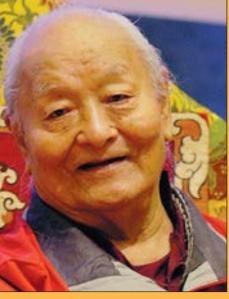


# THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

**Upcoming Retreats** Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



#### 2010

tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com

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** 

Canaries retreat May 28-30 **London Retreat** 

May 21-23

Russia June 2-8 Clinic treatment

June 11-15 Moscow retreat



Rinpoche receives a collective gift on his birthday at Tashigar Norte – 3 bags inside each other, the third with precious jewels: "Outer, inner, and secret," as he said.

# Greetings from Tropical Isla Margarita!

A Report on the Longsal Longde Retreat from December 4–11, 2009

Harri Jäälinoja

ow wonderful it is to come to place for the first time, and immediately meet many familiar faces! Already on the way, when changing flights, I met old friends at the airport, and saw some new friends-to-be with melongs hanging around their necks. This time the melong-carrying crew was headed to Tashigar Norte, to receive teachings on Dzogchen Longde from our master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The Gar was well prepared to receive us. Via the community mailing list we were informed well in advance about the possibility (and necessity) to reserve a place in the camping, and also of other accommodation options. Contact information to trusted taxi drivers was given out, so in the end the long travel went very smoothly from door-to-door. I set up tent at the Gar in my

assigned lot, and quickly fell asleep. And in a striking contrast to the previous early morning in the dark and cold North, soon I woke up in a warm tent to the song of unfamiliar birds. How strange!

Dzogchen Longde is the second of the three series of Dzogchen, corresponding to the second statement of Garab Dorje: "Not remaining in doubt". With the help of the methods of Longde, practitioners can remove any doubts they may have about the primordial state introduced by the Master, to make sure that they have a perfectly precise base. In the beginning of the retreat Rinpoche made it very clear that having a precise base, clear knowledge of our real condition is the most important thing in the path of Dzogchen. Without this, all the various methods remain on the level of intellectual or mental exercise. Therefore we

should not chase after various teachings or methods, even methods as precious as the Longde, only for the sake of the method itself, but instead always remember to aim for the true essence.

Tashigar Norte is a very important place connected to Rinpoche's Longsal terma. As a reminder of this, in the mornings before the retreat started there was always a thun of the Gomadevi practice, another important terma teaching of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The Dzogchen Longde teachings Rinpoche transmitted to us now also belong to the Longsal cycle. Rinpoche explained that compared to traditional Longde teachings, this teaching is more simple and goes more to the essence, but that there is no contradiction of any kind. So once again, we are fortunate to have the

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#### Teaching



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 'The Small Collection of Hidden Precepts'

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#### **Teaching**



Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Opening our eyes to our true nature

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#### News



From all over the World

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# 'The Small Collection of Hidden Precepts'

by Buddhagupta, one of the twenty-one great masters of Dzogehen from Oddiyana

From the retreat given at Merigar West, October 7th 2009

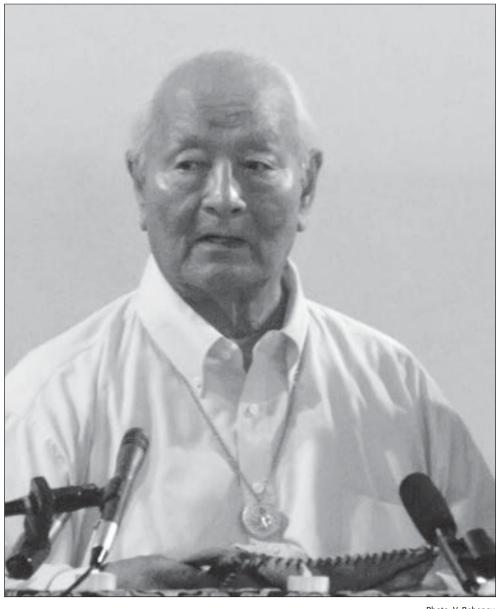
n the teaching of Dzogchen there are so many different kinds of methods. In particular we have tantras, lungs ▲and many series of Upadesha related to the Dzogchen semde, longde and upadesha series. Of course at the beginning there are many things to learn, but the essence of all is for discovering our real nature: firstly discovering it and secondly how to integrate in that state. Everything is based on the state of Guruyoga and so you can see that in the Dzogchen teaching Guruyoga is the most important thing and for that reason we do it repeatedly.

