

THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

No. 100

September, October 2009

Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: E. Del'Angelo

2009–2010

Spain

Barcelona

Nov. 14–18

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Dütsi Jonshing

Venezuela

Dec. 4–11

Dzogchen Longsal Longde Teaching Retreat

Dec. 26–January 1

Santi Maha Sangha Base and practice Retreat

January 16–30

The Drubchen of Mandarava and Vajrapani

Argentina

Tashigar Sur

February 12

Inauguration of Tashi Sur's Gonpa

February 14

Tibetan Losar festival with a Mandarava practice

February 16

Sang and Serkyem Offerings

February 12–24

Dzogchen teaching and practice retreat

Venezuela

March 8–12

Tashigar Norte retreat

March 19–25

Teachers' trainings: SMS base, 1st Levels; Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga 1st and 2nd levels

Trinidad

April 23–25

Weekend teaching

Venezuela

Tashigar Norte

April 30–May 2

SMS Base Level Exam

May 3–9

SMS 1st Level training

Canaries

May 21–23

Canaries retreat

UK

May 28–30

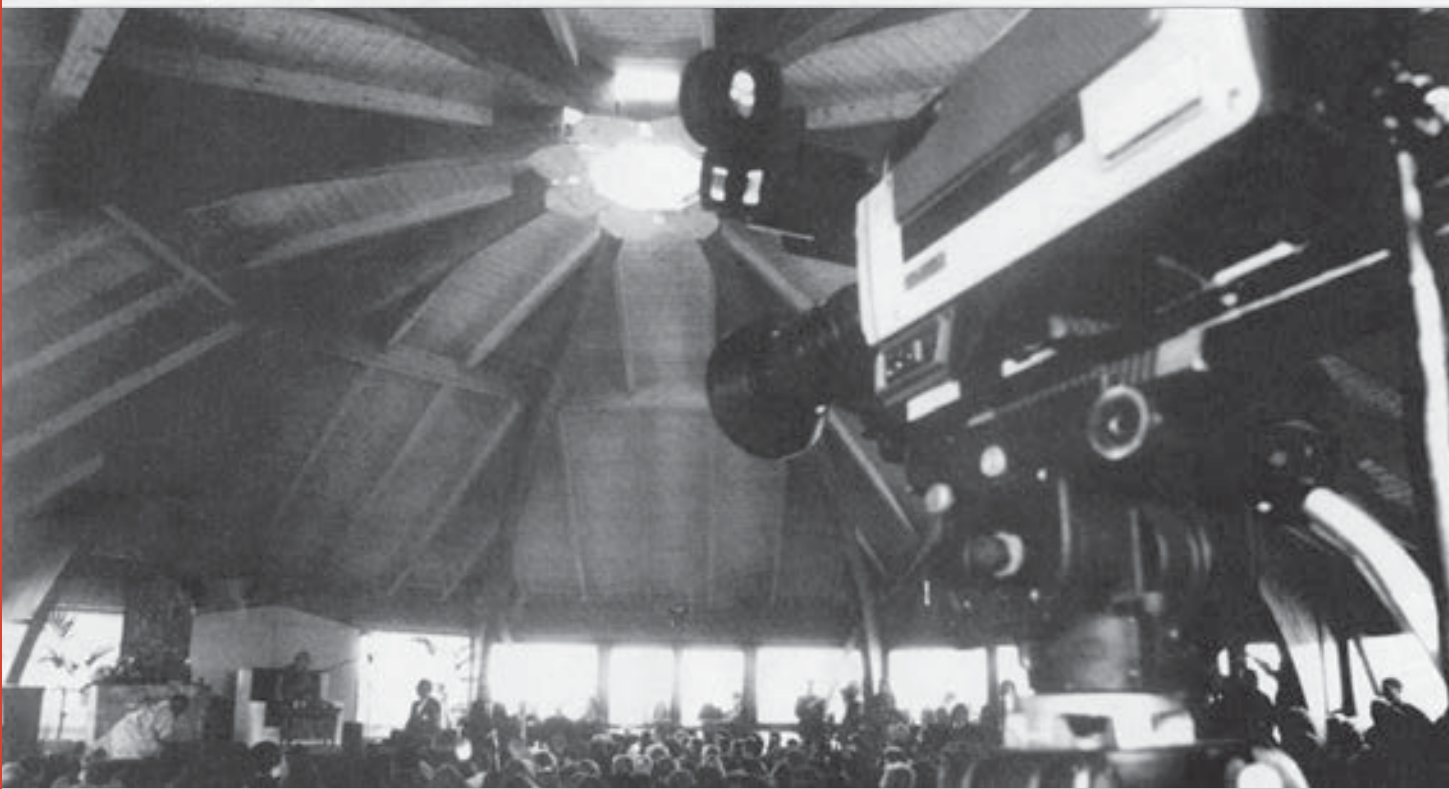
London Retreat

In the Dzogchen teachings a mirror can be used in many ways as a metaphor to clarify various aspects of the teachings and as a symbol to explain the functioning of the mind.

THE MIRROR

THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
INSPIRED BY THE TEACHINGS OF AND UNDER THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF
NAMKHAIR NORBU RINPOCHE

One of the ways in which a mirror is used as a symbol is to remind one to observe oneself at all times and to check whether one is distracted or truly present in the moment.



Issue No. 3, July 1990. His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso the XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet Inaugurated the Shang Shung Institute and gave the first Teaching at Merigar's Gonpa

Photo: G Baggi

100 Reflections in the Mirror

The Newspaper Celebrates One Hundred Issues

This issue of the newspaper offers a section called Focus on The Mirror in order to celebrate and let readers know that this is the 100th issue of the newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community. From the very first newspaper published at Merigar in Italy in March 1990 up to the current one, *The Mirror* has tried to serve the continuously growing Dzogchen Community spread across different countries and continents around the planet by bringing it closer together. We have done this by publishing teachings and interviews by our Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, information on projects and initiatives from A.S.I.A., Shang Shung Institute, the Gars and Lings, programs and reports on courses and retreats and stories about your personal experiences. Each and every issue of *The Mirror* has marked the many milestones in Rinpoche's vision for the preservation of the teaching for the future and in the growth of the international Community.

Over the years many people have generously offered their skills to produce *The Mirror* but the path has not always been easy – the editors and graphic artists have not always been professionals and from time to time there were changes in staff, in the early days internet was non-existent and hence information was exchanged via fax machines and the post office and involved a great deal of typing. Financing the newspaper has also been a burden on the Gars and the main office moved from Merigar to Tsegylgar at the beginning of 1995.

Today with the global system of the internet and the WWW, digital imaging, page layout software etc., *The Mirror* can be written, corrected, edited, put together, read and enjoyed more immediately and easily around the world. The layout and design has been greatly improved by Thomas Eifler in Berlin working with the two editorial 'offices' at Tsegylgar East and Merigar West. The paper version of the newspaper is still printed and mailed

from Massachusetts and since issue 74 in May 2005 has had the front/back and central pages in colour.

In keeping with the development of electronic communication and the original aim of *The Mirror* to bring the Community closer together in a global family, this year the online version of the newspaper has become part of the membership package for all members of the Dzogchen Community linked to most of the international Gars.

In the Focus section of this issue, we give you a few glimpses of some of the more significant moments in the life of Norbu Rinpoche's Dzogchen Community that have been documented by the newspaper since its birth. We have reprinted some cover pages and taken excerpts from articles and talks that we feel reflect the most meaningful events in the last two decades of the Community. Good reading! ©

The Editors

Liz Granger, Naomi Zeitz

Teaching



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Experiential Instruction on
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Experiential Instruction on “Dzogchen Medjung”

The Marvelous State, One of the Most Important Tantras of Dzogchen Semde

Open webcast Merigar West, Thursday August 13, 2009

འཇི་པ་ཐ་སྐད་ཙམ་དུ་སྒོ་བཞག་སྟེ་བསྐྱོན་པ་ནི།

Now we have the fourth explanation of contemplation.

འཇི་པ་ཐ་སྐད་ཙམ་དུ་སྒོ་བཞག་

This means that we do not negate or eliminate anything that we have in the relative condition. We just remain in that instant presence and integrate.

གཞག་ཐབས་ནོར་བུ་པོ་ལ་གཟུང་སྟེ། འདི་ལྟ་བུ་བྱང་རྒྱུ་སེམས་ཀྱི་དོན་མ་རྟོགས་པས་བདག་ཉིད་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་སྤྱད་ཡུལ་དང་བལ་བར་སྒྲུ་ཞིང་

If we have done contemplation incorrectly, in a different way, it is very important that we recognize this because it always says that being in the state of contemplation means being beyond all concepts. If we have some concepts and consider that these are contemplation, we are going in the wrong direction. In this case it is very important that we recognize this.

འདི་ལྟ་བུ་བྱང་རྒྱུ་སེམས་ཀྱི་དོན་མ་རྟོགས་པས་

In this way we are not in the knowledge of the primordial state.

བདག་ཉིད་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་སྤྱད་ཡུལ་དང་བལ་བར་སྒྲུ་ཞིང་ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ་ཕར་དམིགས་ཤིང་རྩེ་སྤྱུ་འབྲང་བ་དང་།

Even though we speak about the state of Dzogchen, we always consider that this, too, is just a concept.

དམིགས་པ་ནང་བསྐྱུས་ནས་སེམས་ཀྱི་གཞག་ས་ཚོལ་ཞིང་ལྟ་བུ་གསལ་དུ་རེ་བ།

This is a very important point. Some people have their own ideas. I've heard some of my students say, “Oh, now I am entering into the state of contemplation.” It seems as if you are not working with what is outside yourselves, what you see and what you have contact with through your senses but you are entering inside yourselves and finding some type of state. That is a wrong direction. Here it is explained very clearly.

གོལ་དུ་དོགས་པ།

There are also people who are always worried about making mistakes. This is also something that is very important for our practitioners. When they learn something, even if it is a very simple practice, instead of working and applying it in a simple way, they think and judge about many details and ask me so many questions. Sometimes I cannot reply because I've never thought about those things. People work very much with mind – this is also a wrong direction. When you receive a teaching method, you should try to do it in a simple way, not always worrying about doing everything so precisely. These are called limitations and the principle of the Dzogchen teachings is going beyond limitations. So it doesn't correspond and for that reason it says here that it is a mistake to worry.

ལས་སྤྱ་རུང་ནས་ནམ་ཞིག་གྲུབ་པར་བྱེད་འདོད་པ།

When you are doing practice you immediately need to have some obtainments and are always concentrated on them. In the real sense, there is nothing to obtain. You have already had all the obtainments since the beginning. That is why when we pronounce the mantra to empower – ‘Jaya jaya, siddhi siddhi, phala phala’ – ‘siddhi siddhi’ means obtainments. It explains that very clearly here.

དམིགས་པ་མེད་པར་སྒྲུ་ཞིང་དམིགས་མེད་ལ་དམིགས་པ།

With our mouth we say that there are no concepts, but that is already a concept that we uphold.

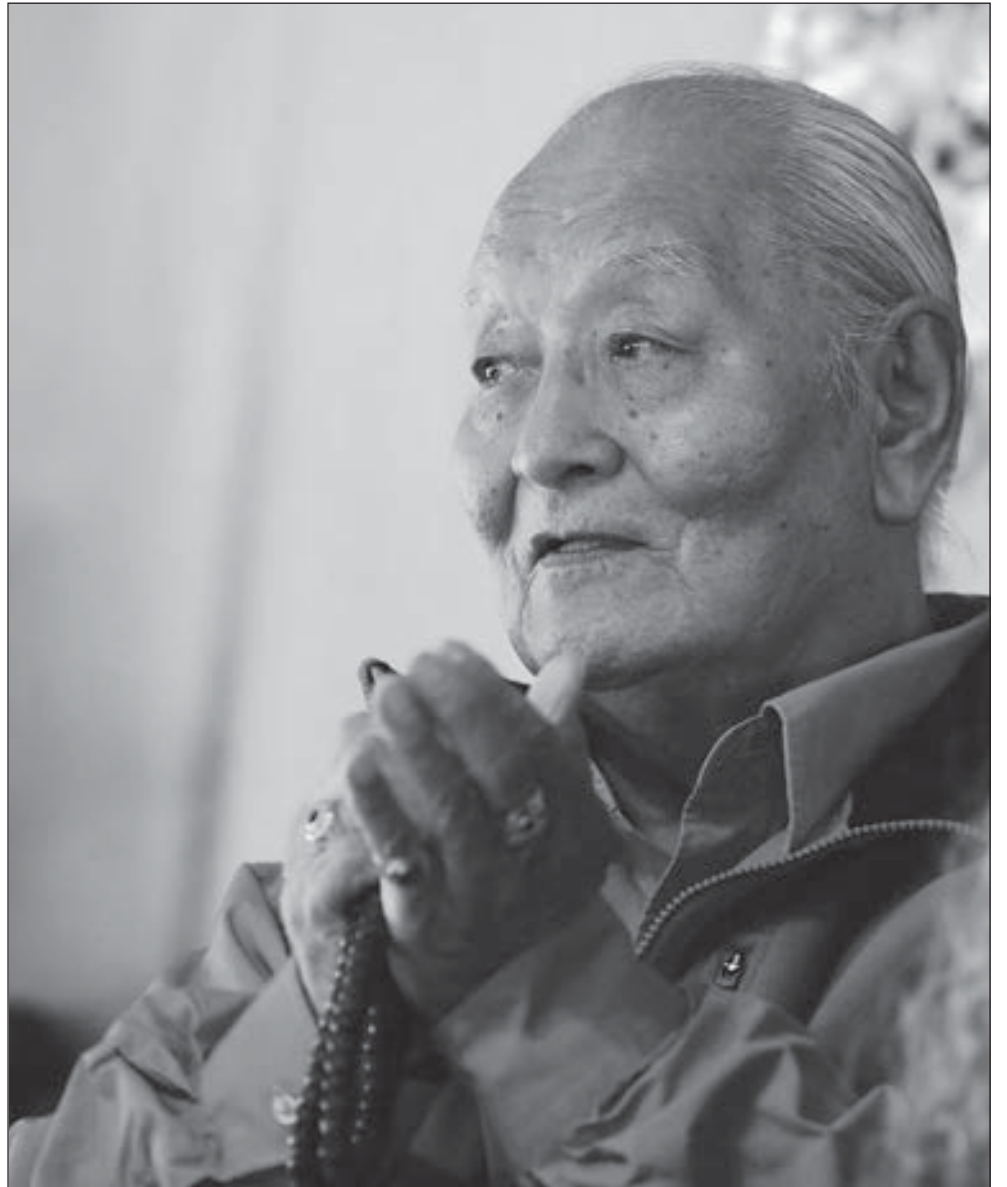


Photo: G Baggi

འདི་ཉིད་ལས།

Then there is a quotation from the ‘Medjung’ tantra.

ང་ཡི་ཡུས་སྤྱ་སྒྲོང་བ་ལ། ཟེ་བྱང་རྒྱུ་མེད་ཅིང་བསྐྱོན་པ་འང་མེད་

ང་ཡི་ཡུས་སྤྱ་སྒྲོང་ “Those who are in my dimension, that is, in our own primordial state, བྱང་རྒྱུ་མེད་ཅིང་བསྐྱོན་པ་འང་མེད་ there is nothing particular to say like we are getting realized or that we are now in the state of contemplation because all of these are concepts.” This is the quotation from the tantra. For that reason it is explained in more detail here.

ཅེས་ཟག་སྤངས་པ་དང་། ཡང་།

Then there is another quotation from the Medjung tantra. སྤྱང་བ་མེད་ཅིང་ལེན་པ་མེད། །སེམས་ཉིད་གནས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་མེད་པས། ཟེ་ཟེ་བསྐྱོན་དུ་མེད་པའི་བྱང་རྒྱུ་སེམས་

36:31 སྤྱང་བ་མེད་ཅིང་ལེན་པ་མེད། “There is nothing to abandon, there is nothing to accept, སེམས་ཉིད་གནས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་མེད་པས། there is no concrete dimension which we can say is the place of the state of contemplation. So the state of contemplation is that in which there is no meditation.” This is also another important quotation from the Medjung.

དེ་ཕྱིར་སེམས་གནས་པ་དང་། རྟོག་པ་དང་། བསམ་པ་དང་། དམིགས་པ་སྤངས་ཏེ། མི་གནས་པ་དང་། མི་རྟོག་པ་དང་། བསམ་དུ་མེད་པ་དང་། མི་དམིགས་པའི་དོན་རྒྱུས་ཆེད་དུ་མི་ཐིང་དོ།

For that reason we don't do anything to remain with our mind. This means that when we are doing shiné, for example, we do fixation that is for calming the mind, but that is not the primordial state, it is working with concepts using mind, fixation etc. Also when we have རྟོག་པ་ thoughts, བསམ་པ་ judgments, དམིགས་པ་ any kind of concepts, then we abandon all these things and try to obtain མི་གནས་པ་ not remaining (or staying somewhere), མི་རྟོག་པ་ thoughtlessness, བསམ་དུ་མེད་པ་ being without judgments, མི་དམིགས་པ་ conceptlessness [but] we do not get attached or force ourselves to do something like that.

དེ་ཅིའི་ཕྱིར་ཞེ་ན།

Why should we do things in that way?

གནས་པ་དང་རྟོག་པ་བསམ་དམིགས་པ་ཉིད་རང་འབྱུང་གི་ཡི་ཤེས་ཉིད་རང་མ་འགགས་པར་རིག་ནས། གང་སྤངས་ལ་གང་ཞིག་དང་དུ་སྤྲོས་ལ་བསྐྱོམས་ཏེ། སྤང་སྤང་མེད་དོ།

All these desires we have to remain in the calm state, all our thoughts and concepts are, in the real sense, part of our wisdom when we have real knowledge, our wisdom without interruption. གང་སྤངས་ལ་གང་ཞིག་དང་དུ་སྤྲོས་ལ་བསྐྱོམས་ཏེ། So there is nothing to accept or reject in the relative condition in a dualistic way. This is very important because some people think that in the primordial state all actions

>> continued on page 4

དགག་སྒྲུབ་མེད་པར་སྒྲུ་ཞིང་ཕྱིར་རྟུགས་ཤིང་རྟོག་སྒྲོས་སྤོང་བ།

It also states in the Dzogchen teaching that there is nothing to negate and nothing to accept and you say that too, but in the real sense you are always worried about your condition. When you do practice sometimes you have a bit of a sleepy state, other times your condition is a little agitated and then you enter into negating and doing something. རེ་དོགས་ཀྱི་ལྟ་བུ་ཅན་ནི་གོལ་ཏེ། So if there is any kind of hope or fear, it is a wrong point of view, དེས་དོན་དེ་མི་འཕྲད་པས། people who have this wrong point of view cannot be in the real primordial state. This is how things are explained in the Medjung tantra and there is a quotation from this tantra:

འདི་ཉིད་ལས། བྱང་རྒྱུ་འདོད་པ་དེ་ལ་བྱང་རྒྱུ་མེད། ས་དང་ཟག་ནམ་ལྗར་ཟུང་རྒྱུ་མཆོག་ལ་རེང་།

“People who want to have total realization, that means being totally in the primordial state, དེ་ལ་བྱང་རྒྱུ་མེད། those who desire that cannot have that. ས་དང་ཟག་ནམ་ལྗར་ཟུང་རྒྱུ་མཆོག་ལ་རེང་ Realization is as far from our condition as the distance between the sky and the earth.” So you must not be in any type of concepts. This is the quotation.

གཞག་ཐབས་མ་ནོར་བུ་ནི་གང་ཞེ་ན།

How can one be in a state of contemplation without making mistakes?

བྱང་རྒྱུ་ཀྱི་སེམས་སྤྱད་དུ་བྱང་བའི་དོན་མ་ནོར་བར་ གནད་རྒྱུད་པའི་མི་ཆེན་པོས། དེ་ཁོ་ན་ཉིད་ལ་སྒོ་འཇུག་ཟེ་དྲོ་མེད།

For a person who has that knowledge of the primordial state as explained in the ‘Medjung’, དེ་ཁོ་ན་ཉིད་ལ་སྒོ་འཇུག་ཟེ་དྲོ་མེད། there is nothing to enter or to accept.

བསྐྱེམ་ཞིང་དམིགས་སྤྱ་ མེད་མེད་ཀྱང་། དོན་མ་ནོར་བའི་སྐྱོམ་ཐབས་ངོ་དགའ་ཙམ་དུ་མཆོན་པ་ནི།

There is nothing concrete to meditate on. But for a person who has no knowledge of the primordial state, then it is necessary, on the relative plane, to have this kind of explanation.

བསྐྱེམ་དུ་མེད་ པ་ཉིད་ཟེ་ལ་བསྐྱོམ་ཞེས་བཏགས།

For that reason it is called the meditation on which there is nothing to meditate.

སེམས་ཀྱི་གཞག་ཟེས་འི་ཟག་ནས་

To keep [up] the nature of the mind, there is nothing that we consider the state of Dharmata.

སེམས་གང་དུ་འང་མི་འཇོག་པ་ཉིད་ལ་གཞག་ཟེམས་བྱ།

When we say that we are in the state of contemplation, knowing that there is nothing to do or to add, དེ་བས་ན་གང་དུ་འང་སྐྱོམ་ཟེ་པའི་སྐྱོ་ཞུགས་པ་མེད་པ་ལ་ཞུགས་ཟེཞེས་ཟེད། for that reason there is nothing, no place or no dimension to enter. However, relatively we say that we ‘enter’ and are ‘in’ the state of contemplation.

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai

Like a Rainbow Dissolving in the Sky

Yeshi's Talk in Cologne
September 2009

Tonight I will explain how life and death are understood and taught from the point of view of Dzogchen Atiyoga teaching. And I will try to explain how we can approach Buddhism. I will point out the main things about our condition.

First we observe that something exists outside of us. We can use an example like a book. When we first see this book, we have an idea of the book. This book is pink. When the lights are off, we cannot see the book, but our idea remains that the book is pink. We understand that there is some real object outside of us. When I hide the book, we can still imagine it because we already have the book in our inner world. So the book also exists inside of us. We can understand the difference between the outer and inner worlds. The book appears old and yellow in the outer word and will eventually disappear because of moisture and air. Everything material eventually disappears. Although the outer book is impermanent, our idea of the perfect pink book always remains the same. The outer book will disappear in the end. We know that our physical body will die and also disappear. We should understand our inner world of concepts, in which this book can be perfect forever. When we discover this difference between outer and inner, we can immediately observe our condition. It is complicated to change the color of the outer physical book. But we can easily imagine that the book is blue and that we have two or more copies of the book. We can instantly discover the difference between outer and inner.

We can describe the shape and color of this book to a friend who has never seen it. But it is difficult to explain how we understand the book and what we feel about the book. Outside we can share something in common, but inside we are all unique individuals. So it is very difficult to speak about why we like the book. We connect our inner understanding from the book with what happens in our life over a few days. We try to use limited words to communicate our inner world. We connect words with our sensory experiences. The word 'book' means something different for different individuals. I try to use more detailed different words to communicate. We need to discover that even if we do not have the direct outer experience of this pink book, we still have our inner experience of the book. We need to discover the existence of direct and indirect experience. Mind imagines. Reality does not imagine. We need to discover how our emotions are related to our outer and inner worlds. Our outer world is our physical body and

material things. Our inner world is speech and energy which produce emotions. We cannot manifest our inner experience outside. We cannot take what is inside and put it outside for others to see.

For example, we cannot now create a book made of light. But we can imagine that the pages of this book become light. Each of us has our own idea. How can we make judgments about how someone else imagines light? Our inner worlds have infinite potential. It is not necessary to judge the ideas of others. Rather we can observe how our own mind is working. We can notice how a thought arises, how we follow it, how we have a feeling about, and how the thought disappears.

