological terms, solutions to the Energy Crisis can be shown to exist - surprisingly enough.

One of the most recent studies, by a Swedish colleague Thomas Johansson, together with a few of the top Energy experts in the world, is the so called "1 Kilowatt Per Capita" scenario. According to this very extensive study, the rich nations could *reduce* their Energy use from the present level of about 4kw per person to around 1kw, by using the best energy-saving technologies. And this would leave *enough* Energy for the poor nations to develop roughly the same standard of living *life process*, with no spiritual basis whatever.

To bring in the necessary paradox we should nevertheless work extremely hard for it to happen !

THE ENTROPY LAW

In physics, this fundamental law (2nd Law of Thermodynamics) describes a universe in constant decline. The available energy or usefulness in Nature is always decreasing; and this is irreversible. We may exploit nature to benefit ourselves, but we "cannot prevent the degradation of the system as a whole" (Georgescu-Roegen, 'Entropy Law and Economics'). Energy then is also related to Time: the faster societies develop materially, the faster they are "using up" Nature, and thus actually make the future *shorter*.

CAN ONE EVALUATE NATURE ?

Environmental and social impacts of energy projects, especially large ones like hydropower dams, gise, so humans build dams, chop trees, eat animals, and the only difference is the *human consciousness* of the interdependence of all life.

The fourth aspect of Energy Planning, which must always involve *some* destruction, is this question of attitude. One acts with reverence: but *not* with a "guilty conscience", which shows a culture out of harmony with Nature. For, if it is true that existence is impure, and also that we are part of nature, then it follows that there is no such thing as "pure nature" (the intellectual illusion behind much Western environmental thought !).

OVERDEVELOPMENT ?

In Europe, most of the watercourses have already been exploited for Hydropower- in order to sustain an extremely wasteful lifestyle. "the only basis for Planning, is the ecological basis." It is in this sense that environment is now seen as underlying all policy decisions -and it is regard to Nature that the West's dilemma becomes most apparent.

Although the Buddhist ideal is that of "motiveless morality", I think one can see that in practice, decisions regarding Environment will usually be a mixture, or a balance, of all "Three Levels of ethics: Selfish (for example, "how much electricity can we get from this river"), Rational ("how can we make a dam which damages nature as little as possible"), and Motiveless ("within the world of water there is a world...". Mountains and Rivers Sutra).

On the positive side, one may agree with Kvaloy that the one-sidedness of rational-technical societies "may be used as mankind's most