It is very important to remember this always, not just follow after names of books or methods. You must remember what the essence is: the essence is being in a state of Guruyoga. If you are in that state, you are in the knowledge of Dzogchen, otherwise you may sometimes be conditioned by intellectual understanding. If we only learn things from books it is useful and, of course, it is also related to the teaching, but it does not mean that it is the real sense. What we want is to have total realization and that can only happen if we are in the essence of the teaching. I have already told you that the Dzogchen teaching is considered the essential and the most important teaching because it goes directly to the real sense of our nature. It is a very precious teaching and a very precious practice and, for this reason, you can understand the importance of Guruyoga.

In general we say that there are two main kinds of teachings of Buddha. One is called the teaching of the lung, meaning all the teachings that Buddha explained and transmitted orally. For example, in the Hinayana and Mahayana sutra, they mainly follow the teaching of the lung of Buddha Shakyamuni. This means trying to understand your real condition. You remember that sutra teaching is explained with the two truths: the absolute truth means we discover and remain in the real condition of shunyata. This is the essence of the teaching of the lung. The other truth is the relative truth, which means that even though we have this knowledge of the empty nature of existence, we all live with dualistic karmic vision. Regarding karmic vision Buddha said that everything is unreal, just like a big dream. But even if it is like a dream, when we are in the dream it becomes something concrete. Only when we wake up do we discover that the dream is unreal. It is the same way when we follow the teaching of the lung of Buddha Shakyamuni: we discover that the relative truth is unreal and we get into the state of the absolute truth. This is how it is explained in the sutra and this knowledge is considered to be the main teaching of Buddha.

Buddha explained how long his teaching would remain in this human dimension – in this case the most important teaching, the real teaching of the lung – and said that the pure teaching of the lung would develop and remain for ngagua tragsum which means 3 times 500 years, that is 1,500 years. After that time we would be in the kaliyuga and the teaching that would continue to exist would be called lung tenpa, something appearing with the form of the teaching but not really precisely how the teaching was. It would be called tagtsam dzinpai tenpa, tag meaning sign, like when you see signs [of the teaching] and it appears that there are sanghas and monks, etc. But it would be very difficult for the concrete teaching of the lung to still exist.

Today most of the monasteries are similar. Even if there is a monastery with hundreds and thousands of monks, very few monks really have knowledge or understanding of the teaching of the lung of Buddha. There are very few and that is the problem. For example, in Tibet, all Buddhist traditions are Vajrayana, even if it is not the perfect teaching of the lung. The teaching of the Buddha, however, is not only lung. Another very important consideration is the



teaching of the togpa, which means inner understanding; not manifesting too much externally. When you go more deeply into the teaching of the togpa, there is always less and less to do externally. But the most important teaching for having total realization is togpai tenpa, not lung tenpa.

This does not mean there is no longer the essence of the teaching; there is even more. For example, in the Dzogchen teaching when we read the Dra Thalgyur Tantra, it explains that in general the Vajrayana teaching will remain in our dimension much longer, three times longer, than lung tenpa. Lung tenpa will slowly disappear, just like what happened in India. During the period when the Gelugpa, Sakyapa and Kagyupa schools began, there were still some teachings in India, not only tantra teachings but also sutra teachings. Then later on there was nothing. India is the origin of the teaching of Buddha, so why did it all disappear? For example, the Hinayana and Theravadin tradition only remained in Sri Lanka and then also developed a little in south Asia and India later on. Today Buddhism is developing in India because there are many Tibetans living there, but originally Buddhism disappeared in India. It disappeared but it does not mean the essence of the teaching is disappearing.

For example in the Dzogchen Tantras it explains that Vajrayana will not only remain longer, but it says that knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching will continue to exist almost up to the time that our globe is totally destroyed. But why are other teachings disappearing while Dzogchen is still continuing to exist? It is very easy to understand. When the teacher introduces you to your primordial state, the teacher is not introducing what you should do with your body or your circumstances. You are only present in that knowledge [of your primordial state] and continue in that state. This is the path and the essence of Dzogchen teachings, so there is nothing to do externally. Of course, for human beings interested in the teachings, if there are some circumstances, we can do something. We can always do something, there is nothing forbidden in the Dzogchen teachings.