Maybe we disagree with our friend about the book, emotions arise, and we are not friends any longer. We may recognize that our ego is the cause of ignorance and suffering. We may discover that the base of our condition is emptiness. Then we can relax. We each think something different about this book. We can talk and create emotions, but our real nature cannot be explained with words. We must discover our condition through experience.

Here is an example. Because I am very involved in Tibetan Buddhism, I want to give a special gift of this rare expensive profound book to my girlfriend. When she opens the wrapped gift she finds this old used book named The Tibetan Book of the Dead. She was hoping to receive a ring and is obviously not pleased with my gift. I start to feel anger instead of love, because I was never really interested in our relationship and her feelings. Our history of hap-



Teaching in Dargyaling

Photo: K Heinemann

everything is about my ego, and not about her. I need to discover that emptiness is the base of my condition and our relationship. I can discover how I project my mind and emotions. Then I can relax and be present in my condition.

The outer world is the physical material level. The inner world of the speech is related to energy. The knowledge of mind is most hidden and secret. We cannot communicate knowledge with words. We need to have experience. We cannot explain the taste of sweet with words. We need to directly taste sweet. Our body, speech and mind change according to conditions. At the moment of death our whole reality dissolves. Each element dissolves into the next. Slowly our material condition disappears. How can we understand this moment? It is like falling asleep. There is a moment when there is no mind. We fall asleep and there is nothing. After a while we start to dream. So mind is waking up again.

We can imagine it is just like a rainbow disappearing in the sky. The sky is very difficult to define. But the rainbow is even more difficult to define. When mind dissolves into its own essence, it is like a rainbow dissolving in the sky. At this point what remains? Only our consciousness that is naked and pervading everywhere remains. This is what we are, pure presence, without any idea of reality, and without assigning any meaning. At this point our real nature is manifesting. All texts explain that our real nature manifests just like infinite spreading light.

It is important to understand that this condition is not based upon the ideas of our minds. Our real condition is not conceptual. We usually think, 'does it exist or not? Is it real or not? We have a problem if something exists or not. We have emotions which confirm existence and non-existence. We should understand that this consciousness is beyond all concepts and emotions. If we do not have this recognition, then our mind comes back. It is exactly like dreaming. We perceive that we are alive but we do not have the limitations of the physical condition. We can see everything and pass through walls. Then slowly we remember our ideas about everything, like that we are human. We have this kind of mind and that kind of idea. We like this and dislike that. We see things from our point of view. We are reborn as the type of being which corresponds to how we perceive.

What can we understand from all this? Firstly, it is not important to read a book and then create some kind of story in our mind. It is important to observe and understand our condition. Tomorrow we can begin to better observe our condition. We can observe how we perceive everything, understand reality and create emotions. We can pay attention so we do not project everything outside. We do not blindly project our mind and emotions outside. We do not try to explain

everything in our mind. We can talk about things we see and touch, but it is difficult to communicate ideas about what we see and touch. It is even more difficult to talk about something like knowledge. We should discover knowledge rather than talk about it.

We should not try to define knowledge or find better descriptions. One Buddhist book may say it is very important to meditate because we can find this fantastic state called shunyata. Then we can understand emptiness, like our mind is in a state without thought. But other books explain that emptiness is a little more like this or that. We should not waste time to find the best explanations. It is much better to discover our own condition. We try to be present and observe. We do not try to affirm something or establish some point of view. It is a lot better if we open our eyes. When we are present in our condition, we try to develop more awareness about the condition of our physical body, energy and mind.

Then any teaching is fine. When we are present and aware of our condition, any teaching works. It is not important if the teaching is called Dzogchen or Vajrayana. It is important that we know our condition and we are present. It is important to observe ourselves and discover our real condition. This is good for us. It is better not to waste time trying to establish something. We discover ourselves and go beyond limits, this is fantastic! ©

Transcribed by Naomi Zeitz
Edited by Jim Valby



Yeshi, Diego and Mathilde visiting the Berlin Zoo

Photo: A Trencsényi

py beautiful weekends together is not important. It is important that she like this book which is so important to me. Inside the book I had placed airplane tickets so we could go to Tibet together. But she wants a ring, a holiday at the seaside and a family. It is easy to talk about the book, but it is so difficult to talk about our feelings. I need to discover that ev-

Now we have a mental body. The physical body does not exist. Our sense organs are not connected with our mind. There are millions of images in our dream. Our mind is all-pervading without limits.

The moment of death is very similar. All our physical aspects disappear. At the end mind also disappears into its own essence.



>> *Dzogchen Medjung* continued from page 2

are blocked. That is a wrong idea. It is not like that. You remember that when we talk about Enlightened Beings like Buddha Shakyamuni we say that they are omniscient which means having wisdom of quality and quantity . All our thoughts and concepts, everything enters into this quality and quantity of wisdom. We do not block anything and become like a small piece of stone. This is important and here it is explained very clearly.

བདག་དང་ཆོས་ཉིད་སོ་སོར་བྲག་ན། བདག་ཉིད་ཤྲོམ་ཟེལ་པོས་ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ་ལྟག་གི། ཆོས་དང་གང་ཟག་མ་སྤངས་པར་གཉིས་སུ་མེད་པའི་ཡི་ཤེས་ཉིད་དུ་ཤེག་ཅིག་ཟེལའི་ཕྱིར་ལས་སུ་བྱ་བའི་བསྐྱེལ་པ་མེད་དོ།

When we consider that our condition and our real condition of dharmata are separate, or something with different aspects, then they become like subject and object. But it is not that way. When we are in the state of Dharmakaya, which means we are in the primordial state with its infinite qualities of wisdom, then, of course, we become omniscient, not without thoughts. When we are in our real nature, our thoughts and concepts do not manifest in an ordinary way – བསམ་གཏན་ལ་ལས་སུ་བྱར་བྱར་གྱི། བདག་གིས་བསམ་གཏན་བྱས་པར་ཐལ་བས་གཟུང་འཛིན་གྱིས་བཅིངས་པར་ངས་སོ།

and here it continues – otherwise they become like subject and object. སྐྱེས་བྱ་དམ་པས་གདོང་ཚུད་ན། For people who have the fortune to discover their real nature and know how to be in their real nature, སེམས་ལ་ལས་སུ་བྱ་བའི་བསམ་གཏན་བྱར་མེད། there is nothing to do, to put in order or to coordinate with the mind. སེམས་སྤྱིའི་འོད་ལ་བཞུགས་ཤིང་གསུང་གི་ཟེར་ལ་རྩལ་པས། The nature of mind is in the dimension of the light of the Dharmakaya so its aspect of voice, all energy manifestations, are like light rays manifesting from sunshine so then it is the way of manifesting of the rolpa energy. ཐུགས་ནམ་མཁའི་ཟད་པར་ཟོ་ལ་རྡོ་རྗེའི་གཞི་དང་འདྲ་སྟེ། The mind is just like the state of the vajra which is like the condition of the sky.

ཀུན་ཀྱང་ཤྲོམ་ཟེལ་པའི་རིག་པའི་ཡི་ཤེས་འགྲོ་འོང་མེད་པར་རང་སྤྱང་བའི་སྐྱ་གསུང་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་བདག་ཉིད་ཡིན་པའི་ཁྱེར།

For one who applies that meditation everything is an aspect of the three dimensions of body, speech and mind. བསྐྱེལ་ཐ་ཤྲོམ་འབྱེད་ཀྱི་ལས་མེད་པར་ནམ་མཁའ་ངང་གིས་གསལ་ལ་མི་གཡོ་བ་ལྟར། There is nothing to meditate on and nobody who is meditating [one is completely] beyond these concepts.

རྟོགས་པའི་གདོང་ཅན་གྱིས་རང་གི་སྒོ་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ཅིར་ཡང་མ་བསམས་པས། རང་བཞིན་མ་བཀག་པར་མི་གཡོ་བའོ།

Everything manifests its qualifications through its wisdom, without interruption, but at the same time it is not something like our ordinary dualistic vision, because dualistic vision interrupts and creates problems for us to be in our real state. འདི་ཉིད་ལས། There is a quotation from the root tantra about this.

མ་སྐྱེས་ཟེལ་ཡི་འཛས་རྣམས་ལ། །རྡོ་བོ་མེད་དེ་བསྐྱེལ་པ་འང་མེད།

“All phenomena unborn from the beginning, there is nothing that is their essence and there is nothing to meditate on. རྣམ་མཁའི་རྒྱལ་དུ་རབ་འབྱོར་བས། Just like the dimension of space. So this is called Samantabhadra, everything is fine.”

ཞེས་གསུངས་ཏེ། དེ་ལྟར་བསྐྱེལ་པའི་ཚེ། དབང་པོ་རྣམས་ཕྱི་བཅུ་མ་ཤག་ནའང་སྤང་དོར་མེད་དོ།

This quotation means that when we are applying that, doing meditation, དབང་པོ་རྣམས་ཕྱི་བཅུ་མ་ཤག་ནའང་སྤང་དོར་མེད་དོ། for meditators there is no difference or limitations whether all their senses are open or closed. For example, if you open your eyes you can see, open your ears you can hear. If you close them, you cannot. There is no difference, which means you should not be conditioned by these things. Sometimes we say that when Dzogchen practitioners are in the state of contemplation, their eyes are open. Then some people think that it is a kind of rule of Dzogchen teaching that the eyes should be open. But it doesn’t mean that. Just like in the practices in tantric style, there are many complicated visualizations and it is much easier to close your eyes [to do them], and for that reason practitioners close their eyes. Here it says that it is not always necessary to close your eyes. You can open them and have sense contacts with objects. But it depends. Sometimes you close your eyes and can still be in the state of contemplation. You could be resting on the bed with your eyes closed and in the state of contemplation, so it is not necessary you open your eyes. This is an example. It means you should not be limited this way. And this is not only valid for the eyes but for all the senses.

འདུག་ཤུངས་ཤིང་གང་ལྟར་བྱས་ཀྱང་དོན་ལས་མ་ཉམས་ན་འད་དམན་པའི་ངོ་དགར་ཤྲོམ་ཟེལ་ཤིང་ཤེག་ཅིག་ཤུར་མེད་པར་གནས་སོ།

Then the position. You can stay in any kind of position. There is no difference in order to be in the state of contemplation. But for people with lower capacity who are starting to learn, we give them some information on the position such as crossed legs, or with the knees drawn up to the stomach in the position of the rishi. You can also do this. By doing this it is easier to control your energy and when you control your energy you have fewer problems with your mind and it is easier to control it otherwise it disturbs you getting and being in the state of contemplation. For new practitioners this is useful and it is also not limiting. In general in the Dzogchen teaching we say that there is no need to have a particular position and then people think that all positions are negative. It is also very important to understand the condition of the individual.

ཟོང་མ་ཟེལ་ཏི་ཏི་གའི་བསྐྱེལ་པ་མཚན་མ་དང་ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ་སྤང་སྤང་མ་བྱས་པར་གང་དུ་འང་མ་བསམས་མ་བཀག་པས་ཚེག་མེད།

For people who have knowledge of Dzogchen teaching there is no need for these kinds of relative limitations in order to follow the practice of Ati Yoga.

འགྲོ་བུ་འདུག་རུང་ཉལ་རུང་སྟོད་རུང་། འོངས་སྟོད་བདེའང་རུང་། སྐྱག་བསྐལ་ཡང་རུང་། སྐྱོན་དུ་ནི་གང་ལའང་མ་བལྟས་པས། མཚན་མའི་སྟོད་ལུལ་མི་འགྲིགས།

When walking, sitting, sleeping, standing etc., when feeling that it is a happy or easy moment, or a sorrowful and difficult one, སྐྱོན་དུ་ནི་གང་ལའང་མ་བལྟས་པས་མཚན་མའི་སྟོད་ལུལ་མི་འགྲིགས། a Dzogchen practitioner can integrate everything and these are not particular defects. But of course for people that do not have this capacity, they become obstacles.

ཡོན་ཏན་དུ་གང་ལའང་མི་བྱེད་པས་གཞིགས་རྣམ་ཆོས་ཉིད་དུ་མི་བསྐྱོམ། བདག་དང་གཞན་དུ་སྤྱང་བ་ཀྱན་ཡི་བསྐྱེལ་མི་དགོས་པར་གཅིག་པས། བདག་གི་ཤེག་ན་ཟེལ་ནས་ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ་ཡར་མི་དམིགས།

When we have this kind of knowledge then we do not hope to obtain and have all of these qualifications and བདག་གི་ཤེག་ན་ཟེལ་ནས་ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ་ཡར་མི་དམིགས། being in our real primordial state we do not concentrate on the condition of the dharmata because that also becomes a concept.

སྟོད་ལམ་གང་ལྟར་བདེ་བར་འདུག་ལ། བསམ་དུ་མེད་པར་ཉལ།

When we do practice, any kind of comfortable position is OK. You remember that when we do practice, I always say that if you want to sit cross-legged that is OK. If you have difficulties you can sit on a chair or rest on your knees in Japanese style. There is no difference. Only it is important to keep our backs straight to co-ordinate our energy at the relative level. You see all these explanations come from these sources.

སམ་དུ་མེད་པར་ཉལ། མི་བསམ་བསམ་མེད་དུ་འོངས་སྟོད། འགྲོ་ཉལ་འདུག་བདེ་སྐྱག་བསྐལ་ཡང་། གར་ཡང་མ་བསམས་པས་རྟོག་པ་རང་གི་སེམ་མེད་དོ།

We do not limit any kind of activities of daily life, and we can integrate them. དེ་ལ་གཟུང་འཛིན་ཐམས་ཅད་མ་སྤངས་པར་མི་རྒྱ་བས་འཇིག་རྟེན་པར་མ་གྲོལ་ལོ། For that reason we are not conditioned by dualistic vision, even though we have it and live in a normal human condition. We shouldn’t worry about falling into the ordinary condition.

ལུལ་སེམས་སོ་སོར་མེད་པས་མ་འགགས་པའི་སྐྱེལ་བར་མ་གྲོལ་བའོ།

We also do not fall into the consideration of subject and object etc., so we also do not fall into the wrong direction.

གང་ལ་ཡང་སྟོང་ལེན་མེད་པས་ཉན་ཐོས་རང་རྒྱལ་དུ་སྤྱང་འོ།

There is nothing that we accept or reject and we do not fall into a dimension like the state of the Hinayana.

རང་རང་གི་ལྟ་བུ་གསུགས་ཅན་གྱི་གཞུང་རྒྱལ་སུ་ལྟ་ཤྲོམ་ཟེལ་པས་ཐེག་པ་གང་དུ་འང་མ་གྲོལ་ཏི།

Even though there are many different kinds of points of view, because every school has a different point of view, we do not particularly accept or enter into those limitations so we do not fall into that kind of direction. རང་བཞིན་མི་རྟོག་ཟེལ་འདུག་པས་ལས་སུ་བྱར་པ་མེད་དོ།

We are beyond any kind of mental concepts so we do not have any of these types of problems.

ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱང་མ་སྤངས་རང་ས་ན་གསལ་ལ།

We do not refuse anything. Even if we do not refuse, everything is clear in our clarity.

དེ་ལ་ཡར་བསྐྱར་བའང་མེད། རྟང་དུ་བསྐྱས་ནས་བསྐྱར་བའང་མེད། Even if everything is in our clarity, we do not do anything in particular, or enter into concepts or accept something and enter into that concept.

དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་རང་རིག་ཡིན་ཡང་ཡིན་པར་མི་བསམ། Even if everything is part of the potentiality of our primordial state, we have no concept of that.

མི་བསམ། མི་དམིགས། མི་རྟོག་པར་མ་འདྲེས་པར་ཡོངས་སུ་རྟོགས་པ་ལ་

When we do not think or do analyses etc., when we do not enter into these kinds of limitations but do not interrupt our clarity, everything is clear and དེ་ཉིད་དུ་དམིགས་པའི་བསམ་པ་མ་ཞུགས་པ་ནི་ཐམས་ཅད་མ་ཞུན་པའི་བསྐྱེལ་པ་ཅེ། that is the state of meditation of omniscience.

ཤེག་ཉིད་ཟེལ་བྱིང་རྩུགས་ཟེལ་ཚོད་ལྟར་དུ་རང་དགར་མ་ཤེག་ཏིང་ཅེ། དེ་ལ་སྐྱོན་དུ་མ་

Sometimes when we are too conditioned by sleepiness, and we have a sleepy state, not clarity, or we are too agitated, we are not particularly conditioned by these things and we do not remain in the concept that these are negative things.

དཀའ་བྱུང་མེད་པར་རང་སྟོད་ཅིག་ཟེ།

We do not sacrifice anything. This seems a little contrary to the Mahayana system in which it says Bodhisattvas make sacrifices for the benefit of others. Also in the Hinayana style they have very much this Kathub (dka’ thub) which means sacrificing. In the Dzogchen teaching it does not say that you have to make sacrifices to have realization.

Also in Tantrism sometimes they also make lots of sacrifices. You can understand this by reading the wonderful biography of Milarepa. What Milarepa did was always positive and very good but his way of practicing was in tantric style. He used to put a butter lamp on his head to do meditation because if he fell asleep the lamps would fall down and he would have a problem. That is an example of making a sacrifice. Then he remained all his life on the mountains with nothing to eat but vegetables. This is also called sacrifice. But the Dzogchen teaching does not say that you should live on the mountain and make sacrifices and live without food. But it also does not say that you don’t have to make sacrifices – of course sometimes in circumstances it is necessary to make sacrifices. The Dzogchen teaching says that you have to work with circumstances. If it is necessary to make sacrifices in that moment, then of course you make them.

There are many different types of sacrifices we can make but in the Dzogchen teaching we don’t need to make any sacrifice. We need to learn how we can discover our real nature. How we can have that capacity to integrate. If we have no capacity, to discover it, to learn about it we need to do practice in a limited period of time. Sometimes we need to do a personal retreat for a week, two or three weeks, one or two or three months. We consider three months is a very long time, and we never say it is necessary to do a retreat for three years, three months and three days. This is the tantric tradition. Of course if somebody likes to do this, Dzogchen teaching doesn’t say that you shouldn’t do it.

For example in the Dzogchen teaching we have three series – Semde, Longde and Updesha. Longde is mainly if you have doubts, for not remaining in doubts. This is the main point of Dzogchen Longde. First there is the Dzogchen Semde and direct introduction with which you try to discover your real nature. This is a more gradual way for people with less capacity to be able to discover it. In the Upadesha we have a series of teachings called Dzogchen Yangti. The Dzogchen teaching is called Ati which means primordial state and is considered to be very important teaching – the supreme path. Yangti is considered to be even more important than Ati. What we find in this is things like dark retreat for developing our capacity of integration more quickly so it means we integrate, apply this practice for some weeks and some months and then when we have the capacity we try to integrate it in our life without limitations. This is the Dzogchen way.

Sometimes there are practitioners like my woman teacher, Ayu Khandro. When she received Yangti teaching she became very interested in it and considered it was the path for total realization for her. She dedicated her whole life to doing this practice in dark retreat. There are no limitations that you cannot do that, but there is a normal wider path that we can follow and learn in general.

There are many quotations from the root tantra to explain this.

སེམས་ལ་མིགས་པ་བདག་མེད་པ་

The mind – when we are in the nature of mind there are no concepts, but if we are in the mind, it always creates many different kinds of thoughts. Most people are conditioned by mind and for that reason in the Dzogchen teaching we have many practices like rushen and different types of sem-dzin first of all to distinguish what is the mind and what is the nature of mind. We do not follow mind. Mind is useful at the beginning for applying some types of methods,

Sogyal Rinpoche's Visit to Merigar A Joyous and Exhilarating Occasion

Andy Lukianowicz

On September 20th and 21st Merigar was graced by a two-day teaching on living and dying by Sogyal Rinpoche, renowned teacher and author of the best-selling “Tibetan Book of Living and Dying.” A lifelong friend of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, whom he was visiting, he had been invited to give this teaching by Yeshi Namkhai Rinpoche when the latter visited Sogyal Rinpoche’s Lerab Ling centre in France last year.

Heralded by huge rainbows the day before, at the start of the teaching Sogyal Rinpoche introduced himself with his customary humility as “not so much a teacher as a facilitator who introduces other teachers”. He then proceeded, over three hours, to deliver a masterful teaching on applying Dharma to living, reserving the teaching on death and dying for the following day.

Features of Sogyal Rinpoche’s teaching style are his humour, warmth, vivacity and spontaneity, and these were all in evidence from the start. After moving and affectionate references to his Dharma connection and long personal friendship with our teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, interlaced with many stories about and quotes (another feature of Sogyal Rinpoche’s teaching style) from his main teachers Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyense Rinpoche, Tulku Urgen Rinpoche and Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, he used readings from his book to illustrate the applicability of Dharma practice, also to find happiness in life. His aim, as always, to bring the

Dharma into our hearts in a way that can be easily understood, usefully applied and which is of immediate benefit.

Interestingly, he also used teachings from Christianity and Islam to illustrate his points, as well as findings from scientific research (this latter also a keen interest of the Dalai Lama’s). Also, sometimes Sogyal Rinpoche uses his humorous, clowning style of teaching as a facilitator, to startle or use a hedew experience to cleave an opening through the mind’s constant elucubrating and thereby swiftly and directly introduce some of his more original (and profound) teachings, through emotional and intellectual insights, into the listener’s mind and heart.

As a symbolic and verbal introduction, he used a gesture favoured by Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche. He would display his hand, palm faced outward, as a symbol of samsara, “mind turned outwards lost in its projections.” He then turned the hand palm inwards as a symbol of nirvana, “mind turned inwards, realising the essence of mind.” As a mind transmission, he (extraordinarily) used the occasion of shaking his audience’s inattentiveness: after a cursory (and typically English!) remark: “Am I boring you?” he silently and with a simple gaze roused an apperceptible shift in the rigpa energy flow, pattern and intensity level in the Gonpa.

This was connected with his remarks later with regard to the Nyingmapa teaching on the Dzogchen path which emphasizes that, once one has been introduced to the view, Dzogchen practice rather than being medi-



Photo: L Graf

tation on the view is instead getting familiar with the view.

We also had an example of his humour, presence and directness when he used the happenstance of a listener noisily falling from a breaking chair to give a teaching on how to use any experience, even one such as this, as an opportunity to reawaken and engage mindful presence.

He brought the day’s teaching to a close with a detailed explanation on Shamatha practice, with and without use of a support. Sogyal Rinpoche joked that we may not be interested in such a low teaching and practice as we were “used to Dzogchen,” but the response was one of great interest and close attention. Especially useful and illuminating was his teaching on using thought and emotion as a way to enhance meditation.

He used this occasion to give a teaching on how to deal with

criticism and anger. Noticing anger addressed at you, he said, instead of identifying with the “target” (i.e. dispenser) of the anger, pay attention to the volume and tone of voice of the angry person, thereby defusing and depersonalising the situation. And the wider message: “Don’t judge.”

On the following day Sogyal Rinpoche gave a detailed teaching on death and dying, that has become a sort of speciality teaching (also following the success of his book), concluding with a teaching on p’owa practice with Amitabha.

Speaking personally, I wish to thank Sogyal Rinpoche for this teaching. Having studied closely with him thirty years ago before moving to Italy and not having had the opportunity in the last fifteen years to see him again, this was an occasion not only to receive precious teachings but also to renew our link. I was grat-

ified when he not only remembered my name but also greeted me affectionately when I went to speak to him.

In conclusion, it is important that on both days, Sogyal Rinpoche talked of a teacher’s students as “his vehicle,” his means to spread the teachings, and encouraged us all to do all we can to support our teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in his work in every way. ©

>> continued from previous page
something related to teaching and instructions and we work with that. But we do not go after our thoughts, our imagination and all the thoughts that arise.