The Week Ahead

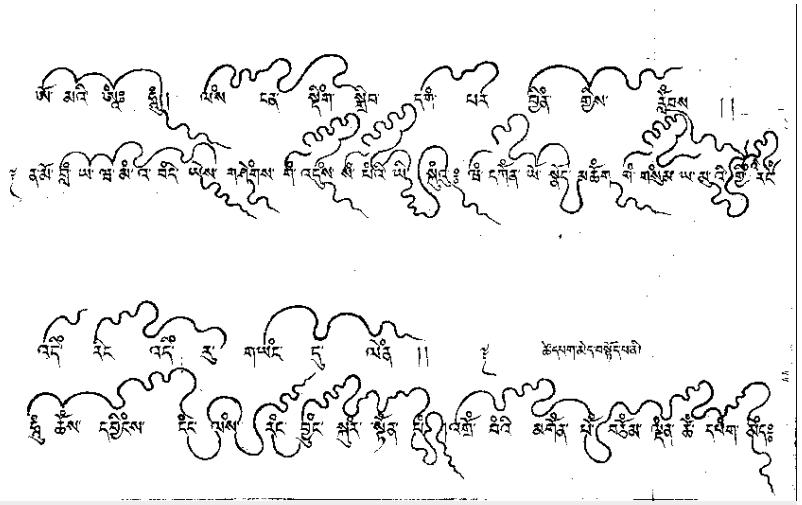
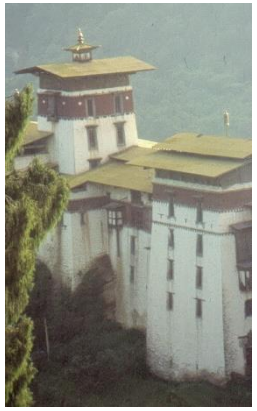
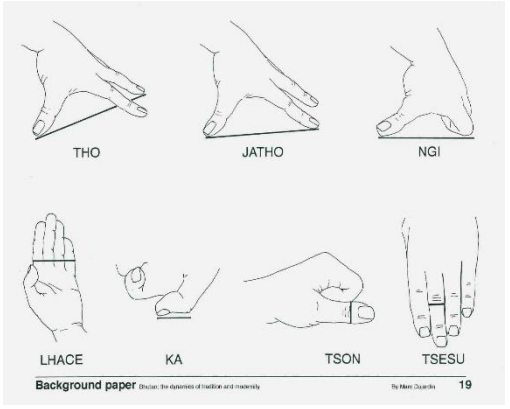
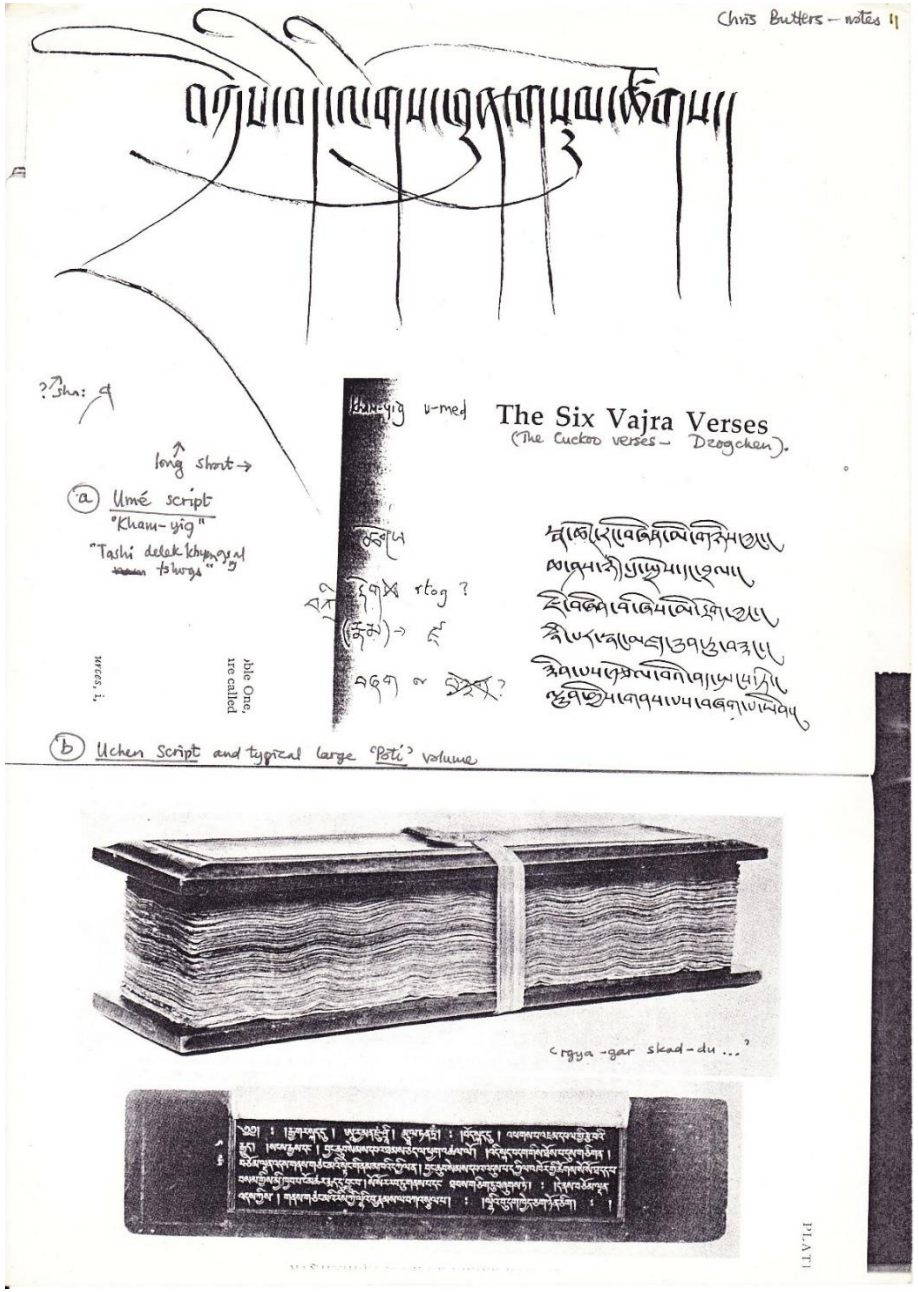
according to Bhutanese and gregorian calendars

Month	Su	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
June	*11	12	+13	14	15	16	17
V	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

* Ta shi ga cha (not auspicious for travel)
\+ Birth anniversary of Guru Rinpoche

Bhutan, 1987-1998, Chris Butters

An example of Bhutanese / *chokey* musical annotation for voice (below), and of Tibetan *umed* script, right



From the sacred dance, Peling yang yig