Many people say that they have problems because they are agitated, confused or always feel afraid. All of these things come from the mind. Mind creates many different kinds of tensions and day after day we accumulate tensions. Even though we accumulate a lot of tensions, the mind is never satisfied and creates more and more.

Sometimes mind also collaborates with our energy channels and then you can have experiences of visions and sounds that come from that energy. Then you think that it is not only mind but something concrete that you can see or hear talking in your ear telling you what to do or not to do. Some people even ask me if they should follow these things or not, thinking it is a bad spirit that is talking in their ear. There are no spirits. It is only the function of your energy. Now mind is associated with this energy and making you have more problems. For this reason you shouldn’t always go after your thoughts.

Of course, if it is something necessary, for example, you think what shall we have for lunch today? Shall we go home and cook or eat out in a restaurant? That is not fantasy. That is something concrete. Of course we should think but fantasy means you have nothing to do and are just fantasizing – what is he doing, is he doing something bad for me, what is he thinking, is there a person doing

some black magic etc. All these kinds of things are called fantasy created with our mind. Sometimes it seems real. You must be careful about this and not always go after thoughts. Try to relax in your dimension, and not become a slave of your mind. In this case you can control it and know that it is nothing more than your mind. So this is what you should do.

Here it says that if you are in your real nature, you do not have that problem, but when you are dependent on or dominated by your mind, your confusion is endless.

Then there is another quotation:
ཐས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་བསྐྱེད་པའི་མཆོག་། །ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ནི་དམིགས་སུ་མེད།

This means that when we are omniscient, that means in our real nature, we are not conditioned by all our visions, even if they are ordinary dualistic visions. When you are in your real nature, it doesn’t mean that your visions disappear but they are an aspect of the wisdom of omniscience. This is the supreme meditation and །ངོ་བོ་ཉིད་ནི་དམིགས་སུ་མེད། there is nothing concrete we consider to be a concept of this.

ང་བྱང་རྒྱུ་གྱི་སྤྱིང་པོར་ཞུགས་པའི་ཆོ། སྤྱོད་པའི་ཆོས་ལ་སྤོང་པའི་ཡུལ་མེད་དེ། མི་གནས་སོ།
When you are in the primordial state, in what you call the phenomena of emptiness, there exists no subject or object of emptiness. མི་གནས་སོ། Even not being in that concept. ཞེས་འབྱུང་བས་གསལ་ལོ། Then we can understand that.

དེ་ལྟར་སྤྱོད་པ་པོས་འདོད་ཆགས་དང་མ་གྲུལ་བས། ཡི་ཤེས་གསལ་པོ་འཇིག་འདོད་པ་དང་། བསམ་པ་ཅང་མེད་པ་འདི་འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་པ་འཇམ། འགོག་པར་ལྷུང་སྐྱུ་པ་དང་། ཐེ་ཚོས་ཟ་བར་འབྱུང་བ་ནི། སྤྱར་བསལ་ཏེ། འདི་ལ་བདག་མེད་པ་འཇིག་འགྲོ་མ་བསམས་པར་འདུག་སྟེ། ཡུལ་སྤྱོད་པ་སྤྱོད་སུ་དོགས་པའི་བདག་གཞན་གྱི་འཛིན་འཇོག་མེད་དོ།

When we are in our real nature, any different kinds of ordinary emotions we have are part of our wisdom and we do not fall into our ordinary emotions. And when we are in the primordial state we also do not worry and think that it is like the Hinayana type of Gogpa (‘gog pa), which means blocking all thoughts and there is nothing, only a kind of dimension of emptiness in which some kinds of practitioners remain for centuries and centuries. You shouldn’t worry about falling into this when thinking or judging does not arise immediately.

འདི་ལ་བདག་མེད་པ་འཇིག་འགྲོ་མ་བསམས་པར་འདུག་ཅེ། ཡུལ་སྤྱོད་པ་སྤྱོད་སུ་དོགས་པའི་བདག་གཞན་གྱི་འཛིན་འཇོག་མེད་དོ།
When there is nothing, with this kind of fear then you are creating some concepts of that.
ཉམས་སུ་བྱ་ན། ཕྱི་ནང་ཇི་ལྟར་སྤྱོད་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་རང་རིག་པས། ཀུན་ཤིང་ཡི་ཤུལ་སྤྱོད་ཡངས་ཀུན་གསལ་བ་ལ། བསྐྱེད་པའི་བཀའ་པ་དང་། རེ་དོགས་མེད་པའོ།
This is another explanation of not having hope or fear. ✽

Editing by J. Winkler, F. Sanders and L. Granger

The sbas pa’l rgum chung retreat

Merigar West October 2-10

Fabian Sanders

The Buddha said, “Everything is unreal”, like a dream. Only when one awakes can he or she realize this truth. So, at the beginning of October, it was marvelous to be in a daydream in which Rinpoche once more pointed out the way towards Awakening for all of us who are trapped in illusion and are willing to listen, reflect and practice.

Under the beautiful blue sky of a summer-like Merigar, the occasion was the explanation of a short text by an ancient Dzogchen Master, Buddhagupta (*sangs rgyas sbas pa*), one of the twenty-one great masters of Dzogchen from Oddiyana who form a lineage from Garab Dorje to the time when the teaching was transmitted to Tibet, not to be confused with Buddhaguhya or Buddha-guptanatha.

The text was ‘The Small Collection of Hidden Precepts’ (*sbas pa’i rgum chung*), an amazing, synthetic and essential text belonging to the ‘Mind Series’ (*sems sde*) of Dzogchen that has a remarkable history. It is one of two texts on Dzogchen found in the

Dunhuang caves, in the present day Chinese province of Gansu. The Buddhist grottoes in this remote location in central Asia had already been sealed in 1036 C.E. to safeguard the great multilingual Buddhist manuscript library that had accumulated in them over centuries, from the hostile armies which desired to conquer this important commercial hub once placed along the Silk Road. So, when in 1900 the Taoist monk, Wang Yuanlu, discovered the ‘Library Cave’, he uncovered a true mass of literary works.

With all due differences these texts had a similar destiny to the Terma literature, even though they were not intentionally hidden for the purpose of renewing and adapting the teachings to the different conditions brought about by the passing of time. Like Terma-s they remained hidden for centuries, well preserved and protected, until they finally came back to light, but unlike terma-s, they remained silent and mainly as the object of study of scholars.

From the point of view of Dzogchen they are extremely im-



Photo: L Carniel

portant not only for their content, but also because they attest the antiquity of the translations of texts belonging to this point of view, clearly placing them in the early phase (*snga ’gyur*) and thereby denying the oft heard allegations that they were more recent counterfeit productions.

In any case, as usual, Rinpoche was very generous in distributing profound teachings so wide and

deep that they were like nectar for all sorts of ears, hearts and minds. Basing himself on this ancient text, Rinpoche explained all the main points of the precious teaching of Ati Dzogpachenpo whose purpose is to integrate all into one’s Real Condition, from the Universal Base (*kun gzhi*) to various practices like the yoga of the night and so on. As usual He also told many delightful an-

ecdotes and examples from His own experience, as well as vivid and fresh expositions of general Buddhist teachings like the Four Noble Truths. Finally a heavy thunderstorm in the night of the day before the last day, marked the end of the retreat and we went back to normal dreaming, though armed with one more weapon to recognize that. ©

Cold Mist to Clear Light

Merigar West October 23-30

Julian Chase

The Khorde Rangdrol retreat in October this year began in thick fog. The clouds were banked high on the Merigar mountain and visibility was just a few feet: old friends needed double-takes before greeting each other – and was that a beautiful Dakini flitting through the mist, or one of the cooks...? And oh, the cold and wet....

Yet by the third day, on Sunday, this scene had completely changed: the sun had begun its warming, drying work and we were treated to a spectacular display of autumnal beauty across the length and breadth of the valley, with dark green turning to burnished copper, light green to scarlet, orange and gold; cold and dark to warmth and serene light.

And for me at least this mood of benevolent transformation continued – and I’m sure for many others, too, from what I could see. Rinpoche’s joyful and energetic presence was of course the beating heart of the whole retreat, and we were treated on the second day to a quick but intriguing glimpse of the very short but potent Shitro Khorde Rangdrol, in which we visualise ourselves as Samantabhadra yab-yum. This is a terma of Rinpoche’s Master Changchub Dorje, and it

was greeted with a lot of interest at the retreat since it is different from the Namcho Shitro given by Mingyur Dorje, which is more often carried out in the Community. This was followed on the third day by a very rare Wang by Rinpoche into the actual Shitro Khorde Rangdrol, in a ceremony that (for us) lasted three hours, but which for Rinpoche, with the preceding preparations, lasted a full four hours. Yet in all that time not once did Rinpoche tire or slow during the initiation; for each of the easily 400-plus people present, he maintained a completely even manner for the mantra he recited for each of us as he placed the vase on our heads and poured the water.



The Khorde Rangdrol initiation



Burning the support at the end of the Changchog ritual

Photo: E Del’Angelo

On the days that followed, Rinpoche took us step by step through the actual practice of the

Khorde Rangdrol Shitro, and of the Chang Chog ritual that can be used as a supplement to it to help dead friends and relatives. This too was a really valuable process of clarification for those of us, like myself, who were new to the practice, as we grappled with the complexities of the practice and visualisations. Finally, on the sixth day of the retreat we left all explanations behind and simply and intensively practiced as best we could, each of us for our dead friends, for our relatives, for those who had passed on with whom we’d had any contact.... How moving it was in different ways for each of us.

As we prepared to disperse on the final day, following Rinpoche’s precious advice and giving of lung, surely I speak for others

of those present in feeling such inspiration for and deepening of the practice, and my sense of sheer privilege at having been present at such a rare and wonderful event. Memories will remain strong of everything that was offered – Rinpoche’s precious teachings of course, but also the Dance, the Yantra Yoga, valuable practice explanations, rituals, and lots of friendship and conviviality. And as always, how could such a large event happen without the help and collaboration of dozens of people – the helpers, cleaners, marshals, guides, in the office and the shops – and those wonderful dakini-cooks.... A big thank you to everyone! ©

Photo: E Del’Angelo



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Tibetan Arts In Transition

A Journey through Theatre, Cinema and Painting

Andrea Dell'Angelo

From September 2008 to March 2009 ASIA carried out a project for raising the awareness of the traditions and culture of Tibet, co-financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project was entitled: *The commitment of Italian NGOs in Tibet to the safeguard of the traditions and culture of the Tibetan people, a journey through theatre, cinema and Tibetan painting* and generated great interest and participation. The cities of Rome, Naples and Arcidosso (Grosseto) were involved in this project to inform and make people aware of the need to safeguard and protect a culture in danger of extinction.

This multidisciplinary initiative was structured as an interactive didactic path which, through conferences, workshops, painting exhibitions, theatre performances and movie screenings, was able to stimulate an artistic juxtaposition of different cultures and raise public awareness of the importance of safeguarding and promoting the Tibetan cultural heritage.

The project arose from the conviction that Tibetan civilization and culture, today more than ever, have to face two kinds of threat: on one side an increasing-

ly worrying linguistic and cultural assimilation and on the other side, the steady “museification” of its millenary traditions, which risks forcing the spirit of Tibet into an unnatural immobility.

For more than twenty years ASIA has been trying to safeguard Tibetan culture in two well-defined directions. Firstly, implementing projects in Tibet aimed at the development of education, the preservation of culture and the ten traditional branches of science, the economic and social development of nomads, the improvement of sanitation and so forth.

Secondly, ASIA has always tried to promote Tibetan culture in the West by organizing meetings on Tibetan culture and tradition, conferences, exhibitions, workshops on specific issues like Tibetan medicine, nomadism, the Himalayan environment, Tibetan architecture and so on.

ASIA had never worked before with artists, painters and filmmakers who, aware that culture and development are reflected in the arts, are trying to unravel another aspect of Tibet, more concrete and less mystical.

Through this project, implemented in collaboration with



Lhamo Opera



Gonkar Gyatso – Buddha Sakyamuni

public organizations and institutions, private supporters and people who have encouraged and helped us, ASIA has continued its commitment to the Tibetan people and to the safeguarding of Tibetan culture, a culture which is active and alive in its different socio-political and cultural aspects and which deserves to be promoted to a wider audience.

The concrete outcome of the project was the publication of a booklet containing the speeches of the conferences organized at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” and at the “Sapienza”, University of Rome. The

booklet is intended to be a real “journey” through Tibetan theatre, cinema and painting and, in particular, focuses on the relationship between tradition and modernity and on the role of the artist in safeguarding the former, without falling into obsolescence.

On the webpage www.asia-onlus.org/handbook you can order the booklet and DVD “TIBETAN VISIONS – CONTEMPORARY PAINTING FROM TIBET”, that tells the story of the event held in Rome through interviews with the Tibetan painters.

In order to give continuity and sustainability to the project, ASIA has decided to organize a wider event on Tibetan contemporary painting that will host six Tibetan painters exhibiting their works in three Italian cities: Milan, Bologna and Rome.

ASIA is now trying to organize similar events in European and American cities and, in order to do so, will need the support and cooperation of all the people sharing our goal, not only to help the people and culture of Tibet to stay alive, but also to enrich and stimulate Western society. ©

Report on the Training for Translators Course in 2009

Margherita Pansa and Daniel Simonelli

This year, six people came to Merigar West with the aim of developing the skills needed in order to translate Tibetan texts into Western languages. Four of these were advanced students while for the others this was their first contact with this challenging and exciting task.

During this one-month course we were able to translate the following texts:

- 1) Taranatha, *bka' babs bdun ldan*
- 2) Jigme Lingpa, *rdzogs pa chen po gnas lugs cer mthong*
- 3) A collection of myths regarding *dpal ldan lha mo re ma ti*

Right from the beginning, for newcomers in the field of translation, working on these texts was a great challenge. To acquire all the skills needed in order to translate from Tibetan into any foreign

language is in itself very interesting work. To read, to analyze and to define proper contexts in order to find suitable meanings for the different words making up a phrase, are all interrelated tasks that need clear guidance to be successfully achieved.

Fabian Sander's kindness and patience were the main starting points for helping us beginners leave behind our “fears” concerning the difficulties of Tibetan language. He very generously provided us with many examples, ranging from Indian mythology to Sanskrit equivalents for Tibetan terms and expressions, in order to allow everyone to benefit from his or her ability and background while acquiring the different aspects of Tibetan grammar.

During the morning sessions, advanced students worked on a text by Taranatha, the *bka' babs bdun ldan*. The translation of this text had begun in previous sessions so, for the most part, we had the support of those who had worked on it in the past years, typed it into the computer and started a first draft translation.

Working in a group is really an interesting experience, especially for those who are used to working alone: in a friendly atmosphere all of us could express our personal views on the text and try to translate without any fear of saying something wrong. In particular the thorough discussions on difficult passages in our everyday work allowed all of us to improve our knowl-

edge of the Tibetan language, to comprehend better not only the grammatical rules, but also the necessity of a real understanding of the doctrinal background and practices involved in order to make better translations, as close as possible to the meaning of the original text. Developing our capacity to see the different options of translation and interpretation, we finally chose the most appropriate possibility for the given context (in Taranatha's text) or with the help of the explanation of our precious master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (in Jigme Lingpa's text). For people who like to translate, a translation group is really something useful and enjoyable.

In the afternoon advanced students and beginners joined to translate Jigme Lingpa's text, the *rdzogs pa chen po gnas lugs cer mthong* (Nakedly looking at the Real Condition, the Great Perfection) which belongs to the ‘jigs gling bka’ ‘bum, the collected works of ‘jigs med glin pa rang byung rdo rje mkhyen brtse'i ‘od zer.

This text is a very special teaching that exposes in a clear (naked) way the state of Dzogchen. Even

though in the title it is stated that these explanations are useful for beginners, we found that, indeed, they are valuable for all practitioners/followers of these very profound teachings.

In fact, our precious master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, gave a detailed explanation of this text during a retreat held at Tsegylgar, USA, from 30 May 2008 to 2 June 2008.

Once we had finished this text, which we found a little complicated because of the difficulties in understanding certain passages, we started another one: the *dpal ldan lha mo re ma ti*, a collection of myths prepared by Sönam Gyatso, the Third Dalai Lama. This is a very interesting text about Palden Lhamo's life in which epic battles between Devas, Asuras and Rakshasas are narrated and the different epithets attributed to Paldem Lhamo after each battle are mentioned in these amazing stories.

These three texts are really dissimilar from each other and this fact allowed all of us to explore some of the different possibilities of the Tibetan language,

>> continued on the following page



20 year Anniversary of the Shang Shung Institute

On Sunday September 20th, the anniversary of 20 years of activities of the Shang Shung International Institute of Tibetan Studies was celebrated in Arcidosso, Tuscany, Italy. Even though the weather conditions were not encouraging, throughout the day several hundred visitors braved the showers of rain to visit the Aldobrandesco castle, the venue for the conferences and the exhibition of sacred Tibetan art.

The conferences were followed with great attention by a large audience and in the presence of the Mayor of Arcidosso and the town councillor for culture. The professor of the faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Naples, Prof. Giacomella Orofino, gave an exciting talk on the origins and history of Tibetan culture, followed by Dr. Gino Vitiello, homeopath and expert in Tibetan medicine, who introduced the principles of Tibetan medicine which is based on the elements and then spoke about its place in history. The international expert on Tibetan Ku Nyè massage, Aldo Oneto, showed an attentive public some of the healing techniques used by the Tibetans in which they make use of the hands and simple substances such as butter, oils and herbs.

The exhibition of sacred Tibetan art attracted visitors with its traditional statues in bronze and gold portraying the principle manifestations of the divine Buddha and other fundamental elements of Tibetan Buddhist culture.

There was also an exhibition of highly valuable photographs taken by Fosco Maraini, well-known

photographer and Orientalist who dedicated a great amount of ethnographic research to Tibet. Some time ago Mr. Maraini donated the photographs to the Shang Shung Institute because he was aware of the important work and ethnographic historical research personally carried out by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the founder of the Institute.

At the same time as these events, there were stands in Piazza Cavour decorated like the rest of the external areas with the unmistakable coloured prayer flags which brought to mind the landscapes of Tibet and here one could find a selection of publications from the Shang Shung Institute. During the evening the stands drew the attention of a great number of food lovers



The Aldobrandeschi castle in Arcidosso was the venue for the SSI Anniversary

Photo: P Barry

diverse activities certainly did not overlook the children who built kites and came to be familiar with

In the evening the lights were lit at the Unanimi Theatre which hosted a sample of the final show

self performed by twenty Tibetan students from different Indian universities, artists not by profession but for necessity and love for their artistic and musical tradition. The entire show was brilliant and highly expressive. The student performers entertained spectators for an hour and a half with a series of performances of traditional dance and new popular songs such as, for example, one dedicated to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The day successfully reached its goal of carrying a message of protecting the cultural heritage of Tibet outside Merigar and of bringing this fascinating thousand year-old culture closer to the public.

The next step in this direction will be the creation of a museum dedicated entirely to Tibet. We sincerely hope that this will come to fruition in the shortest possible time. ©



The Tibetan students performing a traditional song during the evening show

Photo: R Piro

who, in spite of the bad weather, gathered to sample traditional Tibetan momò (a small pastry with spiced meat steam cooked). A day filled with such festive and

one of the many games played by children of the same age in distant Tibet, as well as other traditional board games, all inside a workshop dedicated to them.

meant to be given in Piazza Indipendenza and moved to the theatre because of the weather conditions. Later in the evening it was the venue for the show it-

Video Webcasts of Tibetan Medical Talks by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

The next video webcast of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo's Tibetan Medicine public talk series from our Tibetan Healing Center in Northampton, MA is scheduled for Friday, November 6th from 7-9pm EST. We have received many requests for this service, and we are happy to finally be able to provide this wonderful opportunity to learn about Tibetan Medicine from anywhere in the world.

Anyone with an ample Internet connection and a web browser should be able to connect to this FREE service.

How does this work? Simply type the following web address

into your browser on the date of a scheduled webcast between the hours of 7pm and 9pm EST (Time zone of Boston or New York City: <http://213.203.141.7/ssi-usa/>

If you live far from Northampton, MA, don't forget to check your local time for each event before attending. You can do this on the following webpage: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

The first Tibetan Medicine webcast that took place on October 2, 2009 was very successful (108 connections!), and we look forward to continuing this exciting new service. If you would like to



donate to the costs needed to help the Tibetan Medicine live webcast project continue, please donate directly through the SSI-USA online store at www.shangshung.org/store, or contact us directly at: secretary@shangshung.org or 413-369-4928. ©

If you have any questions or comments about this service, please email us at secretary@shangshung.org

>> continued from previous page from old to modern, from doctrinal exposition to narrations, and also poetry.

Everything helped us to create, from the very beginning, a relaxed atmosphere in which our small group could share one in-

tense and enriching month of studies. In the future we plan to go on studying together organizing periodic meetings through

Skype or whatever tool we find suitable for that purpose.

We are very thankful to our Master and to the Shang Shung

Institute for giving us this opportunity. ©

Focus on The Mirror



No. 1, March 1990

Why this newspaper is called The Mirror

Excerpted from Issue 1, 1990

The mind's essential nature is said in the Dzogchen teachings to be like the nature of a mirror. A mirror's essential nature is clear, pure, and limpid; if this was not the case no reflections could arise in it. In the same way the mind's natural condition is one of clarity, purity and limpidity. A mirror will reflect whatever is placed in front of it, but the nature of the mirror is not stained by any reflection, no matter how ugly or terrible. In the same way, if an individual remains continually present in the contemplative state that is the inherent nature of the mind, no thought however beautiful or ugly, attractive or repulsive, can stain the mind's fundamental purity, or distract or disturb the practitioner, who remains integrated in a state beyond the limits of the ego and the judging mind, experiencing the world as the play of his or her own energies. This is the effortless state of 'Dzogchen', the 'Great Perfection', complete in itself, and lacking nothing. But when an individual is distracted, they are no longer in the state of the nature of the mind; they enter into the dualistic confusion of separating their experience into that of an observing subject who perceives a seemingly external world as an object. This is said to be like mistaking the unreal reflections arising in a mirror for reality itself.

The Dzogchen teachings exist to enable those who have entered into this dualistic condition, with all its inherent suffering, to return to the 'primordial state' which is

the mind's natural condition, the state of Dzogchen. This state is self-perfected, and exists in every individual from the very beginning. It is only lost through the dualistic clinging of the ego-fixated mind. It does not have to be created, or constructed. The practitioner of Dzogchen, having received transmission of the primordial state from a qualified master, experiences it for him or herself and no longer remains in any doubt as to what this state really is.

He or she then tries to remain present, continuing in non-dual contemplation in each moment, without becoming distracted or allowing the mind to become caught up in the net of conceptualisation. Relaxing body, energy and mind in the state of pure presence or 'rigpa', he or she allows the dualistic clinging of the mind to 'self-liberate', without renouncing, purifying, or transforming anything.

Thus the path of Dzogchen is called the 'Path of Self-Liberation'. On this path, all that arises in the practitioner's field of experience is seen to be essentially no more real than a reflection in a mirror. Finding oneself, through transmission from the master and through the various practices of the path, in the Primordial State that is one's inherent condition, one then continues in this state of contemplation, in which nothing can disturb the mind's natural spontaneously manifesting clarity. One develops in this state until one reaches total realisation, in which the bonds of dualistic existence are completely untied.



No. 12, November 1991

The Teaching given by His Holiness The XIV Dalai Lama to the Dzogchen Community in the Merigar Gonpa

Excerpted from Issue 3, 1990

On the 30th May 1990, on the occasion of the official opening of the activities of the Shang Shung Institute, His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso the 14th Dalai Lama gave the first teaching in the Merigar West Gonpa to the Dzogchen Community. The teaching belonged to the twenty-five cycles of the secret teachings of the Fifth Dalai Lama and it was believed to have been the first time this particular teaching had ever been given in public and in the West. The following is an excerpt.

●●● In the Dzogchen teaching the principle of our existence, our condition, corresponds to the two kayas, two states: the kaya of the dimension of form, and that of the Dharma, which is the nature of all existence. The kaya of the nature of existence is the one that represents our condition of emptiness, is pure from the very beginning, and is called Kadag.

.....

There are many methods and techniques in the Dzogchen teachings which can be learned and applied to enable one to know and develop the primordial state; but to enter and remain in that contemplative state in one's every moment is the essential practice of Dzogchen to which the symbol of the mirror points, and to the sustaining of which the Dzogchen Community and this newspaper are dedicated. © John Shane

Whereas its qualification, its potentiality that manifests is called Lhundrub, which is generally called the Rupakaya. On this basis, this is what manifests in realization.

The methods for applying the practice of the Dzogchen path are linked to our three primordial wisdoms: of nature, of emptiness and of energy, the manifestation of our potentiality. Bringing these into practice one obtains the realization of the three dimensions. In particular in the Dzogchen teachings there is Ati Dzogpachenpo; Ati means the primordial vehicle. This is the way that is beyond effort and beyond modification, which means it is beyond the mind and concepts of the mind, whereas all the different paths until that of Ati Yoga, like Mahayoga and Anuyoga are paths which are linked to application of the mind and the concepts of the mind. Dzogchen talks about Tsoldral (rTsol-bral) which means "beyond effort". But this does not mean that one does nothing, although one might misunderstand it in this way. The real meaning of Tsoldral is that one has a real understanding of this state, of this consciousness. This knowledge comes through following one's Master with devotion and through this one receives a kind of empowerment from the Master and then this awareness arises. It is not something constructed; it is something which comes from the discovery of one's own nature. All the methods until Anuyoga, all the paths for realization

The Future of the Dzogchen Community

Excerpted from Issue 12, 1991

On November 2nd 1991 at Merigar West, Chögyal Namkhaj Norbu spoke about the need for people to consider how the Community has developed and the necessity of taking responsibility for shaping the future. The following is an excerpt from his talk.

Our Community is based on the teaching and the spirit of the teaching, it's not just an ordinary organization. This Community exists within a society which is always moving ahead and changing. The teaching tells us how to work with circumstances and that is why we always try to improve and to integrate as much as possible in society.

I've heard many people say that the Community is getting too organized, it's not like it used to be once. Certainly you may feel that it was more simple and natural but you have to understand that we are going ahead in society, we are not going backwards. Going back to the beginning means cancelling everything.

If one person thinks only about themselves and refuses to accept society, I'm not saying that couldn't be a solution. But I can say for sure that this is not a solution for society or for the majority of people. Rather we have to consider what the condition of society is and how to integrate the teaching in society. That's why we've organized the Community and we are trying to organize it better to function in society. That's true integration. That's why we need at least a minimum of organization, not to remain behind everyone.

Up till now I've always committed myself like the father of a family. But it's not sufficient to think that I commit myself and no-one else needs to bother. There are things that have to be done, things that involve a commitment. If the Community is to continue everyone must be responsible.

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.....

tion of knowledge are linked to various methods involving effort. For example in Tantrism there are practices with the prana, the chakras and the channels etc. All of these involve effort and so it is said that even these are paths of the application of the mind, whereas the Dzogchen teaching which is called Atiyoga is said to be the application of the path of wisdom. This means that there is something the Master introduces to the disciple and also that the disciple discovers an awareness, a consciousness. And so in this sense Dzogchen, Atiyoga is considered to be something that is not a teaching of a gradual path, it is more a direct path of knowledge... ©

Focus on The Mirror

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No. 15, May, June 1992

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Last year I wrote a letter informing people of my ideas on how the Community could continue, to ask people what they think about them. I've received a few replies to my request for people's opinions. About twenty percent of the people who replied said they thought these ideas were very interesting, but about thirty percent replied with criticism. Most people kept quiet and I don't know whether or not they are in agreement with my ideas or are just too shy to say anything.

Anyway my original idea was to form a kind of commission to examine all these ideas but when I saw these kinds of criticism I thought better of it because I'm convinced that the time is not yet ripe for it.

Our Community is not yet mature so it's useless to carry out my ideas for the international Community. But Merigar, Tsegyalgar and Tashigar are all concretely in existence. With all of our sacrifices we have acquired land, houses and things to maintain. The principle of this is always for the maintenance of the teaching. Therefore, I haven't the least intention of renouncing all of this. Certainly we will have to find a solution of how to do it. It's not that I want to decide everything by myself. The people interested have to decide and take responsibility. *



The Precious Vase of Instructions

Excerpted from Issue 15, 1992

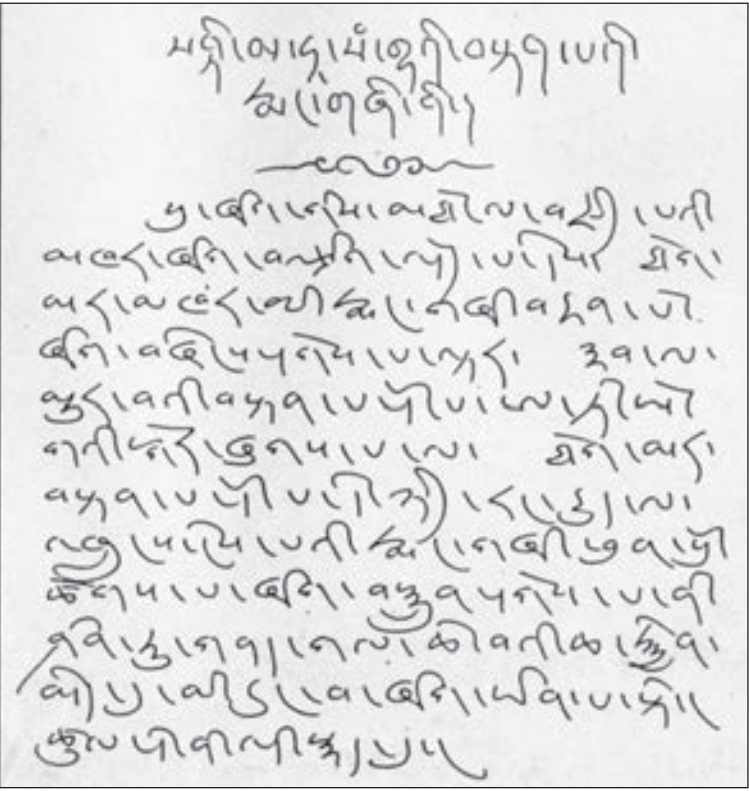
Donatella Rossi

The teachings given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in the Merigar Gonpa during the Easter '92 Retreat (between 15th and 22nd April) centered on a text he has set down this year.

Its full Tibetan title, *Santi Maha Sangha'i rMang gZhi'i Khrid*, Rin Chen jBun bZang, can be translated as "The Precious Vase of Instructions relating to the Basis of Santi Maha Sangha". As we know, some years ago Rinpoche composed "Santi Maha Sangha" (meaning "The Dzogchen Community"). This text presents in an extremely condensed form the various stages that need to be understood and applied by a practitioner interested in realizing the "Great Perfection" Teaching, and in developing the capacity to transmit it correctly and completely to other beings. The instructions Rinpoche gave during the Retreat refer to the initial aspect of this: the "Basis". In order to give a complete overview of the sense of the Dzogchen Teaching – and above all to nurture and develop an inner understanding of this Teaching – the text first deals with topics related to fundamental concepts such as the Four Noble Truths, Compassion, Bodhicitta, correct attitude, morality and so on. It is necessary to study the theory or view illustrated in the texts of the three series of Dzogchen, as well as that expressed in the Sutra and the various classifications of Tantra so as to gain a proper understanding of the approaches related to the different traditions.



No. 17, October 1992



"If someone wants to build a tall house, first that person has to think about the foundation. It is the same to follow a Teaching like Atiyoga, which is very deep and a very fast way to realization. First of all, one must build a very solid base, so that the knowledge of the true condition of the individual can arise."

From the first page of "Santi Maha Sangha" by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

To open one's heart to the sense of the Basis, it is also essential to train one's mind and attitude completely, taking advantage (along with the study) of the concrete opportunities provided by each moment of our day-to-day life. In this way, genuine compassion can arise as to the dimension of ignorant suffering that all beings experience. True Bodhicitta can develop, free from personal conditioning. The many techniques of meditation and Yoga are the precious jewels of the transmission which, fortunately, realized masters have handed down as far as us. Practical commitment based on a real knowledge of them helps us to experience directly the meaning of contemplation, understanding of the nature of mind.

Those who wish to commit themselves in this way will study the texts and practise precisely in order to gain concrete knowledge. If, after this preparation, they concretely show Rinpoche that they have the necessary requirements, they can then commit themselves to the next stage: the first level of Santi Maha Sangha. The original text of the instruction regarding the Basis comprises roughly four hundred pages of hand-written Tibetan script. It is full of specific quotations, and it clearly describes not only the mental trainings and techniques to be applied, but also the different concepts underlying Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. During the retreat Rinpoche translated it concisely in its essence. He also let us know that

Second International Seminar on Tibetan Language

Excerpted from Issue 17, 1992

The Second International Seminar on Tibetan Language, organized by the Shang Shung Institute, Siena University and I.S.M.E.O., took place from August 30th to September 4th, 1992, in Siena and at Merigar. The aim of the conference was to offer an occasion to scholars and specialists in the field to have an active exchange that would help the language maintain its identity.

As academic conferences go, the Tibetan Language Seminar was something rather special. For it was the first time that scholars living outside Tibet had had the chance to sit down and discuss the situation of their language with colleagues from within Tibet. True, a first edition of the Seminar was held in India in 1987, but sadly, no Tibetans coming from Tibet itself had been on hand to speak.

Now, thanks to the organization of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and the Shang Shung Institute, it was finally possible for Tibetans from all parts to gather, describe the differing situations of the language, and put forward concrete suggestions for its protection and continuation.

One of the main themes of this historical conference was the need for standardization of the language. The choice of a basic standard does not seem to entail too many problems. As Mr. Tsering Thar briefly pointed out in his paper, the Lhasa dialect had always represented the principle means of national communication, owing to Lhasa's role as a central meeting point for so many traders, pilgrims and monks. Other speakers pointed to the fact that when educated Tibetans of all different native dialects met, as at this conference, they would immediately start communicating in the language of Lhasa.

Chairperson, Mr. Rakra Tethong Rinpoche, underlined how just about everyone present was in agreement as to the necessity of taking this 'common language' as a standard.

More difficult is the question of how to preserve and actively promote the language. As we all know, Tibetan has been catapulted into the technologi-

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he has finished writing the text on the "first level" as well as part of the second. With his untiring kindness, Rinpoche has taped a literal translation of the text on the Basis – more than 130 hours of tape. Several people have collaborated in the transcription which is well on its way to being completed and printed. In good time, an annotated translation will be written. ©

[illegible]



THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Drogchu Community

H. H. Sakya Trizin visits Merig

August 2003

by Lio Granger



afternoon, he gave initiation and instruction on Guru Drogchu from a terma of Nyang Rat Nyima Oser, a 12th century king tertön, to more than five hundred people at Merig's Goaps. Behind his throne which was placed directly under the panel representing Sakya Pandita and other Sakya masters, His Holiness had hung a beautiful thangka of Wangchuk Nyungpo, a direct disciple of Jigme Lingpa, a serene and important master related to this practice. Directly in front of him sat Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his wife, Rosu, surrounded by Ringpoche's many students in special areas that had been marked out in the Goaps. His Holiness gave clear and patient explanations of the various stages of the initiation in his clear and perfect English.

After the conclusion of the initiation, Sakya Trizin gave the "lung" and a brief explanation of the "Chen

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

SCHEDULE

2003 - 2004



2003
MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA
 October 13 Letter for Margarita.
 October 31 - November 4 Longpal Teaching Retreat

December 4 Margarita Long Life Practice (Ringpoche's birthday)

BRAZIL
 December 30 Letter for São Paulo, Brazil.
 December 32-14 Brazil retreat

CHILE
 December 16 Letter for Chile
 December 18 Talk on Tibetan Medicine
 December 19-21 Santiago retreat

ARGENTINA
 December 22 Letter for Cordoba

2003 - 2004
 December 26 - January 2 Tashigang retreat

Saint Malo Sangha
 January 6-8 DMS Basic Exams
 January 9-13 DMS 1st Level Training

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and His Holiness Sakya Trizin at Merig

This has been a historical summer in Tuscany and the rest of Italy. The media and the public have been

No. 65, August, September 2003

No. 22, June, July 1993

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cal era, and as a result, a whole set of new technical terms has to be introduced and standardized. Now too, much work is being done in this way by Tibetan linguists both inside and outside Tibet so as to prevent the language from becoming swamped by an excess of haphazard borrowings from other sources. A distinguished example is Acharya Karma Monlam, an interpreter of H.H. the Dalai Lama, who spoke on his work in compiling a new comprehensive Tibetan-English dictionary incorporating around 60,000 new terms complete with brief explanations, which should be of considerable help to secondary school students.

Language and education clearly go hand in hand, and several interesting papers touched on educational matters. Many speakers, such as Professor Dunkar Losang Trinlas Rinpoche from Lhasa, underlined the advantages of teaching modern subjects to Tibetan children in their own language: studies have shown that this simply produces better results. Apropos of this, Mr. Lobsang Tenzin Rikha of the Council for Tibetan Education in Dharamsala remarked on the excellent quality of the modern Tibetan scientific text books produced in Lhasa.

This is just one of the areas where greater communication and co-operation could benefit the future of the language and of Tibetans in general. After all, as one delegate pointed out, a subject like mathematics is the same the world over, independently of politics or philosophy. Indeed there was an overall feeling that an information network would help promote the language as a whole. And in response to a generalized request from speakers, Professor Namkhai Norbu confirmed that the Shang Shung Institute would be pleased to act

The Health of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Excerpted from Issue 30, 1995

Barrie Simmons

In early November, on one of the last days of teaching the first level of the Santi Maha Sangha at Tsegyalgar, (Conway, Massachusetts, U.S.A.), Rinpoche communicated to those present that he had very recently developed a major medical problem. Thereupon, Dr. Gerry Steinberg, a physician, and Paula Barry, a Nurse Practitioner, both long-standing members of the Tsegyalgar community, explained the malady in detail.

Rinpoche was diagnosed on Saturday, November 5th, as suffering from acute promyelocitic leukemia in a very initial phase, though at that date he showed no external signs of illness. On Monday, November 7th, he was admitted for treatment to the Sloane-Kettering Memorial Institute in New York city, widely considered one of the outstanding hospitals in the world for this type of disease. Rinpoche's schedule of travel and teaching through the first quarter of 1995 was immediately suspended.

Tests on Tuesday, November 8th, confirmed the first diagnosis, and treatment was begun with transretinoic acid, a new and powerful medicine.

On Sunday, November 13th, Rinpoche was discharged from hospital to become an outpatient. His treatment plan foresaw 45 to 60 days of continuing medication

as a centre for pooling and exchanging information among delegates, and was happy to help co-ordinate preparations for a third edition of the Seminar. ©

with transretinoic acid, involving twice-weekly clinic visits for controls, with chemotherapy to be administered in a subsequent phase. Unfortunately, complications ensued, and on Thursday, November 17th, he was again hospitalized. Due to lack of immunity, expectable in leukemia, Rinpoche had contracted a pulmonary infection which became pneumonia with high fever. This, with renal insufficiency, and anemia, thereafter occasioned his transfer to an intensive care unit within the hospital. He underwent antibiotic and corticosteroid therapy, repeated dialysis and transfusions of various blood products. This difficult period ended with release from the intensive care unit on Sunday, November 27th.

Pneumonia had ceased. His kidneys had started slow recovery, the leukemia had begun to respond to treatment. The doctors arrived at a positive prognosis. A new discharge from the hospital came on Thursday, December 8th. Unfortunately, it was followed within days by an emergency readmission, again provoked by collateral complications. This time Rinpoche was under attack by an oral fungus which impeded eating, by oral infection, by continuing anemia and by bleeding from stress-induced stomach ulcer. Although the new problems were, from a medical viewpoint, simpler to overcome, they brought fever, pain, weakness to Rinpoche and preoccupation to his family and the Community.

On December 24th, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu once more left

the hospital and began outpatient care.

On January 8th, the leukemia had entered remission. His doctors proposed, and Rinpoche accepted, therapy with monoclonal antibodies. This treatment is still experimental, so new that it has been tried for this type of leukemia with very few human beings, all successfully. It should make subsequent chemotherapy much more effective. It is, hopefully, free of risk. Treatment was administrated twice weekly for three weeks, on an outpatient basis, at Sloane-Kettering, beginning Monday, January 23rd.

As of Saturday, February 18th, Rinpoche has completed three weeks of treatment for leukemia with monoclonal antibodies, as an outpatient, with positive outcome.

Rinpoche was in the hospital from Monday, February 20th to Saturday February 25th, at the Sloane-Kettering Memorial Institute, for a first cycle of chemotherapy. There were no contraindications for his release on Saturday.

As of noon, Sunday, March 5th, the situation is as follows: Rinpoche celebrated Losar, the Tibetan New Year, at home in his New York apartment, comfortable but expecting probably fever, as his doctors had warned, as a consequence of lowered immunity after his first cycle of chemotherapy. That fever came the next day, Friday, March 3rd, and he was immediately readmitted to the hospital at the Sloane-Kettering Memorial Institute, where he is now and likely to remain for some days.

Rinpoche's condition is not considered worrisome under the circumstances. Positive developments, which can reasonably be expected, may make the second cycle of chemotherapy feasible in a few weeks. After completion

HH. Sakya Trizin visits Merigar

Excerpted from Issue 65, 2003

Liz Granger

This has been a historical summer in Tuscany and the rest of Italy. The media and the public have been talking of little else – the heat. Wave after wave of torrid African heat, without a cloud, without a break, without a sign of relief! For those of us fortunate to live on the lush green slopes of Mt. Amiata, home to Merigar, the summer has been remarkable not merely for its marathon heat wave. It has been a period that has seen two teaching retreats of our master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in June and August each of which hosted close to 1000 participants.

It also gave us an ongoing series of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance courses, practice retreats and practices, enough to satisfy even the most eager and diligent yogi or yogini. And all this rising crescendo of spiritual activities has just concluded in a very special way with the visit of H.H.

>> continued on the following page

of three cycles, another course of treatment with monoclonal antibodies is probable, bringing the entire cure to its hoped for successful end in late Spring.

On the occasion of his original announcement, and in messages sent later to various members of the Community, Rinpoche urges us not to worry over his condition, but to give concrete help through practice, and above all to keep pure our relations, thus our samaya, with the Master and between practitioners. ©

Barrie Simmons,
Blue Gakyil, Merigar

Focus on The Mirror

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Sakya Trizin, the 41st holder of the Sakya throne and head of the Sakyapa lineage.

His Holiness’ short stay at Merigar was on the invitation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who had requested him to impart the initiation of Guru Dragpo, the wrathful form of Guru Rinpoche, to himself and many eager students. Although his time with us was very short due to a tight teaching and travelling schedule as well as visa difficulties finally overcome, it was no less meaningful due to its brevity, for in the course of an afternoon, he gave initiation and instruction on Guru Dragpo from a terma of Nyang Ral Nyima Ozer, a 12th century king tertön, to more than five hundred people in Merigar’s Gonpa. Behind his throne which was placed directly under the panel representing Sakya Pandita and other Sakyapa masters, His Holiness had hung a beautiful thanka of Wangdud Nyingpo, a direct disciple of Jigme Linga, a tertön and important master related to this practice. Directly in front of him sat Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his wife, Rosa, surrounded by Rinpoche’s many students in special areas that had been marked out in the Gonpa. His Holiness gave clear and patient explanations of the various stages of the initiation in his clear and perfect English.

After the conclusion of the initiation, Sakya Trizin gave the

‘lung’ and a brief explanation of the “Great Song of Experience” by Sakyapa Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltzen, a very profound text with an important explanation of the view, meditation, behaviour and result which is closely connected with the Dzogchen teachings. At the conclusion of teachings, the many people present lined the Gonpa on the invitation of His Holiness to receive a blessing from the empowered statue of Guru Padmasambhava, the torma and the nectar which had been used for the initiation.

The following morning, after a brief meeting with the local authorities who in honor of the occasion presented ‘khatag’ to His Holiness, Sakya Trizin departed with his son, H.H. Ratna Vajra (Dungse Rinpoche), his son’s wife, his uncle and two attendants to continue his tour of Italy.

This was his second visit to Merigar, a powerful experience for the many people who attended, and a fitting conclusion to the many weeks of retreat and practice that have taken place at the Gar. Our heartfelt thanks to His Holiness for his time and energy given so warmly and without reserve and to our master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, for his great kindness in creating this opportunity for all of us. ©

Mandarava Retreat Webcast

Excerpted from Issue 69, 2004

Luigi Ottaviani
Yeshe Namkhai

In 2004 the first webcast of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s teaching was transmitted around the world from Isla di Margarita in Venezuela. The webcast system was set up thanks to the initiative and know-how of Yeshe Silvano Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani.

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

Merigar decided to propose a webcasting service to all the other ‘gars’ and ‘lings’ in order that all community members could have access to the teachings, even at distance. The technological solution by which the webcast service was carried out made use of the infrastructure set up for the Community’s new IT system. This brought about a sizeable reduction in costs and is the first service produced and supplied by the Community.

Examining in detail this initiative, AmbientiWeb Consulting offered the Community their technical studio, the system set-up as well as all the work required for carrying out the webcast, free of charge.

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

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

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

Luigi Ottaviani & Yeshe Namkhai
AmbientiWeb Consulting Snc
info@ambientiweb.it



No. 75, July, August 2005

Investigating the Ancient Kingdom of Shang Shung

Bruno Baumann interviews Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar (West), July 17, 2005

Excerpted from Issue 75, 2005

Austrian-born Bruno Baumann is an award-winning writer and photo-journalist living in Munich. He interviewed Chögyal Namkhai Norbu about his own research into Shang Shung and about his visit there in 1988.

Bruno Baumann: Could you tell us about your own research on Shang Shung and why you consider the area of Khyung Lung to be important.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: In general in Tibetan history there are many important places related to the ancient kingdom of Shang Shung because the Shang Shung kings of the past lived in different places such as Guge and Khyung Lung and many others. But we consider Khyung Lung to be a little more interesting because it is the place where the last king (of Shang Shung) lived. So it is more recent for us even though in the real sense it was at the time of Srongtsen Gampo, which was not so very near. Since the history of Shang Shung is really very ancient it was for that reason that I went mainly to Khyung Lung.

During our trip there we saw many caves and understood that in ancient times the Shang Shung kings lived there in the winter-time. But I think that during that period, they didn’t always live in a fixed palace such as the Potala. Although they stayed mainly in a stable place during the winter-time, in summer they moved to different places and did a lot of activities. And I also think that the weather and the general situation in that part of the country is a little different today from what it was in the past because the situation doesn’t correspond very much.

We visited a lot of these caves and we understood that even when the last Shang Shung king no longer lived there, some Bonpo groups continued to live there for many years. Later on there were Buddhists.

Then finally there was a kind of small Gelugpa monastery there. We understood that because in one of the caves there were small remnants of books and even though not a single book was intact, we could see in which period different kinds of schools and traditions had lived there. The books showed this very clearly.

Later, during the Cultural Revolution, they did not permit the Gelugpa community to continue living there and after, when things became a little freer, they rebuilt the Gelugpa monastery in a nearby town because it wasn’t so comfortable to return to the caves, which were completely empty.

Here we are referring to a very ancient period in which the Bonpo tradition explains that there were 18 famous kings of Shang Shung who lived in different parts. It is a kind of rough history. In this period even Tibet didn’t exist. The land and people were there but it wasn’t called Tibet and there was no Tibetan king. This came much later. The first Shang Shung king that is mentioned goes back to very ancient times.

Historically the first Shang Shung king was more or less at the time of Tonpa Shenrab, the founder of the Bon tradition. The Bon of that time and the Bon of today are a little different. The characteristic of ancient Bon was knowledge of different kinds of medicine and astrology, rituals for having good crops and eliminating illness. It was related to the countryside, to the people, to the local guardians and there was a kind of interdependence within their knowledge and they studied very much in their own way, not like the Buddhist way. But modern Bonpo have taken much from Buddhism and have almost lost the ancient Bonpo tradition.

So in that period there were the ancient Bonpo who were related to the 18 famous kings of Shang Shung. Some of these kings lived in Khyung Lung and it was their residence and later on they continued to live there.

BB: Which sources did you use in your own research? Did you find any Bonpo texts which included historical data on Shang Shung or something about the ancient form of Bon practised at the time of Shang Shung?

CNN: I couldn’t find very much in the official Bonpo books, such as their history books. But when I was doing research I found many things in the Bonpo rituals. For example, the Bonpo still use many of their ancient rites and there is a part of every rite called ‘mang’ (smrang) in which they explain a kind of short history. These historical explanations are very useful for understanding how ancient Bonpo really was.

A question from the audience: How can we approach the study of Tibetan history in the future?

CNN: We should be more aware of how the real situation is, not only going after ‘official’ histories, because official books and histories change according to the situation so we cannot put much faith in them. But we should look at the concrete situation and try to do research. I think that is very important. When I was working at the university, at the beginning, when I spoke about Shang Shung, many people laughed. They said that it was only a kind of legend, that Shang Shung didn’t exist. That is an example because it has been officially documented that way. But then when we are a little aware and we do some research, then we can discover many things. That way in the future I hope very much that Tibetans and particularly Westerners, scholars, people who are doing research, will try to find something more concrete and develop this kind of research. I think that that is very important. ©



No. 80, May, June 2006

The 25th Anniversary Celebration of Merigar

Excerpted from Issue 80, 2006

Lauri Denyer

Merigar is the center of the worldwide Dzogchen community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu set in

the matchless beauty of the foothills of Monte Amiata in Tuscany, Italy. It was developed entirely by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and

his students, working on the basis of the Dzogchen teachings, as he explicitly presents them. Merigar’s function is integrally connected to the principles laid out by the Master, to this day.

When Rinpoche’s students first came to Merigar, there was no beautiful wooden Gonpa decorated with images of all the masters of the lineages, and the twelve Dzogchen masters, the

vidams and dakinis, as well as mantras and seed syllables. Nor was there a network of other gars and lings around the world, looking to Merigar as an example. There was only the potential, the energy and the means to do something, to study and practice with Namkhai Norbu, on this piece of farmland near Monte Labbro.

Oliver Leick, director of the Shang Shung Institute of Austria, and in charge of the Ka-ter Translation project and Opera Omnia project to translate the complete works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu recalled “I just remember when I came here there was no road sign at all, there was a little wooden road sign called ‘Merigar,’ I still have the picture in black and white: it was nearly falling apart.”

Merigar’s many features- the Gonpa, the large archive of rare texts and video and audio resources, the offices of the Community, the Istituto Shang Shung, Shang Shung Edizioni, the Mirror, the dormitories, and other buildings, the stupas – have all come since those early pioneer days. It hosts immense retreats every year, as well as many other seminars, trainings and conferences.

Rinpoche said in his opening address that there is always something going on at Merigar, whether he is in residence or not. The way of the Community is be-

ing together, working with one’s energy, doing things, learning about oneself and others at the same time.

“Rinpoche is the person who has always put in the most.... he personally worked the most physically, building walls and emptying out the stables,” John Shane said in his reminiscences of the early days, “and Rinpoche was the greatest worker among us and of course we are incredibly grateful to him for that: he set us an example which today still shines to us all. Wherever we come from in the world, and whatever experience we bring to the teaching there is always the example that Rinpoche contributed the most, he would not ask us ever to do something that he would not do himself. And I think that this place is the navel of the Dzogchen community, because in Tibetan medicine everything grows outward from the navel when the child is forming inside the mother, and I am sure all the gars and lings are very proud and will have Merigar as a fantastic example for many years to come.” ©

“When you discover one, you discover all.”

Interview with Yeshe Namkhai June 3, 2008

Excerpted from Issue 92, 2008

The Mirror: Recently you mentioned at a talk at Tsegyalgar East that while you were visiting Tibet for your enthronement ceremony at your monastery, you had some kind of awakening experience. Would you like to tell us something about that?

Yeshe Namkhai: Yes. An awakening experience is not as what you might see in a movie. Its not like you go some place, a monastery for example, and you are supposed to be the head of this monastery, they invite you when you are very young, present you with objects and special things that should belong to you, and you magically recognize these objects. You recognize these objects because you played that bell all your life. Or if you did something more Tantric, maybe you used a purba. Or if you did a lot of Tantric initiations then I suppose you recognize your hat, all these ritual things. Probably though, if you are a Dzogchen practitioner, you would take the first bell that you found, and you would not use a hat or all this equipment.

When I was at the monastery I had more experiences related to



Dzogchen than the Sakyapa tradition, which is what the monastery is. I expect more Dzogchen experience, since I passed all my life as a Dzogchen practitioner. I am more interested in knowledge and awareness than in rituals or ‘sacred’ things. Of course when this event of awakening happens you start to have thoughts that are not from your mind or from within you. It is not that you start to have memories, but you have experiences completely from outside of your own mind, based on things that you don’t know.

I was expecting something more like this. Instead I had real and familiar thoughts and feelings that were from another environment completely. It was a little confusing at the beginning. Slowly I passed from having these kinds of thoughts and memories to having clear images, mental images, from the moment of

death to the moment of rebirth. What you really remember is that you go back, like from today you go back and back and back, and then slowly you start to remember everything. You remember all that happened before your birth, and you start to remember backwards everything until the moment you died. This is more or less the main memory I have. I don’t have any clear memories before the moment of death and rebirth. I have thoughts, more or less like you have a consciousness.

So, at the beginning I had a lot of confusion and I could not sleep for many days because this was all coming out like something that was opened. It started to flow and could not be stopped. At the beginning it did not stop for five days. I had so many dreams and visions. The first night I slept in Khyentse’s room, in this house that was completely

rebuilt, and it was more or less in the same style.

The Mirror: When in your life did you make the decision to take your position as a reincarnation – to accept this position?
Yeshe: I never decided. Not even now. I never accepted it. I have to be sincere. I never wanted to be a “Lama,” and I cannot take this position as the head of this monastery, for example. It is not my attitude, and it would be strange if I suddenly changed and went there dressed in yellow and orange.

The Mirror: I didn’t mean a Lama in that way. I meant, when did you decide to become a Teacher, a Master, like your father?

Yeshe: Yes, this is different, sure. I promised the monastery that I would go every two years. When I went there, the first night I had very strong dreams from the general point of view. They were not like normal dreams, but more like visions. It was so strong that I could not integrate with anything. I could not sleep at night; I just kept watching all these images coming. There were a lot of things, images, memories, some other experiences related with the teachings, and a lot of strange images about death and the bardö. I had a lot of these strange experiences that were quite realistic. It was not like something I was looking at. It was like they were inside me, flowing for hours, these dreams and visions. I was not really awake or asleep. I wasn’t sure if I was dreaming

or not. The whole night passed like this, and I had very interesting visions. All these visions were mainly related to Vajrasattva.

The Mirror: Yeshe, why have you decided to teach now, at this point in time?

Yeshe: I decided to teach now simply because I have no other possibility. “When you discover one, you discover all.” This happened to me, and when you discover that you have capacity and development, it would be wrong to keep this only for yourself. Even here in these days at Tsegyalgar East, I can’t sleep and I always have dreams about Longsal and the Vajra Dance. My life has changed so much and I have to dedicate it to the Dzogchen Community and the Teaching, but most of all to Rinpoche. Now I am having very interesting dreams about the three levels of Vajra Dance: the movement of how we do it now, the integration of how it should be with contemplation and instant presence, the mandala, and the full domain of form and the universe. I will practice and explain this to the Vajra Dance teachers as soon as I realize it and also because Rinpoche has asked me to.

The Mirror: Thank you so much for your time and for all you do for us. ©

Transcribed by Naomi Zeitz
Edited by Anna Bartenstein and Naomi Zeitz

Graduation of the First Tibetan Medicine Class of 2009

Shang Shung Institute, USA, Conway MA
October 17, 2009 at Amherst College, Amherst MA

Jacqueline Gens

Tibetan medicine is no stranger to the international Shang Shung Institute, founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Over the past two decades, there were milestones that heralded many firsts – the first international conference on Tibetan Medicine in 1986 held in Italy, Dr. Thubten Phunstog’s foundation courses in Italy and America from 1997-2000, extensive Kun Nye trainings, and then the four-year Tibetan Medicine Program established by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo in 2005. From its inception, the Institute has delivered on its dedication to provide educational opportunities in the study of Tibetan medicine and to support its practice as a living tradition. This commitment to Tibetan medicine is due to the founder of the Shang Shung Institute, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who has a deep appreciation for the Tibetan medical tradition of his native culture and has written extensively on the subject. At every step his guidance has been the catalyst to inaugurate these accomplishments.

The Shang Shung Institute American graduation of its first class of four-year medical students on October 17, 2009 at Amherst College, was an historical event for several reasons. It was also a gracious series of interactions that brought to fruition all the hard work and dedication on the part of so many individuals who have supported all branches of the institute over the years. Truly, as Will Shea commented in the graduation ceremony at Amherst College, the event is a “commencement” for the graduates who will embark on a lifetime of continued learning and add to the inexhaustible well of knowledge transmitted to them through their study of the root tantra over the past four years. But it is also a commencement of a larger conversation taking place among Tibetan doctors about the future of Tibetan medicine.

Several key points were highlighted during the ceremony that dramatically illustrate this conversation for the Institute brought together a number of important Tibetan doctors, from Tibet, India and the US, who not only presided over the ceremony and scheduled events but also engaged in serious discussion among themselves about the direction of Tibetan medicine in the west. All of them are now members of ATMA (American Tibetan Medical Association) founded and directed by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, which is dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Tibetan Medicine

and is a national organization representing the Tibetan Medical profession in The United States of America. Its aims include setting standards of education and creating protection for the practice of Tibetan Medicine in America.

I first encountered the existence Tibetan Medicine twenty years ago. There were very few publications found in Western languages. Today, there exists a growing body of texts translated and published in the West as a response to the increased knowledge about the importance of the Tibetan medical tradition that is over 2000 years old. Complimentary healing traditions are increasingly met with mainstream acceptance as scientific research into the body/mind connection



Visiting Tibetan Doctors and Dr Phuntsog Wangmo at Amherst College
Top row left to right: Dr. Thubten Phuntsog, Dr. Kunchok Gyaltsen, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, Dr. Aku Nyima, Dr. Lobsang Tenzin, Dr. Lusham Gyal.
Bottom row left to right: Dr. Lobsang Namkha, Dr. Yupa, Dr. Yang Ga, Dr. Tenzin Dakpa

reveals long-standing evidence central to these systems. But until Shang Shung founded its four-year course, there still was no systematic study of Tibetan medicine specifically designed for Westerners that parallels the traditional training methods for Tibetans in China or India, other than some preliminary courses or private apprenticeships requiring many years study of Tibetan language. What Shang Shung Institute has done here is a major step for the future of Tibetan medicine and the graduates of its first class are living proof that it is possible to transfer this knowledge via another language. As pointed out by Dr. Phunstog Wangmo during the graduation ceremony, Tibetan medicine is not only for Tibetans, but for the whole world, and it doesn’t matter what language is used in the teaching or study of the tradition. This is a truly a remarkable statement that, in my mind, transforms the conversation about the fate of the Tibetan Medicine as a living body of



Dr Aku Nyima (on the left) Public Talk at Amherst College Friday Evening, translated by Kunchok Gyaltsen

Photo: K Fekete

knowledge practiced world-wide and not just another esoteric academic topic for Tibetan scholars or one isolated geographically or culturally. Naturally, the study of Tibetan language is an important aspect of Shang Shung’s curriculum, but the classes are taught in English. Such an acknowledge-

gence of the American Tibetan Medical Association (ATMA) – an important development for the future accreditation of the institute and the practice of Tibetan medicine in the West. Without the tireless efforts of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, these accomplishments would not have come to fruition. Like many Tibetans, she has made enormous personal sacrifices to communicate her expertise by leaving her homeland, learning English and transmitting teachings utilizing a pedagogy that resonates with Western students. But really, her accomplishment is only as good as her own role as a student of Tibetan medicine. Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo studied for many years both officially and unofficially with some of Tibet’s greatest doctors. Her learning is deep and this is the source she brought to her students here in America. The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree, as the saying goes. All of the graduates of the first trail blazing class in 2005 successfully completed their studies under her loving direction.

Finally – congratulations to the seven courageous and hard working graduates who in addition to completing their course requirements in residence at Shang Shung in Conway, passed their final examination at Qinghai University Tibetan Medicine College following their three-month internship in Tibet. This examination qualifies them, at least theoretically, for a compa-

table Bachelor degree leading to the title, Menla. In other words, their knowledge as tested by the officials of Qinghai University Tibetan Medicine College, Qinghai Province in China, met the requirements of that respected institution of Tibetan medicine. While not an authorized certificate by any accredited institution in the West, nonetheless, this process indicates possibilities for the future. Footage of the ceremony at Qinghai University was shown during the Amherst graduation ceremony where the graduates received a certificate of completion.

And so, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo is to be congratulated on her challenging task of successfully converting a traditional curriculum of Tibetan medicine into a pedagogy supported by the learning styles of Western students. She has proven an outstanding teacher in a sea of uncertainties with patience, perseverance and exacting intellectual rigor. She has also achieved the impossible task of bringing together so many diverse individuals from around the world in support of Shang Shung’s Tibetan Medicine Program.

The graduation ceremony was officiated by master of ceremonies, Will Shea, whose presence in that capacity showed great stand-up performance qualities and subtle humor as he spoke every few sentences, which were then skillfully

>> continued on the following page

House For Sale

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or Tuscanary: ritarenzi@tuscanary.it





Graduating class and Dr Phuntsog Wangmo after receiving diplomas at the Graduation Ceremony

Photo: N Zeitz

Graduation Ceremony Excerpts:

Will Shea
“Tibetan medicine has not yet entered the Forbes top ten list of high paying careers. (audience laughs) Thus far, there hasn’t been a lot of worldly incentive for the study and practice of Tibetan medicine. So what is the motivation for the study of this path? The only motivation is to preserve these precious healing methods for the benefit of others. This is a motivation that honors you (the graduates) your teachers and your friends and family. We are all very proud of you.”

Dr. Gerry Steinberg,
Western physician and member of the board of ATMA
“I’ve come here today to speak on behalf of ATMA. From my perspective as a Western physician, a few things come to mind.

We’ve heard a lot in the news lately about health care. When we hear about health care what we hear about is the health care “industry.” As technology advances and health care becomes big business, the materialistic side of

medicine in the West is emphasized which sometimes means a lack of balance. Sometimes it’s easy in that environment for us to lose our way in terms of what our real intentions and goals are when we first got involved in medicine.

In coming here today and listening and also being involved with ATMA and understanding that the base in Tibetan medicine is the individual which is based on compassion and kindness – This is something very important in the West at this point to bring us into balance and revitalize our vision of what we should be doing as practicing physicians.

From the perspective of the treatment of patients, Western medicine puts a great deal of emphasis on situations based on making decisions about how by looking at large numbers. It’s called ‘evidence based medicine.’ But what can happen is that the individual and the differences among individuals can get lost.

Practicing physicians in the Western world base their treatments

>> continued from previous page
translated into Tibetan by Kunchok Gyaltsen for the visiting dignitaries. Will’s relaxed delivery made it possible for us the audience to likewise relax into what was going to be a long parade of laudatory speeches – Tibetan style. The program consisted of talks by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, who offered an explanation of the qualifications required to receive a certificate, class representative Anasuya Weil, and the following guest doctors: Dr. Thubten Phuntsog, professor of Tibetan Medicine at Beijing University and visiting scholar at the University of Virginia, Dr. Yupa the foremost Tibetan astrologer, Dr. Gerald Steinberg, a member of the board of ATMA, Dr. Lob-sang Tenzin a Professor of Tibetan Medicine in Varnasi, India and

visiting scholar at the University of Indiana, Dr. Lusham Gyal the Dean of Qinghai University Tibetan Medicine College; Dr. Aku Nyima – the foremost living Tibetan medicine practitioner and founder of the Qinghai Tibetan Medical Hospital and professor at the Tso Ngon Tibetan Medical School, and finally concluding prayers led by Khen Rinpoche. Kunchok Gyaltsen, a doctoral candidate at UCLA in Public Health, acted as translator during the ceremony. Also present was Dr. Yang Ga who is an assistant professor at Lhasa Tibetan Medical University, a doctoral candidate at Harvard University and member of the board of ATMA. Later in the evening, the Institute served a banquet at the schoolhouse with more speeches and rounds of gifts. ©



Administrative Director Anna Bartenstein and SSI Board Member Jim Valby at the graduation reciting the prayer of dedication
Photo: N Zeitz

on generalization and then adapt to the individual. From the Tibetan perspective, the individual comes first by looking at that person and developing the treatment plans from that individual. The balance of traditional healing like Tibetan medicine is very important.”

Dr. Aku Nyima
“For the students, you have a very good life, a comfortable place, and you made many sacrifices and gave up many things to study. This is not surprising because learning is always difficult. You have to suffer otherwise you will never be knowledgeable.”

Dr. Thubten Phuntsog
“I am very happy to see the first Western people who receive a Tibetan medicine certificate. This makes me really happy. This indicates a beginning of collaboration with Western culture. Medicine doesn’t belong to a particular group but is shared with the whole world. It is very beneficial for all human beings.
I would like to support Shang Shung Institute because I am Namkhai Norbu’s student – twenty-three years ago we invited Namkhai Norbu to my university and he gave us a three month course on how to research the history of Tibet and Tibetan culture. He gave us really good direction. So, I would like to do as much as I can for the Shang Shung.”

What is ATMA?

The American Tibetan Medical Association (ATMA) is exclusively dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Tibetan Medicine and has no political affiliations or involvement. It is a national organization representing the Tibetan medical profession in The United States of America. Their mission is to preserve, protect, improve and promote the philosophy, knowledge, science and practice of Tibetan Medicine for the benefit of humanity and to serve as a representative membership organization of the Tibetan medical profession. The board consists of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, Dr. Yang Ga, Dr. Yangdron Kalzang, Dr. Kunchok Gyaltsen, Professor Chimed Rabten and Dr. Gerald Steinberg M.D. The honorary chief advisor of ATMA is Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The current goals of ATMA are: to establish and maintain standards of education, ethics, professional competency and licensing; to provide professional development opportunities for Tibetan medical practitioners; to affect public policy and legislation in all matters pertaining to Tibetan Medicine; to support the establishment of licensing for the practice of Tibetan Medicine; to develop, participate in, conduct and support Tibetan medical research programs consistent with Tibetan medical principles. ©

Dr. Lusham Gyal
“First – congratulations to the students. Over the four years you studied very hard and through the demonstration of your examinations, you qualified the same as Tibetan students. Congratula-

tions also to the Shang Shung Institute for establishing this new path in the West, which is a special path. From now on we will all walk this path together to utilize Tibetan Medicine in the West.” ©

Books by
**Chögyal
Namkhai Norbu**

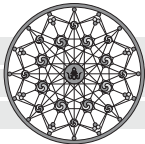
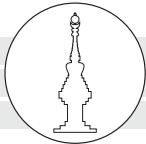
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Calendar of Events 2009

November

November 14-18
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
Webcast from Barcelona, Spain

November 27-29
Mandarava practice retreat with the
Tsalung of Purification with the Fire of
Wisdom
With Nina Robinson

December

December 4-11
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Longsal Longde Teaching Retreat
Webcast from Tashigar North,
Venezuela

December 4-8
Santi Maha Sangha Level 1 Training
With Igor Berkin

December 11-13
Practice of Shine-Lhangtong
(for those who have received
transmission)
With Igor Berkin

December 26-January 3, 2010
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Santi Maha Sangha Base retreat
Webcast from Tashigar North,
Venezuela

December 27-31
Dance of the Song of the Vajra advanced
course
With Prima Mai

December 27-31
Yantra Yoga 2nd and 3rd group
With Laura Evangelisti

Merigar West update

The end of the summer period has always marked the end of the 'term of office' for the Merigar West Gakyil and hence a time to present what has been accomplished throughout the year. At the Assembly of Members held on Sunday September 27th at the Gonpa, the various colours of the Gakyil presented their reports on what had been done.

The Lings

One of the main points mentioned was the importance of the Lings within the Dzogchen Community which serve as very important centers because they enable practitioners to participate in the activities of the Community close to where they live and also because they can be considered like a window for people interested in the Teaching. For these reasons Merigar West has been encouraging the birth and growth of these centers both in Italy and in Europe.

The actual situation of the Italian Lings is as follows: Kunsalling in Brescia, Zhenphenling in Rome, Namdeling in Naples, Desalling in Rimini, Milano (does not have a name yet), Kunkhyab Ling in Apulia, Adzamling in Termoli (in the process of being formed), with many others developing in different parts of Europe.

The new website

An important step forward this year at Merigar has been the Community website so that communication amongst members and communication with the outside world can be developed; Thinley Koblenki of the new Yellow Gakyil is the Project Manager of the website which is

still in the process of being finalized; a team of many practitioners is working on it, in particular there is collaboration between Merigar East and West.

Members can also pay for their membership and for retreats online. This new service not only makes payments fast and easy but also facilitates the general administration of the Gar since in the past people have made payments late in the year while attending retreats, in the summer or autumn, with the result that the delay has held up the administration of the Gar. The Gakyil warmly requests members to take advantage of the new service in order to enjoy its benefits.

[www.dzogchen.it]. Feedback about the website is welcome.

Construction

In May 2009 the environmental plan for the construction of new buildings at Merigar West was officially approved by the authorities. The first project that was carried out was the work done at the Gonpa to repair and renovate the roof and to enlarge the space inside. Two areas have been created - an inner one (the 'old' gonpa) to be used during the winter to reduce heating costs since it is smaller, and an outer one (the new covered area surrounding the old one) to be used during the summer retreats.



New Gakyil for 2009-2010

The Gakyil can be contacted at: gakyil@dzogchen.it

Blue Gakyil: Gabriele Marazzi, Maria Napoleone, Virginia Aloia, Gloria Pera (Assistant), Jacobella Gaetani (Assistant)

Yellow Gakyil: Anna Pucci (Director), Daniela Garbo, Thinley Koblenki (Vice-Director), Marco Baseggio (Assistant), Massimo Catalfo (Assistant)

Red Gakyil: Claudio Donadio, Patrice Bricaire, Rasa Lukstaite

Gekos: Franco Cocco and Claudia Paltera



On September 20th Rinpoche gave teachings in Tibetan to a group of Tibetan university students from various parts of India. The teachings were given at the Gonpa at Merigar West and were followed by a question and answer session. The same students later performed at the 20th anniversary of the Shang Shung Institute wonderful traditional and modern Tibetan dances and songs.

Recent activities

During August three Teachers' Training courses were held and two Vajra Dance Teachers' Training courses because there were so many participants. There was also a special Yantra Yoga course led by teachers Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti to which all the instructors around the world and those seriously interested in YY were invited. The course was free and its aim was to cover and review all 108 movements and produce a film on the First Level of Yantra Yoga.

Merigar also welcomed the well-known teacher Sogyal Rinpoche and his retinue of students for a visit towards the end of September. On the invitation of Yeshi Namkhai, he gave teachings on Living and Dying to a group of more than 200 people gathered in the Gonpa. (Report on the teachings on pg. 6)

Communication

During the August retreat representatives from the four international Gars were present at Merigar and had quite a few informal meetings. As a result, the Merigar Gakyil plans to put together a video showing different views of the



Yantra Yoga Teacher Training in Merigar West August 2009

Gars and hope to present this during the end of the last October retreat.

Another development in the field of communication is the new up-dated colour brochure of Merigar West that has recently been published to replace the old one.

There is also an internet link for European gakyils through which members can be in direct contact with each other to exchange experiences, ask for and

give advice and receive important information regarding the Dzogchen Community. This has been a very important step in bringing together Gakyil members in different countries and offers them a very valid form of communication and guidance in their tasks.

During the summer months, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asked people to send their proposals for improving Merigar. The Gakyil received quite a few, summa-

rized them and gave them to Rinpoche. These proposals were about matters such as membership, ecological solutions, cultural activities, etc.

The future

At the moment a project to build a Solar Mandala is being set up but has not yet been finalized. Rinpoche has said that the form of the building will be similar to the Gonpa and that it will be constructed

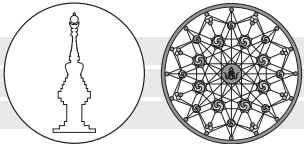
on the hill behind the covered stands used for registration during the retreats.

During the September Assembly, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu spoke about some of his plans for the future at Merigar West. First of all he spoke about the Tibetan Language Conferences that had been held in the past - the first in Dharamsala in 1987 and then the second at Merigar West in 1992. The latter was organised by the Shang Shung Institute and the Merigar Gakyil and went very well. Rinpoche's idea is to have a third Conference on Tibetan Language at Merigar West in 2011, probably in June. Since the Conference will require a lot of organization, Rinpoche suggested that it would be better to start preparations now and create a committee of people who can take responsibility for the Conference since it cannot be organized by the Gakyil alone. Scholars and professors will be invited not only from outside Tibet but also from China and Tibet where the Tibetan language is mainly spoken.

Rinpoche also talked about his plans for inviting H. H. the Dalai Lama who attended the opening of the Shang Shung Institute in 1991 and the inauguration

>> continued on the following page

MerigarWest



On Thursday September 10, Rinpoche, together with a number of his students, did a Sang and Serkyem practice to inaugurate the statue of Adzom Drukpa in the little meadow just below the Gonpa at Merigar West

Photo: L Graf



Piero Bonacina is a sculptor and long-time practitioner who has lived in Montegiovi, near Merigar West, for many years. At the request of Rinpoche and his wife Rosa, he has created several wonderful pieces of art for Merigar West, including the newest addition of the Adzom Drukpa statue near the Temple of Great Liberation inaugurated in September 2009.

Piero is available to do commissioned work in stone and wood and can be contacted at 3385265907. ©



>> continued from previous page of the Gonpa, giving the first teaching there. In fact, at a later date, on October 12th, Rinpoche met Gheshe Tenzin Tenzin, Daniela Abba (director) and Laura Pellati of the Lama Tsong Khapa Institute in Pomaia who had come to Merigar to thank him for the donation from Merigar for rebuilding their Gonpa which was destroyed in a fire last December. Rinpoche told them about our intention to invite the Dalai Lama in 2011 and said that he would be very happy if we could organize the event together with the Lama Tsong Khapa Institute. They were very pleased about this proposal.

Then during the Assembly in September the Master spoke about another

very important plan for the future – the 30th anniversary of Merigar. Rinpoche said that Merigar is the origin of the Dzogchen Community and the Gakyil and although we have a lot of different Gars, the original and most important is always Merigar so for our 30th anniversary we should do something exceptional like inviting the Dalai Lama for this occasion. He also suggested that we also invite all the different Gars to participate as well as the Italian authorities and that since it would be an important occasion we should start to plan for it now. The event would take place probably in July 2011.

Supporting Community projects

During the meeting for electing the new Gakyil which was held at the Gonpa on Saturday October 10th, Rinpoche thanked the members of the Gakyil for their work and commitment throughout the year. He also thanked the Community for helping Yeshe Namkhai's family while Yeshe is dedicating himself entirely to the Dzogchen Teaching and the Community. Finally he listed a number of projects in the Community, such as the projects for the Mandala Hall and dormitory, the Museum, A.S.I.A., for emergencies, for Merigar East and for Kunzang Gar, to which he and his family are very generously donating. ©



Photo: R. Piro

EVERYONE READS THE MIRROR



Participants of the Gomadevi course at Merigar West led by Enzo Terzano in August



Passages

Married: On Friday October 23rd, Carla Capone and Maurizio Mingotti were married at a small ceremony in an out of the way place on the Italian Riviera.

Many warm wishes to them from all their friends.

Accommodations near Merigar West

Information for people who intend to come to Merigar for retreats or to follow courses

If you are looking for accommodation, airport transfer, local car hire or only logistic assistance, you can contact the following information and reservation service:

Accommodation Service

(Information available in English, German, French and Italian)

Information service and reservation of accommodation during retreats, local transport, & logistic solutions:

Christina von Geispitzheim
Email: accomodationservice@gmail.com
Phone: 0039 0564 957542
Mobile phone: 0039 339 1370739

We cooperate with local hotels, family pensions, residences, agriturismo, Community members who have rooms or houses to rent or sublet. Also we can advise on car rental (at airports or locally), on the best itinerary and time tables of trains and buses, and we have now a circuit of residents who offer various useful services like transfer from the airports, local taxi service, translations, baby sitting, etc.

Europe

Austria

New Gakyil of Vienna

Blue: Honza Dolensky
Yellow: Andreas Resch
Red: Alexander Heckner
Red assistant: Winnie Scheiblbrantner

Gakyil of Vienna
dzogchen.wien@gmx.at

New Gakyil of Austria Regions

Red: Ingrid Samlicki
Yellow: Oliver Leick
Blue: Monika Klietmann
International contact person is Oliver Leick

The new E-Mail address of the Gakyil is: gakyilaustria@aon.at

www.dzogchen.at
www.yeselling.at

Yeselling
The Dzogchen Community Austria Regions is happy to announce the schedule of practices and retreats at Yeselling, the Ling of the Dzogchen Community Austria.

November 11, 1:00 pm
Anniversary of Adzam Drugpa,
Direct Transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

November 10, 6:30 pm
Explanation on the practice

November 28
Karmayoga day

December 4–8
Course of Preparation of Namkha and practice of Guru Yoga with Liane Graf
During the course we will also follow the webcast of the Dzogchen retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from Tashigar Norte.

December 8
Birthday of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

January 1–6, 2010
Intensive Mandarava Practice-retreat with Nina Robinson
During this retreat we will also follow the webcast of the Dzogchen retreat

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from Tashigar Norte

Every Friday at 6:30 pm
Practice of the Dance of the Vajra at Flöcking in East-Styria.
Every second Friday at 5:00pm: Collective practice of Guru Yoga at Yeselling
If you are interested please call us before coming.
For further information please visit www.yeselling.at

Best wishes and greetings,
Gakyil Austria Regions

Gschmaier 104
8265 Gr. Steinbach
Tel.: +43 676 3221365
Fax: +43 3386 83218
yeselling@speed.at
www.yeselling.at



Passages

Born: On Oct., 30th in the afternoon healthy and pretty Elina Schweizer was born to her happy parents Bernhard and Manuela and her proud brother Tobias from Mattsee, Austria.

Czech Republic

The Czech Dzogchen Community is pleased to announce
A Teaching retreat with

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai The Four Contemplations of Dzogchen Semde

November 27–29, 2009
in Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic
and a **public talk** on November 26
in Prague.

Location: the retreat takes place near our Ling in very beautiful town Cesky Krumlov (www.ckrumlov.info/docs/en/kaktualita.xml) in the hall of a local theatre.

More information and registration you can find on: www.yeshi.cz/en

Prices: 100 euro – if you register before November 20 on www.yeshi.cz
120 euro without registration

(As we have most of the members with reduced membership, we decided to give only one price for everybody with the discount for those who register in advance)

Accommodation:
Possibilities of accommodation in Prague and Cesky Krumlov will be published on www.yeshi.cz

Location:
Public talk (November 26):
Unitaria Palace, Anenska st. 5, Praha 1
Retreat (November 27–29):
Representative hall of the local theatre,

Horní st. 156, Cesky Krumlov
Map and instructions for travel you will find on the websites.
Course will take place 10 am–6 pm, exact schedule will be specified later.

Contacts:
Feel free to contact us by e-mail or telephone.
+420 605 709 122
blue@dzogchen.cz

Germany

New gakyil
Yellow: Vilma Eiden,
vilma.eiden@dzogchen.de
Ilka Müller-Mennrich,
ilka.mueller-mennrich@dzogchen.de
Michael Möhle,
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Gillian “Jil” Self,
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Joachim Raack,
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Michael Voigtländer (also Director of the Gakyil),
michael.voigtlaender@dzogchen.de

Gakyil-assistant: Lenka Kroh,
lenka.kroh@dzogchen.de

if you want to contact the entire gakyil write to: gakyil@dzogchen.de

Upcoming:
Courses and Webcasts 2009
Overview:
www.dzogchen.de

Webcast Retreat from Barcelona with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Cologne, Nuernberg, Berlin and other cities
November 14–18
Info: Jil Self, Tel. +49 221-421 09 11,
jil.self@dzogchen.de
*
Dance of the Vajra with the Song of the Vajra / Part 2
with Karin Heinemann
Dargyaling in Cologne
November 14–22

Info and registration:
Evelyne Kleinmayer, Tel. +049 89/41 85 77 66 or +49 170/432 11 70,
evelyn.kleinmayer@dzogchen.de
*
Mandarava-Tsalung
with Elio Guarisco
Dargyaling in Cologne
November 27–December 1

Info and registration: Jil Self,
Tel. +49 221-421 09 11
jil.self@dzogchen.de
*

Webcast-Retreat from Venezuela with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Cologne, Nuernberg, Berlin and other cities
December 4–11

Info: Jil Self, Tel. +49 221-421 09 11,
jil.self@dzogchen.de
*



Ongoing Yantra Yoga with Saadet Arslan at Dargyaling in Cologne, Germany

Tsandul Breathing and 5 Movements
for people who already know the 8 Movements as a continuation of a beginner’s course
with Saadet Arslan
Dargyaling in Cologne
December 5–7

Info and registration:
Christian Pogoda,
Tel.: +49 2083-76 29 10,
christian.pogoda@dzogchen.de



Passages

Birth in Germany:
Emil is born, our son
Birthdate: August 5, 2009
Birthplace: Cologne
Parents: Larissa & Joachim

Greece

The Hellenic Dzogchen Community invites you to a Teaching Retreat in Athens

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Dzogchen, The Self-Perfected State An exposition of Dzogchen view, practice & attitude based on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s book by the same title

Athens
Tues 29 Dec. 2009–Sat 2 January 2010

Program:
Day 1 – Public Talk & presentation of the book.
Day 2 – Sutra, Tantra & Dzogchen
Day 3 – The Dzogchen View
Day 4 – The Practice of Dzogchen / Trekchod
Day 5 – The Attitude of Dzogchen Yogi

Guruyoga along with some semzin & inner rushen meditations will be introduced and practiced under Yeshi Silvano Namkhai’s guidance during the teaching sessions.

Participation fees: 120 euro (with the usual discounts for Dzogchen Community members).
Retreat info & seat reservations:
info@dzogchen.gr
Travelling & accommodation info:
liber@upzu.gr
*

The annual retreat of the Hellenic Dzogchen Community took place from the 29th of August to the 5th of September, at the Dharma Reatreat Center “Karma Rigdrol Ling” which belongs to the Karma Kagyu Lineage and is located at Mt. Cholomontas of Macedonia, Northern Greece.

We spent 8 wonderful days surrounded by the beautiful nature of Mt. Cholomontas’ forest, a place of extreme clarity, full of cedars, firs, pines and oak trees, practising intensively the 7 Semzins, 7 Lojong, Sang offering, Chod, Long Tun and Ganapuja, distributed in four daily sessions.

The resident lamas of „Karma Rigdrol Ling“ were really friendly, warm-hearted and supportive to us all. We would like to express our deep gratitude for their compassion, understanding and gracious hospitality. ►



Hellenic Dzogchen Community practitioners with the lamas of “Karma Rigdrol Ling”

Europe

>> continued

Italy

Milano
Vajra Dance Course for beginners
led by Maurizio Mingotti
Prima Mai will supervise according to her schedule
21–22 November, 12–13 December,
16–17 January, 20–21 February

The course will take place at the Scuola Media Via dell’Arcadia 24, Milano, Italy
Information: Lucia Della Libera
tel: +39 02 58 10 25 56
mobile +39 340 460 85 97
liberadella@gmail.com

✱
Florence-Lucca

New Gakyil
Blue: Antje d’Almeida.
tel 3346997493
Yellow: Gianni Baggi.
tel 3483193372, 0571-680370
Red: Camilla Cappuccini.
tel 3290910276

Yeshi Namkhai in Venice

The first weekend in September the city of Venice had the great fortune to welcome Yeshi Namkhai for a cycle of three days of teachings. In an autumn atmosphere, with an air that was suddenly fresher and crisper from the rain that made the colours of Venice more vivid, around a hundred people listened to Yeshi’s explanations on Dzogchen in the comfortable surroundings of the S. Alvise Sports Centre.
He touched on many points and outlined, even in that brief period of time, the many aspects of the teaching.
He brought to mind ordinary experiences of everyday life and showed us how we could concretely understand their meaning through awareness, for example, “external” and “internal” in relationship to the individual, the origin of our conflicts, how we are conditioned by our values, how our habitual way of understanding works ...
Yeshi also spoke about the experiences of the Bardo of Death and of the

Dharmata, clarifying that the apparitions of the divinities are nothing more than the manifestation of our emotions, that is, of our energy. Recognizing them means recognizing our condition and, as happens during our lives, it is easier to recognize the wrathful manifestations more than the joyful ones.
On Sunday participants met together with Yeshi and his family in a nearby park and in a cheerful and relaxed atmosphere enjoyed a wonderful picnic prepared by the practitioners of Venice.
✱
Rome
The new Gakyil for Zhenphenling (Rome) was elected at the general meeting of October 11th 2009:

Blue: Massimo Pelliccioni (President) **massimopelliccioni@tiscalinet.it**
Maurizio Piazza **mauriziopiazza@gmail.com**
Sergio Quaranta (assistant) **csquaranta@libero.it**

Yellow: Mirella D’Angelo **mirella.dangelo@fastwebnet.it**
Federica Mastropaolo **aciredefa@yahoo.it**

Federico Ballarin (assistant) **federicoballarin@yahoo.it**

Red: Brunella De Biase **artinballo@yahoo.it**
Claudia Nuozzi **nuozzi@hotmail.com**
Lucilla Curini (assistant) **lucillascintilla@libero.it**

Zhenphenling
Comunità Dzogchen sez. Roma
via Giovanni Miani 5
00154 Roma
tel. 0657300346
posta@zhenphenling.it



Passages

Married: Luca Mastrogiuseppe and Antonella Pasqualone of the blue gakyil and the yellow of Adzamling were married in Torremaggiore in Foggia Province, Italy on August 31st 2009. All our best wishes to them!

Poland

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Teachings In Poland

October 5-13, 2009
Marek Macko

Yeshi was about to come to Poland in April, but then circumstances changed. Now October proved to be more auspicious for his visit.
The first four days, October 5 to 8, there was a program in Warsaw connected with Rinpoche’s webcast. It started at 8 in the morning with a Yantra Yoga course of the 8 movements led by a local instructor, than at 10 there was the video webcast of Rinpoche’s teachings from Merigar West. After this there was a course of the OM A HUM Vajra Dance with Algis and also the showing of the dance of the six spaces. Later in the evenings at



Photo: G Konieczka

7 pm we could have the benefit of hearing Yeshe’s teachings.
Formally these lectures were a commentary on Rinpoche’s Longsal “Introduction to the State of Ati” and also another book “Introduction to the State of Contemplation.” Yeshi elucidated and clarified the important

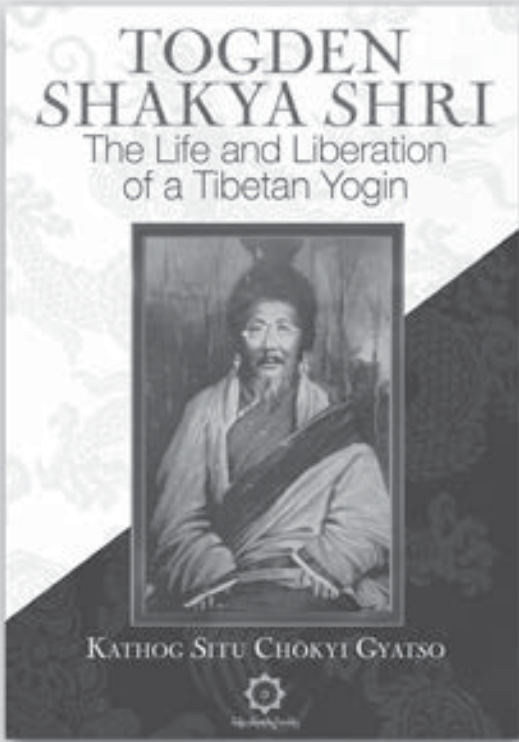
points of the Dzogchen teachings about the meaning of the series

of Semde, Longde and Upadesha, and also the teachings on Bardo. What he does is go to the essence taking examples from ordinary life, and if you listen to the example, then the conclusion is very astonishing and deep in meaning.
Then at the weekend of October 10 and 11 he visited Paldenling. There Yeshi continued the teachings from Warsaw and we also did practice like Yeshe Zantel. And what was strange was that about 60 participants came to this small house of Paldenling which is far away from Warsaw.
A very important part of Yeshi’s visit was his meetings with the Polish Community in Warsaw and also at Paldenling. Recently the Polish Community has been having a hard time which was


mainly due to the lack of communication and then, of course, also of collaboration. With Yeshi’s help and advice things have started to go better and there is more liveliness.
On the last day in Warsaw there was also a lottery and an auction. The auction was small but quite fruitful, so now there is a possibility to finish the building of the dark house at Paldenling.
At the end of his visit Yeshi went to Cracov where on 13th October he gave a public lecture at the Technological Academy AGH. ©



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Togden Shakya Shri
The Life and Liberation of a Tibetan Yogi
By Kathog Situ Chökyi Gyatso
Euro 20.00
Translated and edited by Elio Guarisco
Shang Shung Institute 2008
THIS NAMTHAR, OR TRADITIONAL Tibetan biography recounts the inspiring milestones in the life of the revered Togden of Drugu (1853-1919), a portrayal which is also precious as the mirroring of a vanished world. The chronicle glows with inspiring facts and miraculous happenings, as well as insights provided by numerous letters between the Togden and some of the greatest masters of that era.
The book begins with instructions by Shakya Shri called Opening the Door to Liberation, and a selection of his Songs of Realization. In the appendixes, the translator puts the life work and accomplishments of the master in several useful contexts. The volume includes a preface by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a foreword by Sey Rinpoche, lineage holder and great grandson of Shakya Shri.



Shang Shung Publications
books can be ordered on-line visiting the website:
<http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org>
e-mail: shangshunged@tiscali.it

MerigarEast



Merigar East
Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen

23 August 907005 phone: 0040 746 26 08 61
Constanta office@dzogchen.ro
Romania www.dzogchen.ro

Merigar East Gakyil meets

By Jaga Zebrowska

Between 10 and 13 of September the second official Gakyil meeting of Merigar East took place in Romania. After 4 days of intensive gathering – basically speaking all day long – we managed to clarify some matters and take a few decisions. Fijalka and Filip flew with the famous budget airlines Ryanair from Pisa, Beatrix, Abel and George experienced the adventurous roads of Romania in Abel's red Skoda, finishing their journey without George's driving license, getting caught by local police just a few meters before 23rd of August and me myself travelling with all possible means of transport, that is plane, train and bus from Poland. We

were all warmly welcomed by Mira, Greg and Fiu (a very cheerful dog). As to the matters discussed, we are still waiting for permission to build the Gonpa, however we are getting closer to solving that matter with the supervision of Giovanni Boni, who is staying here with us. What is more, in about a month all the work connected with the preparation of the barn for the winter will be finished. We are continually working on a hybrid project (wind and solar) electric system for the barn and the future Gar. At the moment the fence is being made. We have done about 250 meters, and there are still 750 to go. The schedule for the retreats in 2009/2010 is done. We are starting with a 6 Spaces of Samanthabadra course in Constanta on 6–8 of November 2009, which seems to be exceptionally challenging since there is only one member of the Community there. :-) And among



Merigar East Gakyil meets Giovanni Boni, the architect

other activities we are planning a Shang Shung event in Bulgaria, which will be our first activity in this country and will not be less demanding. However we are trying to be full of optimism.

During our Gakyil gathering our favourite Geko celebrated his thirtieth birthday. We had a little grill party on this occasion. Greg performed in his traditional beautifully decorated

Romanian outfit and his new Teva ultra- outdoor sandals (a present from us all) made especially for the off-road circumstances at the Gar. In a very nice atmosphere, local music played in the background (especially a cool group called Zdub si Zdub), with good food and drink (Polish Żubrówka and Romanian Bucegi) we had a chance to talk about other than Gakyil matters. The time of collaborating face to face has just finished L, but our work continues. The form is changing. Now, we are fully dependent on technological innovations – such as forums, e-mails, skype meetings etc. for about 2 months. I have started to appreciate the possibility of being with members of the Gakyil in the same place and time, something that I took for granted while being on the Polish Gakyil. ©

The Power of the Sun and Wind

The youngest Gar in the Dzogchen Community is Merigar East in Romania, founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2006. Merigar East is located on the Black Sea coast, one hour's drive from Constanta, where there is an international airport. It is situated on a 4.5 hectare piece of land where we are building an octagonal Gonpa according to the vision of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's son, Yeshe Namkhai. It will feature three mandalas, two stupas in classical style, gardens, and roads – all in the shape of the Longsal symbol.



Currently, the only structure on the land is a wooden barn that serves as a shelter for the Gekos. We are insulat-

ing it to make it more efficient for the hybrid solar/wind power system we are planning. This system is designed to

provide enough power for the operation of the Gar. In addition to the construction of the Gonpa, future projects include retreat huts, a dark retreat hut, and small houses for practitioners. We need power to support the development of our new Gar in Romania. Since we cannot connect to the local power grid, we have decided to make the best use of circumstances by installing a green, sustainable, state-of-the-art hybrid solar and wind system. Having power on site will significantly improve the existing Meribarn (currently the only house on the land) with its many different functions, and most importantly, it will help create the conditions for building the new Gonpa. The Green Power Project will cost 15,000 Euro. Rinpoche has already given 2,000 Euro towards this amount.

Your donation will help us transform the power of the SUN and WIND. You can transfer your energy through PayPal, through credit card, through our bank account, or, if you are at Merigar West, in person through Gakyil member Fijalka Turzikova (+39 3400 98 60 65, yellow@dzogchen.ro). PayPal: www.dzogchen.ro/paypal Credit card Contact: yellow@dzogchen.ro Merigar East Euro Bank Account: Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-chen UniCredit Tiriac Bank SA 30, Constantei Str., bl. H1a RO-905500, Mangalia, Romania Swift: BACXROBU IBAN: RO50BACX0000000267513001

Israel



Beginner's Yantra Yoga in Jerusalem Israel with Naomi Zeitz October 2009 Credit: E Kenan

St. Petersburg The St Petersburg Dzogchen Community is happy to announce the retreat with **Yeshe Silvano Namkhai** on **Narag Tongtrug**, which will take place in St Petersburg, Russia on November 20–22, 2009.

There will be 1 evening session on Friday, November 20 at 19:00, and 2 sessions a day at the weekend, November 21–22: 10:00–12:00 – teaching, 18:00–19:00 – practice. The webcast for this retreat is not provided.

During the retreat at the weekend there will also be Yantra-Yoga and Vajra Dance practice sessions.

On November 18 Yeshe Silvano Namkhai will conduct an **open lecture "About the nature of mind"** at the St Petersburg University, Philosophy department.

For registering and additional information please contact Alla Ermakova at: +7 904 337 5770 or klukvamac@gmail.com

Russia



Course on 7 lotuses and 7th lojong in Moscow with Fabio Andrico. October 2–9th 2009

b o d h i
THE VOICE OF VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM

BODHI MAGAZINE is dedicated to providing genuinely practical teachings & practice instruction from a Kagyü Nyingma Vajrayana Buddhist perspective. It is published under the direction of The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche.

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www.www.tsegyalgareast.org

Tsegyalgar East News Building Updates

The dark cabin has received a complete overhaul and thanks to the consistent dedication and very hard work of Joe Zurylo, Vern Harrington, Ben Harrington, David Hayes, John Foster, Woody Paparazzo, Matt Schmookler and Asruh Warner, it is now up and running and ready to be used. We thank the donors who made the renovation possible.

As you can see in the photos, the house that will serve as a Community house and residence for Rinpoche is coming along. Most recently an old structure adjacent to the under-renovation farmhouse was leveled, and construction of a room that will serve as both a living area and a small Gonpa for the Community will begin. These two structures will be merged into one. Our wish is to eventually have the Dzogchen Community housed on lower Khandroling, leaving the Schoolhouse for the fast growing Shang Shung Institute’s Tibetan Medical Program.



Jim Smith and Joe Zurylo shoveling the cement for final pier for the clumns for the Vajra Hall

Photo: O Klibansky

We still need a lot of help as in karma yoga. We can offer room and board for those who have the possibility to stay a little longer term and can also negotiate other possibilities of travel expenses for the right candidates with sufficient skills and the capacity to be self motivated and work hard. Joe Zurylo, our devoted project manager, is working on the house from Wednesday to Saturday every week, rain or shine, so more ‘local’ people, are welcome to come and

offer a few hours or a day or two to help. No one will be turned away.

If you are interested in discussing this highly rewarding and immensely beneficial activity please contact: Cindy Thibeau, Red Gakyil, at rosarugosa21@hotmail.com

We have poured the cement for the last and 12th pier that is the final support column for the Vajra Hall; as you can see in see in the photo. Jim Smith has been following through on this immense project for many months and will finish the curved retaining wall before freezing weather arrives. This footing will then allow the last of the block work to be finished and everything can be back-filled by the time snow comes. This will allow all the backfill to settle and the structural frame can begin in the spring. Jim could use some serious help for this project. We have recently received a very generous anonymous donation to

complete the first phase of the construction of the Vajra Hall.

Program Updates
The Blue Gakyil has been actively developing programming for the next year. There have been practice weekends one weekend a month with Jim Valby at the Schoolhouse and they have been very successful. They will continue until June 2010. As part of an outreach effort, Jim has also been giving public talks in Northampton on Monday evenings entitled, “Emptiness and Freedom, a non-religious seminar of study and meditation”. These talks are well attended and bring in new people.

Future Programs:
2009
November 6–8
Supervision of Chie Hammond by Prima Mai of the **Dance of the Three Vajras**

November 9–11
Advanced Vajra Dance with Prima Mai

November 11
Worldwide Webcast Transmission with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Adzom Drugpa Day

November 28–29
Anuyoga Practice Weekend with Jim Valby

November 30
Public Talk in Northampton with Jim Valby

December 4–11
Webcast Retreat from Margarita Island with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Longsal Longde Teaching

December 4–6
Introduction to Yantra Yoga with Paula Barry

December 7–11
Advanced Yantra Yoga with Paula Barry

December 14
Public Talk in Northampton with Jim Valby

December 26–27
SMS Practice Weekend for Level II only with Jim Valby

2010
January 30–31
‘Purification’ Practice Weekend with Jim Valby

February 18–24
Webcast Retreat from Argentina with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

February 27–28
Zhine Practice Weekend with Jim Valby

TBA in February
Mandarava & Chöd Instruction and Practice Retreat with Nina Robinson

We have other programs planned for Spring/Summer 2010:
March 31–April 9 Yantra Yoga, Advanced and Teacher Training with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti and June dates TBA, a Dzogchen Practice Retreat with Elio Guarisco.

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai will be coming in July 29 – August 12, 2010!



Joe Zurylo working on the new Community Center and Namkhai Family Residence Photo: N Zeitz

USA
New York
Upcoming
Introduction to Yantra Yoga with Naomi Zeitz
December 11–13, 2009
Kundrolling
151 W 30th St.
New York City, NY
For more information:
stanleycool@hotmail.com or
tckeegan@gmail.com



During the summer of 2009, Kundrolling had the pleasure of hosting Nelida for a course in the Dance of the Vajra. Since then, weekly dance practice attendance has exploded. Thanks Nelida!



Introduction to Yantra Yoga in Yellow Springs, Ohio with Lynn Sutherland in October 2009 Photo: M Poston

THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

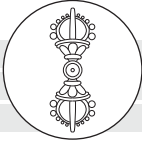
Main Office: PO Box 479, Conway, MA 01341, USA * Tel: 413 369 42 08 * Fax: 413 369 44 73 * mirror@tsegyalgar.org ** **European Office:** The Mirror, Istituto Shang Shung, Podere Nuovissimo, GR 58031 Arcidosso, Italy * Tel: 39 32 98 86 52 92 * l.granger@shangshunginstitute.org ** **Editorial Staff:** Naomi Zeitz, Tsegyalgar, Conway, MA, USA * Liz Granger, Istituto Shang Shung, Arcidosso, Italy ** **Literary Editor:** John Shane ** **Advisors:** Des Barry, Adriano Clemente, Anna Eid, Barbara Paparazzo, Jim Valby ** **International Blue Gakyil Advisor:** Fabio Andrico, International Publications Committee ** **English Language Advisor:** Liz Granger ** **Layout & Design:** Thomas Eifler ** **Web Site Managers:** Thomas Eifler, Malcolm Smith ** **Printer:** Turley Publications, Palmer, MA, USA ** **Distribution:** Tsegyalgar at Conway, MA, USA ** **Subscription Rate/6 Issues:** \$35 US available through Tsegyalgar; 30 € through Merigar ** Visa and Master card welcome ** **Online Mirror:** www.melong.com ** All material © 2009 by The Mirror ** **Reprint by permission only** ** We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com
<http://tsegyalgarwest.org>

www.tashigarnorte.org

Note: You can register at the Gakyil Office 3 days before Retreats with Rinpoche and Courses from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Please don't be late with registration and payment.

Tashigarsur



Tashigar South
Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar
Calle pública S/N

Tanti 5155
Pcia. de Córdoba
Argentina

Phone & Fax: 0054 - 3541 - 498 356
tashigarsur@gmail.com

2010 Gonpa Project

Dear Sangha,
As you all know, the work of the re-construction of the Tashigar South Gonpa has already started. Although the weather did not help much, since as soon as the work started we had a week with heavy rain and then snow, the Gonpa has been totally dismantled and at present all that remains is the platform on which the new construction will be made.

It is our great joy to say that we need to raise only \$15,000 US more. We feel it is of great importance to say that it was Rinpoche's great generosity that provided us with 60% of the money raised to date. As usual Rinpoche is showing us something in every gesture and it is up to us to discover.

With all our love,
Sergio, Paula, Daniel and Ana
(The Gonpa Project Team)
www.2010tashigar-sur.com.ar



Time to Roar like a Lion

On February 7, 2010 Tashigar South, the Gar of the Dzogchen Community for South America, will be 20 years old. The name, which means 'auspicious place', was especially chosen by our Master. After looking for a location in many areas of Córdoba, we discovered the place he was looking for and bought the land where we were supposed to place the Gar, explaining that this was a sacred place. Its unique characteristics have favored the profound development of the Dzogchen

Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in South America.

Since its foundation in 1989, Rinpoche has led more than 60 retreats of precious teachings and hundreds of courses, retreats and practices have been undertaken by instructors of SMS, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance, coordinated by older practitioners. All this would have been impossible without this sacred place. ©

Calendar of Activities
January 22nd–February 5th
Yeshe Namkhai will lead a short retreat during his stay at the Gar



February 8th
Rinpoche's arrival to Tashigar South

Yantra Yoga Course – Part 1
Second Level led by Naomi Zeitz and supervised by Fabio Andrico
February 10th–11th

February 12th
Opening of the New Gonpa of Tashigar South!

February 14th
Losar and Mandarava Practice

February 16th
Sang and Serkyem Offerings

February 18th–24th
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Dzogchen Teachings and Practice Retreat

February 25th–26th
Yantra Yoga Course – Part 2
Second Level led by Naomi Zeitz and supervised by Fabio Andrico

More information:
2010@tashigar-sur.com.ar
www.wordpress.tashigar-sur.com.ar
Tel: +54-03541-498-356
Fax: +54-03541-498885
tashigarsur@gmail.com
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Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



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Dzogchen Community in
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www.dzogchen.org.au

Namgyalgar Survives Bushfire

Viki Forscutt

On Thursday August 27, during unseasonal warm weather, a fire broke out on Gulaga Mountain upon which Namgyalgar is situated. Although it was winter, unusually hot conditions and gusty winds caused fire to flare up from logs still smouldering after a hazard reduction burn conducted by the Forestry Dept. three weeks earlier. Propelled by strong winds, the fire soared up to the peak of the mountain and by nightfall had crept over the top and begun gradually burning downhill towards the Gar, rural properties and the nearby villages of Central Tilba and Tilba Tilba.

At the time, SMS Scholarship student, Dorje Latshang, was doing a personal retreat, which was interrupted when relieving Gekö, Arnaud, informed him there was a fire approaching the Gar. Though still some distance away, and several gullies to burn through, with the advent of strong winds and uncertainty of how fast the fire might travel, fire-fighters advised Gar residents to move to accommodation off land. Before doing so, with the assistance of practitioners arriving for Thursday night's collective practice, all important items from the Gonpa (thangkas, ritual implements, statues, etc), plus the library's reference collection, bookshop stock and office equipment were packed into containers. These,



and other items from the Gar, including Rinpoche's belongings in Gawaling, were transported to Jenny's home in Narooma where they were safely stored.

The following day a meeting was held in Central Tilba where authorities of the current fire situation informed 200 residents from the local area, including several members of the Gar, and how to prepare and protect or evacuate their properties. With helpful advice from fire-fighters, the Gar was prepared in various ways with gas bottles being moved away from buildings, shrubs and bushes removed from around the Gonpa and outside areas dampened down with water. The Gar's fire fighting water pump was mounted onto the old Gar car and water tanks at Gawaling and the Gonpa were prepared so Fire Brigade hoses could be attached. Arnaud, Dorje, Nicki, Lisa, Dennis and Jean kept watch on the fires and were in contact with fire-fighters who were regularly

patrolling the Couria Creek area in the vicinity of the Gar. A large contingent of fire brigades was positioned around the mountain, and helicopters equipped for water bombing were poised ready for action.

As was anticipated, Saturday was very hot and winds were fierce, consequently the fire spread to many parts of the mountain, which became engulfed in flames and thick heavy smoke. Viki, the secretary, evacuated from Central Tilba, taking with her important computer records and valuables from the office. The Gar was in real danger, threatened by fire nearby at the neighboring dairy farm and on the hill directly above Rinpoche's house. At mid-afternoon fire-fighters informed practitioners keeping watch on the fire at the Gar that they must leave as there was now a real possibility the property would catch alight and Gawaling would burn. Fearing the worst, practitioners gathered in a nearby house and

decided to do a Ganapuja. Then magically, around 5 pm, a thunderstorm erupted and a heavy shower of rain fell on the mountain. Though the rain was short lived, it was sufficient to dampen the fires a little and miraculously the Gar did not catch alight! It was as if at the critical moment rain manifested to protect the Gar and nearby communities. Amazingly, prayer flags remain in tact and still hang in trees around a patch of burnt bush on the hill above Gawaling. Fire-fighters were very surprised that the Gar did not succumb to the fires. The next day, Guru Padmasambhava day, was very calm – expected strong winds did not eventuate, reducing the threat of fire. Over the following days and weeks fire-fighters managed to contain the fires, and thankfully some rain manifested. Gradually the situation eased, people became relaxed, and the Gar returned to its normal life.

Without any doubt it would seem that the practices done by Vajra family in Australia and around the world, including at Merigar where practitioners did a 5-hour naggon, were greatly beneficial.

Thanks to Elise for the fire updates posted regularly on the Namgyalgar website and Norbunet and much heartfelt gratitude to everyone who responded to requests to do practice for the Gar.

May the Victorious Gar live on and help to spread the glorious teachings of the Master! ©

[To see more fire pics go to the photo gallery at the Namgyalgar website: **www.dzogchen.org.au**]

Namgyalgar Summer Program
Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat

26 December 2009–1 January 2010
This retreat will be led by SMS Base teacher, Cheh Goh, and will include teachings on the SMS Base by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu via webcast from Tashigar Norte. It will be a family friendly retreat suitable for new and experienced practitioners.

Yantra Yoga Intensive
led by Emily Coleing and Amare Pearl
3–9 January

The Yantra Yoga Intensive is suitable for practitioners who are already practicing the 8 Movements and have learned at least 2 other groups of movements in the Yantra system.

Jnana Dakini and Vajra Dance practice retreat

11–17 January
This retreat is suitable for practitioners who know the dances of the Six Spaces and the Three Vajras, or who know all three dances including the Vajra Dance. Anyone who has received transmission of the Jnana Dakini practice can also attend, even if not participating in the Vajra Dance aspect of the retreat.
Inquiries: Namgyalgar Secretary
Tel/Fax: 02.44737668
secretary@dzogchen.org.au

New Zealand

Summer Practice Retreat
Secret Rushen
The Separation of Samsara and Nirvana and study of the View, Meditation and Behavior of the 9 Vehicles
Led by Santi Maha Sangha Teacher Angie Gilbert
January 27–February 1, 2010
The retreat will also include **Jnana Dakini Group practice**.

Cost: \$280 including food and accommodation.
Venue: Huia Lodge which is west of Auckland beside the sea.
Registration and inquiries:
info@dzogchen.org.nz
We warmly invite you to join us!

NZ Dzogchen Community
P.O Box 52089, Kingsland 1352
Auckland, New Zealand
info@dzogchen.org.nz
www.dzogchen.org.nz

China

Shanghai



October 3–8 a Vajra Dance course and a Yantra Yoga course were held in Shanghai, China. Tracy Ni and Wesley Guo both led the Vajra Dance course while Tracy also led the Yantra Yoga course. 13 people attended the Dance course and 9 people the Yantra Yoga. 4 of the 13 Dancers were newcomers (but after the course they attended webcasts and became students). Everybody was happy and very interested in the Dance, and we have already made a date for the next Dance course. The participants were from different parts of China but most are Shanghai local residents.



‘One Yana’

Stephen Hill

The purest, the greatest yana,
the one secret beyond all others,
is the strong backed Hinayana,
because these are the all encompassing
words of the Buddha,
and it is the Vehicle of Common Sense

Where we pour cool water
on this wheel of fire,
and we just
Stop it!
Now!

It is great, because it is the yana
that helps the most people

Still, it is lesser
because we are concerned primarily
with our own purity

And this means we still believe
that samsara
is something
other

Than our selves.

Ther purest, the greatest yana,
the one secret beyond all others,
is the noble Mahayana,
because here is where the insight dawns:

That pride is what traps us,
and all of us are exactly like this

And so, quite logicly,
we reverse the fever of samsara
into medicine
by washing the feet
of our enemy

Then we follow the steps of the Buddha
into the Giant Yana
where the endless pain
of ordinary people
becomes the activity of endless
compassion

Still, it is lesser,
because if we rely on method,
that means we still believe there is a self
and other.

The purest, the greatest yana,
the one secret beyond all others,
is the regal Vajrayana,
because it is the one that awakens
this struggling deaf mute we call samsara
into the sunlight
of luminous clarity

It is regal because its jewels are radiant
and beyond count,
exactly as the stars in the sky
shine clearly
with out name

Still, if we think of it as symbol,
it is lesser,
because that means we still believe in
mind.

The purest, the greatest yana,
the one secret beyond all others,
is the Imperial Ati,
that fresh old dragon who roams space
with no home

It is the vast yana
free of exclusion
or inclusion
with no outer or inner:

its just naked space:

but here is where the student finally
steps free
of the bone rot
of the crystal cage
into the living space
of reality

Exactly as it is,
unchanged since the beginning

To say it is lesser or greater is useless,
because there is no other yana.
Because there is nothing outside it,
it is all the fear and renunciation
of that Long Toiling Sutrayana

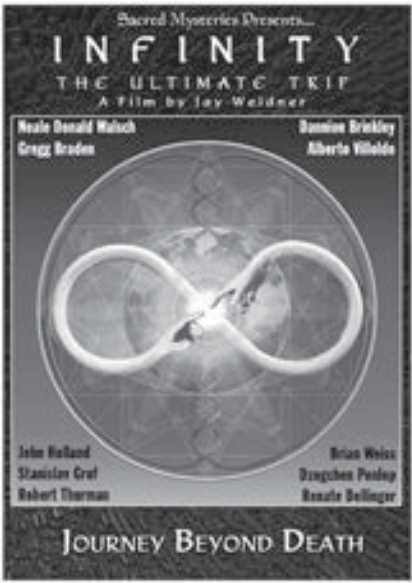
It is all the drunken summer love
all the empty wanting
of the Endless Mahayana

It is all the secret music
too perfect to ever be held
except in dreams
of the Mantrayana.

Sometimes the light disappears into the
blue sky.
Sometimes it moves closer, red flames
fanning our face.
We like to think up names for it,
as we always have

And will. Sometimes we call it the Mind
of Samantabhadra,
and maybe we find ourselves there,
inside this single yana
that has never altered, this
spotless mirror that creates nothing,
this blue sun,
ruby crown,
yellow sky,
green wind,
sound of nowhere,
this one name
that is always
All Good,
always.

Sacred Mysteries DVDs



Infinity
The Ultimate Trip
Journey Beyond Death

\$24.95
Available
Thanksgiving 2009

FEATURING GREGG BRADEN, DANNION BRINKLEY, RENATE DOLLINGER, STANISLAV GROF, JOHN HOLLAND, DZOGCHEN PONLOP, ROBERT THURMAN, ALBERTO VILLOLDO, NEALE DONALD WALSCH AND BRIAN WEISS.

What happens after we pass from this world? Is there a life after this one? Or do we just disappear forever? These are the questions asked in this powerful and poignant feature documentary, *Infinity: The Ultimate Trip*. Many may be surprised by the answers.

Featuring noted experts Gregg Braden, Dannon Brinkley, Renate Dollinger. Stanislav Grof, John Holland, Dzogchen Ponlop, Robert Thurman, Alberto Villoldo, Neale Donald Walsch and Brian Weiss, *Infinity:*

The Ultimate Trip brings a message of hope and optimism concerning the most mysterious act in a human life; the end of this life and journey to the beyond.

Using vital and beautiful imagery, along with personal accounts of near-death experiences, reincarnation and more, *Infinity* brings forth the story of our own infinite nature, what to expect after death and the magic and beauty that awaits us on the other side. *Infinity: The Ultimate Trip* is an honest and hopeful assessment of the greatest journey that any of us will ever take. It changes our view from that of dread and pessimism to one of hope, joy and light.

www.SacredMysteries.com
877-304-3459

Lights, Camera...Yantra

Paula Barry

It began last summer during the Level 2 Yantra Yoga Teacher Training course in Merigar. There we were relaxing in the corpse position after the Vajra Wave, integrating Body, Speech and Mind with Presence when we hear the voice of Fabio: “I have an idea”! The idea was to meet again in 2009, and invite all the instructors of Yantra Yoga and those with a deep interest in Yantra to review, learn and understand all 108 aspects of the profound instructions of Yantra Yoga. The course would be without charge, a kind of symposium for all those with the desire to collaborate and to realize this goal.

During the year the ‘idea’ continued to bear fruit, and it was decided to make a professional quality film of the First Level of Yantra Yoga. The film would include: warm-up exercises (very necessary and much requested), The 9 Breathings for Exhaling the Stale Air, Tsigjong (Loosening the Joints), Lungsang (the 8 Movements for Purifying the Prana), Tsadul (Controlling the Channels), the 5 Basic Yantras for each of the 5 series of Yantras and the Vajra Wave.

An experienced film crew from Ukraine was hired. Salima Celeri was to do the make-up. A wardrobe was purchased and funding was secured!

gentina and China convened in Merigar eager to enter together the profound methods of the Nyida Khajyor. Our ages spanned 4 decades; some had been doing Yantra Yoga for many years, others for only a few. Some were incredibly blessed with agility and flexibility, while others did their best to expand their limits and broaden their capacity, but we all worked patiently and diligently to integrate the movements with the breathing which is one of the unique aspects of Yantra Yoga that differentiates it from other methods of Yoga.



Eight Movements

Photo: P Barry



Eight Movements

Photo: L Carniel

ing eyes to make sure that each Yantra was performed correctly. “Ready to Shoot”, Tanya would shout, “Camera”, “Yes”, “Beat”, and the metronome would start at 46 beats per minute to help those performing the Yantra to coordinate their movements with each other.

It was inspiring to see the patience, and commitment of the film crew, our tireless teachers, our strong Yogis and Yoginis who performed difficult Yantras many times over in order that they be as perfect as possible, and all those coordinating the wardrobe and make-up, and snacks and schedules, all working harmoniously together.

We all look forward to seeing the finished film, and hope that it



Director Tatiana Khodakivska and Camerawoman Ekaterina Dubrovskaya

Photo: P Barry

So...this September, in Merigar, Yantra Yogis and Yoginis from Estonia, Russia, Italy, Brazil, Australia, Poland, Germany, Ukraine, America, England, Ar-

Every afternoon as we practiced each of the series of Yantras Fabio and Laura were able to see who would be the best candidates to perform the Yantras for

the film. Everyone was included! We then went on to explore and work through each of the series of Yantras, all of the Basic Movements, Movements for Training and Movements for Progressing, patiently working with the text of Vairocana the Nyida Khajor or “Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra” and Rinpoche’s detailed commentary “A Stainless Mirror of Jewels”. Some of the variations are very strenuous and could only be performed by a few of the “super-yogis”. However, it was always extremely interesting to observe as well as to apply these, whatever our capacity. They allowed one, in a real sense, to deepen the knowledge and experience of each of the five kinds of hold. During the last few days we also learned and practiced the



Zhenya Rud and Adam Was doing the Frog Yantra from the 5th group of Yantras

Photo: P Barry

Seven Lotus Poses, which eliminate disorders of the channels, prana and tig le.

Every morning at 7 o’clock those who were to be filmed gathered in the outer ring of the Merigar Gonpa for make-up and wardrobe selection, and to begin warming up for the Yantras they were to perform. Then, for the following 6 hours (or more) the Gonpa was transformed into a film set. Our patient director Tanya and camera woman Katya assisted by Dima and Alessandro set up each take, making sure that the lighting was correct, that the colors of the clothing were coordinated, that there were no distracting background movements or sounds, and that the yogis were performing the Yantras in a coordinated and perfect rhythm. Laura and Fabio tirelessly provided advice and discern-

will bring great benefit to future practitioners of this profound system of Yantra Yoga. ©



Rhythmic Breathing

Photo: P Barry



Salima Celeri applying make up to Dina Priymak

Photo: P Barry

A Buddhist Response to the Climate Emergency

Contributions from Dalai Lama XIV, Joanna Macy, Chatral Rinpoche, Susan Murphy Roshi, Karmapa XVII, Thich Nhat Hahn, Sakya Trizin Rinpoche, Bikkhu Bodhi, Dudjom Rinpoche, Robert Aitken Roshi, Thrangu Rinpoche, and many more.

Edited by John Stanley, David Loy, Gyurme Dorje.
Wisdom Publications 2009

Andy Lukianowicz

Human activity everywhere is hastening to destroy key elements of the natural ecosystem all living beings depend on. These threatening developments are drastic and shocking. It is hard to imagine all this happening in our lifetime, and in the lives of our children. We must deal with the prospect of global suffering and environmental degradation unlike anything in human history. (Dalai Lama)

This book is a timely overview with up-to-the-minute information on the climate emergency and what part we, as engaged and concerned Buddhists, can play to avert at least the most dire consequences of what may be imminent disaster brought on by our reckless destructive relationship with our natural environment, our home, planet Earth.

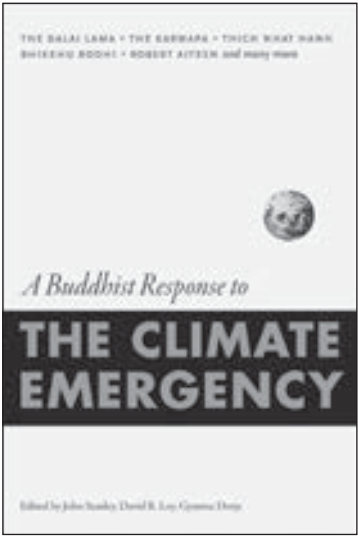
The Introduction, by chief editor John Stanley and Buddhist philosopher David Loy, succinctly summarises our predicament: we are in an ecologically critical situation, brought on by ourselves (in the words of Thich Nhat Hahn, through “our competition for power, fame, sex, and profit”) about which we are institutionally misinformed by the mainstream media (“our collective nervous system”) as the “unholy trinity” of corporations, politicians and media resist any attempt to reverse or at least curtail the damaging effects of the fossil fuel industry on the environment. This political and economic analysis, especially of the danger of denial and of suppression of awareness of our predicament and the concomitant impossibility of continuing (as our political leaders seem intent on attempting to do) with “business as usual” consumerism, is dovetailed with a Buddhist explanation of its underlying cause: the alienating dualism artificially created between man and the biosphere: “Human civilisation is a

collective construction which induces a sense of separation from the natural world.” Our task, rather than the impossible urge to dominate nature, is to control our own “toxic cleverness”.

This sets the stage for the book, structured in six parts. Parts One and Six contain essays by the two most influential Buddhist teachers of our time, the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the Vietnamese Master Thich Nhat Hahn, for both of whom “the climate emergency has become a paramount concern.” The Dalai Lama’s article also contains a poem written in 1998, evincing his remarkable foresight on “the degradation of our environment,” with special emphasis on the Buddhist theory of interdependence and on the importance of trees.

In Part Two, John Stanley concisely and elegantly summarises the most recent scientific findings on the Anthropocene-induced climate crisis, viewed from a Buddhist perspective. This section is especially useful because the author is trained in science (he holds a Ph.D. and ran an important microbiology research department in Colindale, London U.K.) and has been practising Nyingma Tibetan Buddhism (his main teacher being Dudjom Rinpoche, generally considered the supreme Nyingmapa master of the twentieth century) for over thirty years. The science is irrefutable, the Buddhist perspective persuasive, interwoven in a seamless presentation.

Regarding the relationship between science and Buddhism, the Dalai Lama concludes some pertinent observations with the following statement: “[O]ne fundamental attitude shared by Buddhism and science is the commitment to keep searching for reality by empirical means and to be willing to disregard accepted or long-held positions if our search finds the truth is different.”



Particularly illuminating in Part Two is the section “What Makes Us Do It?” Western post-Cartesian logical philosophy has precipitated an ever-widening rift from our fellow animals and nature; this is a constricting “frame” that Buddhism, by reconfirming our biophilia, can heal. (The preceding section confirms, on the basis on DNA sequencing, the Buddhist affirmation of humanity’s kinship with all life.)

Parts Three and Four form the heart of the book, “a variety of Buddhist perspectives on the climate and sustainability crisis” by important Tibetan Buddhist masters (Part Three) and Western Masters, mostly in the Theravada and Zen traditions (Part Four).

Part Three, which “also reunites four great reincarnate lamas and lineage heads who, between 1951 and 1981, led Tibetan Buddhism into the world beyond the ‘Land of Snows’ – the Dalai Lama, Gyalwang Karmapa, Sakya Trizin, and Dudjom Rinpoche,” contains a number of monlam aspiration prayers (ably translated by Lotsawa Gyume Dorje), as well as incisive essays, many written in response to John Stanley’s penetrating questions posed to these masters. It is particularly pertinent (and dangerously ironic) that the Tibetan plateau, known as the world’s “third pole,” is source to the major rivers in Asia: India and China, builders of most of the new coal-fired power plants which are wreaking great damage in Tibet, stand most to lose by their reckless pursuit of “progress.”

More prosaic, perhaps, but no less interesting, is Part Four. In my opinion, the longer interaction between Zen Buddhism and western culture has entailed a keener understanding of the socially, politically and economi-

cally constructed aspect of the human samsaric dimension. Thus while the Tibetan Lamas by and large invoke the compassionate help of the Buddhas, the essays by the Western Buddhist teachers are more orientated towards an attitude of “self-help.” This being a man-made crisis, how have we brought it about, how are we perpetuating it, and what can we constructively do to avert it? The authors pull no punches and directly address the contingent facts and causes of the crisis: socio-economic analysis attributes the responsibility to the prevailing unbridled consumerism-driven fossil fuel-dependent commodity capitalist economic model, reliant on continuous (actually, unsustainable) “growth”. Psychologically, “denial of global warming and indifference toward its consequences stem from the potent mixture of corporate greed, the arrogance of power, fear of collapse, and stultifying delusion” (Bikkhu Bodhi). Buddhist insight finds the solution in cultivating contentment instead of insatiable grasping: “From a Buddhist perspective, a sane economy would be governed by the principle of sufficiency, which holds that the key to happiness is contentment rather than an abundance of goods” (Bikkhu Bodhi).

All the essays repay close and attentive study, but I must mention Roshi Aitken’s remarkable prophetic hymn warning “Woe Unto Us!” and Joanna Macy’s insightful essay “On Being With Our World,” where she identifies “the spiritual traps that cut the nerve of compassionate action.” These are: believing that suffering is a mistake (what I would term the demon of spiritual narcissism); believing the phenomenal world is an illusion; believing we create the world unilaterally by the power of our mind (which two conflated form the demon of solipsism). The corollary of the latter belief is deeming “the world already perfect when we view it spiritually.” That is a sweet-scented “comfort” (Macy’s word) that I personally cherish and have difficulty forsaking; however, Macy warns “the price for such comfort is high. It is my experience that the world itself has a role to play in our awakening. Its very brokenness and need call to us, summoning us to walk out of our prison of self-concern.”

Part Five reviews some urgent collective responses we can implement. In this part John deconstructs the denial engendered by institutional deception and misinformation (alluded to above), breaking down, one by one, the “sceptic” pseudo-scientific government- and fossil-fuel industry-sponsored “facts” (technically known as horse manure) deriding and maligning alternative and sustainable sources of energy. John then proceeds to delineate a renewable future with the five transformative powers: wind, solar thermoelectric, solar photovoltaic, tidal and enhanced geo-thermal.

Part Six is Thich Naht Hahn’s brief but heartfelt meditation on mindfulness and Buddhism as humanitarianism. As this master, who coined the term “engaged Buddhism,” wisely says: “We don’t have to sink into despair about global warming, we can act.”

The Afterword adds the Dalai Lama’s endorsement of the (350ppm) safe level for atmospheric carbon dioxide, an important message to politicians and scientists alike.

What more could a reader ask? A wealth of teachings directly relating to our being in the world from teachers in the Tibetan Nyingma-Dzogchen, Kagyu-Mahamudra, Sakya-Lamdre and Gelug-Kadam lineages and from masters in Theravada-Vipassana and Japanese and Vietnamese Zen traditions. Un-media-ted scientific information, un-media-ted political, economic and social analysis, across the spectrum Buddhist and western psychological insight. Advice on what we Dharma practitioners can do, individually and collectively, to avert or at least alleviate impending ecological disaster, for our sake and our descendants (so that they will have a world wherein to practise Dharma) and for our innocent fellow sentient beings (animal, plant and mineral) with whom we share the planet.

By the way, interested readers can visit the dedicated website on www.ecoduddhism.org for further and up-to-the-minute information, quarterly review, and blog.

“Our climate itself is now in our own hands”

(Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche)
If you read only one Dharma book, make it this one. ©

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Schedule 2010

>> continued from page 1

Russia
June 2–8
Clinic treatment

June 11–15
Moscow retreat

June 18–20
Saint Petersburg retreat

June 28–July 4
Crimea retreat

Romania
July 20–25
Merigar East retreat

July 26–29
SMS Level I exam
July 30–August 10
SMS Level II Training

Italy
August 16–22
Merigar West retreat

August 25–Sep. 3
Grosseto personal retreat of
Mandarava empowering chudlen
pills for use at the retreat in
Margarita plus Fitness

September 8–12
Zhitro purification for all those
who have died

France
September 24–26
Teaching at Karmaling

Spain
October 1–7
Barcelona retreat

Brazil
October 13–17
Brazil retreat

Venezuela
Tashigar Norte
December 1–8
Mandarava intensive practice
retreat with Chudlen
(in Webcast)

Dec. 26–Jan. 2
Christmas retreat

The History of a History Book

The story of how *The Light of Kailash* came to be written, an aside by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu made during the Bepai Gumchung, The Hidden Collection of Buddhagupta, retreat at Merigar West on October 5, 2009.

Speaking about the history books he has written, Rinpoche said:

Within the Buddhist tradition, an author generally composes a homage placed at the beginning of a book or commentary. Thus someone who belongs to a particular school pays homage to the founder of the school to show that the book and teachings belong to that tradition. For us Tibetans this custom is an important one, and when we write we very often use this way of showing respect.

Once I did research and wrote a history of Tibet. That was my first history book and I wrote it in a more intellectual way. At the beginning of the text, I paid homage to the founder of the Bön tradition because investigating, I saw that the ancient history of Tibet was centered in the Bönpo tradition. Without recognition of this fact, nothing could be understood.

Later, as the fruit of my enquiry into Tibetan history, I wrote several volumes: the first concerned only the Bön tradition and the founder of Bön in the history of Shang Shung and showed the source of Tibetan history and culture. For that reason I also considered that the founder of the Bön tradition was important and so I wrote a homage to him. At the conclusion of the book, I also criticized the Buddhist tradition which, though it always believed the teachings were very important, did not concern itself with history, and as a consequence Tibetan history had been distorted.

But then I thought that even though I had written down my ideas, citing my research, and that it was a good book, I could not publish it, otherwise all the Tibetan Buddhist traditions – Sakya, Nyingmapa, Gelugpa, Kagyüpa and so forth – would criticize me. So I put the book away in a box for two or three years. Later I thought it not positive that this

book remained hidden because if people – particularly young people – read it, their eyes would be opened and they would be led to do their own research.

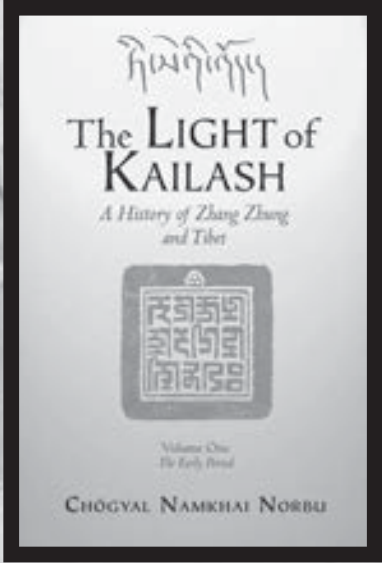
I reflected about what I could do and I had an idea: I would send a copy to the Dalai Lama. But then I thought that the Dalai Lama would also get angry and that would not be good because he is very important for me.

Another year passed and I considered that even if the Dalai Lama was affronted, he would stay angry at the most for three years and in the end would discover the great importance of doing research into Tibetan history, particularly into the most ancient times. I said to myself it does not matter if he gets angry for a few years, I will send it anyway. So I made a copy and sent it to him.

After nearly a month I received a very nice letter directly from the Dalai Lama. He said that I had written a history of Tibet using my brain, not just writing and copying what other people had said before and pasting together a history. He was extremely pleased with this book and said that if I gave him permission he would like to publish it. I was so happy and immediately replied saying, “Please publish it – I will be very pleased.”

He published it right away in Dharamsala, so many people read it, Sakyapa, Gelupga, Nyingma, Kagyüpa, and so forth, but they could not criticize me directly because they knew that the Dalai Lama had chosen to publish that book. Secretly, however, they always condemned me, particularly the Nyingmapa and the Kagyüpa, who were even worse than the Gelupga. They said, “Namkhai Norbu has become a Bönpo because at the beginning of the book, instead of paying homage to Buddha Shakyamuni, he pays homage to Tenpa Sherab, the founder of Bön! At that point I was no longer worried because

THE SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE PUBLICATION OF



A Groundbreaking Study of the Origins of the Land of Snows

IN THE FINDINGS OF Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the cradle of Tibetan culture is to be looked for in the ancient realm of Zhang Zhung and in the Bon spiritual traditions which flourished within and spread from that kingdom.

According to relevant textual sources, the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung, prior to the advent of Buddhism in the seventh century, encompassed a vast area including Western and Northern Tibet, with the revered and majestic Mount Kailash as its center and heart. Thus, the Author's choice of title for his work is meaningful per se, in that it symbolizes and at the same time emphasizes the rich cultural origin of the Land of Snows.

The text, originally conceived as a series of university lectures given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at the invitation of the University of Nationalities in Beijing in 1988, formed a first abridged version of *The Light of Kailash*, subsequently enlarged and expanded by the Author, until the manuscript, written in his unique calligraphy, became a work of 1,900 pages, divided in three volumes.

Volume One, “The Early Period, the History of Ancient Zhang Zhung”, considers the rise of early human generations and the Bon lineages of ancient Zhang Zhung, its dynasties, language, and culture.

Volume Two, “The History of the Intermediate Period: Tibet and Zhang Zhung”, concerns the diffusion of Bon during the lifetimes of the first Tibetan monarchs, the Bon religion, and Bonpo religious figures of Zhang Zhung.

Volume Three, “The History of the Later Period: Tibet”, examines the genealogies, Bonpo lineages, royal dynasties, language, and civilization of Tibet.

The Light of Kailash through meticulous selection and a critical use and analysis of a vast array of literary and often unpublished sources offers an open, daring, holistic, unbiased approach to the study of the cultural and spiritual heritage of Tibet and to the understanding of the origin of this fascinating and endangered civilization.

It is my hope that scholars will appreciate the import, and interested readers enjoy the content, of this amazing trilogy.

from the Foreword of *The Light of Kailash*
by its translator and editor,
Donatella Rossi, PhD.



Shang Shung Publications

books can be ordered on-line visiting the website:
<http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org>
e-mail: shangshunged@tiscali.it

I knew that the Dalai Lama was happy.

A few years later, I went to Dharamsala. The Dalai Lama called me and we spoke about the history of Tibet and Shang Shung for three hours. He gave me a very nice gold pen and asked me to please write more. At that period there were no computers and I wrote all these books by hand. Afterwards, when I wrote a book

called *Drung Deu Bön* on an important aspect of Tibetan history, I wrote more than ten pages with the pen from the Dalai Lama. I finished that book and later Adriano translated it.

Finally I also completed the three volumes of my history book and managed to publish it in China so that many young Tibetans were able to read it and in

fact wrote many articles based on what I had explained.

All this has nothing to do with today's teaching [laughter], but paying homage is the story of the book, and it is also a useful idea to have. This three volume work is called *The Light of Kailash*. The first volume translated into English will be published shortly, and you will be able to read it. ©

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Schedule 2009–2010

2009

November 24–December 1
Czech Rep., Phendenling

December 2–6
Slovakia

Dec. 28–Jan. 3
Greece

2010

January 4–8
Cyprus

January 16–18
Italy, Retreat in Merigar West

February 23–5
Argentina, Short retreat before Anniversary Tashigar Sur

February 6–12
Brasil, Lhundrubling

March 1–13
Hungary, Budapest, restricted retreat

March 18–26
Margarita Isl., Santi Maha Sangha Teacher's training

April 10–14
France, Paris

April 15–20
France, Dejamling

April 21–24
Ukraine, Kiev

April 25–28
Ukraine, Phuntsokling (Donetsk)

May 1–5
Israel

May 8–10
Italy, Florence/Pistoia, Weekend teaching in Sakyangongaling

May 20–25
Russia, Moscow, Weekend teaching in Rinchenling

May 26–31
Crimea, Kunsangar South, short retreat and CHNN organization

June 1–8
Russia, Moscow, Clinic

June 9–15
Russia, Moscow, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Retreat

June 16–24
Russia, St. Petersburg, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Retreat

June 29–July 6
Peru, Retreat at Norbuling

July 7–14
Bolivia

July 24–28
USA, New York City, Kundrolling

July 29–August 12
USA, Conway, Mass, Tsegyalgar East and Khandroling

August 18–23
England, London and Wales, Kunselling

September 7–12
Russia, Izhevsk, restricted retreat in Kungaling
September 13–16
Mexico, Mexico City, Pelzomling

September 17–20
Costa Rica, Dekyting

Sept. 21–Oct. 4
Baja California, Tsegyalgar West

Oct. 31–Nov. 4
USA, Berkeley, California, Dondrubling

November 17–24
Mozambique, short retreat

December 7–15
Moscow, Russia, Longde restricted retreat on Rinchenling's roof

How I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Mara Sangiorgi

From the time I was very little, I have always had two things which I liked most: to play with my face and name in front of a mirror until I started to see many different faces and my name had no more significance to me, and to remember my vivid dreams and imagine to continue them during the daytime. In the end I came back to both things when I finally met Rinpoche.

It was in 1977 and I was in India doing some pilgrimage in holy Buddhist places. When I was in Sarnath I felt very strongly that I really wanted to find a Buddhist Master to teach me the Dharma, but at that time I really had no idea where to find him, but I trusted in my good fortune and continue my journey around India.

A few month later I went to Katmandu and climbing up to Swayambhu temple, after thousands of step, I looked up and the immense golden Dorje just in front of me and there was a really strong opening of my heart and I felt I was arriving home. In the temple some monks were performing a puja to Tara, so I sat there and when it was finished I remained in an empty state of mind, which I had never experienced before, but still no Master was manifesting. I went around Nepal and I really started to feel strongly that the time that separated me from my Guru was becoming shorter and shorter.

Continuing my travel, I went to Manali Valley, and one day coming down from Vashish, a hot spring dedicated to Lord Shiva, I met three young men, coming from Lahuli Valley – Andrea Sertoli, Andrea Dell’Angelo and Mario Maglietti. I went for lunch with them and it was a really wonderful moment because they told me that they were following a Tibetan master called Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, the precious jewel of the sky. What a wonderful name! I felt that my devotion started in that moment!

We spent the day together – at the time I was quite a direct person, and I felt that people were a little astonished by my strong character, so I started to look at my behavior with more presence. With that feeling in my heart I went with Andrea Sertoli to

the Manali market because he wanted to buy a damaru. At the time I didn’t know that a damaru is a ritual instrument for doing Chöd practice and I was very struck by the fact that the damaru had a male side and a female side. In some way that fact really touched me and made me think deeply about the double – the male and female – aspects of my own nature.

Also, along the road to Manali, I often came across Tibetans who were working on the road to repair it. They lived in the most terrible conditions, practically inhuman and were very dirty. But what was really amazing was their smiles when you greeted them. They transmitted a type of serenity, a feeling of inner peace that had a profound effect on me and I started to ask myself how could people who live in such a terrible way be able to transmit such a feeling of peace and serenity. So it was really the meeting with Andrea, Andrea and Mario, coming into contact with the Tibetans and hearing the name of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche that was like a seed to awaken my consciousness to the fact that more than anything else in the world I wanted to meet this Master.

Finally I went back to Rome and started to read some of the books of Chögyam Trungpa. I was very impressed by his clarity and the way he analyzed the human condition in our society. Then one night I had a very vivid dream. I dreamed that it was night, there was total darkness illuminated by a lot of stars, and I was floating in space with a golden being who was wearing ornaments like a Tibetan divinity (only later I realized that it was Vajrasattva) and there was a golden fluid that passed between our mouths and gave off this strong golden radiant light all around. When I woke up it felt so real that I phoned one of my friends, I think it was Andrea Sertoli, to ask him for Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s address. This was in October 1978.

So I got the train in Rome and went to Formia to his house and before I arrived I bought a ricotta cake to take with me. When I arrived, Rinpoche was in the kitchen preparing lunch for his children who were on their way back from school. So I



As soon they started to sing I found it easy to follow all these difficult Tibetan words and it was like everything was going spontaneously into place. Sometimes Rinpoche would come to Naples by car and when he went home he would give us a lift as far as Formia.

He was already transmitting teaching in a particular way. He would ask things like, “What do you see outside the car?” and we all had different visions, so he would talk to us about the visions different beings have of the reality. We started to understand that his way of transmitting teachings was very linked to here and now, without meditating in silence somewhere. This was something that I felt very strongly in my being and it was my path.

My first retreat with Rinpoche was in Graz, Austria, in December 1979 where he transmitted teachings of the Longde Series. At the end of the retreat I wanted to start practicing, so I asked him how I could do this because I was living in Rome. Rinpoche told me that there was a practitioner called Andrea Sertoli living in Umbria and he suggested that I go there and do a Longde retreat at his house. This was the same person that I had met in Manali.

So I went there and started my retreat but I didn’t finish it because we fell in love and became a couple. At that time Merigar didn’t exist so we would go to the retreats in different places. I still remember an incredible retreat in Sardinia at Laconia where my first child was conceived. Rinpoche started to talk to us about the fact of buying some land to start the Community, and one day he told us to go to see a ‘podere’ in Tuscany. It was a terribly windy cold day typical of the Amiata winter when we first saw the future Merigar. And finally in July of 1982 the first Merigar retreat took place under a beautiful white tent placed near where the Gonpa is now. In October of the same year, with Jacopo only a few days old in my arms, Rinpoche decided to found Merigar and with Andrea and other practitioners, so I was one of the founding members.

From that time a lot of hard work started to make the Serkhang out of a stable and gradually the Gonpa, the big Stupa, the Mandala hall, all that Rinpoche’s clear vision has manifested. His good will and sacrifice has guided us to work hard at his side. We planted hundred of trees, and my pine is now tall and strong on top of the hill over the place where we eat!

Many things had happened since that days, many retreats have been attended, there were very difficult moments that we overcame trying to do our best, many children have been born; the young men and women who are the future of Merigar. This is the story of how I met Rinpoche and my great wish to be as close as possible to him has been fulfilled. I feel so fortunate to be able follow His Perfect Teachings and to collaborate with my brothers and sisters. Being at Merigar now is often like being in Dewachenpo.



New!
Website for the Vajra Dance Costumes
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