We can always integrate everything. Remember in the case of the Dzogchen teaching, you should work with your circumstances. Day after day circumstances change and are always different. If you know how to work with circumstances it will always correspond with your real condition. If you have some concept and think you should do something in a precise way and you persist with these limitations, if the circumstances work in a contrary way, you cannot easily move ahead. For that reason we should work with circumstances.

For example, in all teachings starting with sutra, teaching is always related to our attitude and for that reason when they follow teaching most people always ask the teacher what they should do, how they should do the practice, etc. Since the main teaching in Dzogchen is to work with circumstances, the Dzogchen teacher does not give advice to the student about what the student should do and how they should live. How can the teacher give advice and know about all your circumstances? Simply giving advice for all the possible circumstances of an entire week is difficult, so how can we give advice for all of one's life? This is an example of how important it is to work with cir-

Working with circumstances was not invented by teachers: it is the teaching of Dzogchen. For that reason we should turn internally to our real nature and try to be in that state, and for that, the best thing to do is Guruyoga and to be in a state of Guruyoga. Guruyoga is a very easy method in the Dzogchen teachings and it exists in all traditions in Vajrayana. There are many types with many complicated visualizations, chanting, verses, etc., because they are all related to Tantrism, and we know that in Tantrism there is the gradual method, non-gradual method, etc.

In Dzogchen we do different Guruyogas in the tun, Guruyoga with Guru Garab Dorje, Guruyoga with Guru Padmasambhava, and we unify all our teachers and transmissions in this form. This method originally came from Anuyoga, a system of Tantrism, and is not really the Dzogchen way. In Dzogchen we do Guruyoga with a white A and thigle, which is the symbol of our primordial potentiality. That way it is very easy and we can always do that

There are all kinds of different methods and teachings in Dzogchen connected with this Guruyoga. Even if you do a practice of shine, in the Dzogchen semde style, first of all you should do Guruyoga. Then you work with that method of Guruyoga and it represents transmission. Dealing with transmission with any kind of practice is very important and in that way that practice becomes important for your total realization.

Transcription by N. Zeitz, editing N. Zeitz and L. Granger

# Opening our eyes to our true nature

Kruml, Czech Republic November 29, 2009

Te have finished this short retreat and maybe we have understood something about meditation. We understood that meditation has different aspects according to the different types of teaching. We understood most of all that the teaching is related to ourselves. Whatever we are doing, if we are not aware, loses some function. From one side, our capacity of discrimination and use of logic can be the main obstacle, and from the other side it can also be the best support.

We understand that each path has its own characteristics. We understand we have the most experience of the path connected with the mind and we have this idea of what teaching, religion and philosophy are. But we also understand that the key point is to open our eyes. These eyes are always the eyes of our different aspects. So now you understand better when you read the titles of texts, and you often find the word 'eyes' or 'light' connected with the three roots, and slowly you start to understand these are not symbolic words. We just do not have the same confidence in these words as we have with our world.

We know this world is made of objects and things that we have created. The world made of more natural things we know less, and the world connected with our real nature we know even less. So the best advice is that we open our eyes, let all these things appear and then we try to learn how they are. When we are working with our mind we must define everything. Once we have defined everything we can say, "Oh, I am following dharma teaching, religion or some philosophical idea." But whatever we follow, all kinds of teachings, relate to us. When we are taking this knowledge, putting out in front of ourselves and judging, then it becomes something like a teaching, religion or philosophy. So when we apply the principle of these three considerations or this direction, we have this problem.

If we want to really understand the teaching of Buddha, Buddha said everything has a cause of existence. Then with this cause we have this kind of effect. But we are causing it, because our real nature or primordial state is always there. We have a need to define our natural state as dharma or religion. To say this is Buddhist tradition, for example, Buddhist teaching, Buddhist religion, is not necessary. It does not qualify as teaching. For example, if we say Dzogchen teaching, it can change if we define it. If we define it, it is more like philosophy, more like knowledge, more like religion, and doesn't really change anything.

It is important advice to understand this aspect. When we try to



define something we immediately have problems. If it is not like religion then it is like a philosophy, if it is not like philosophy it is like a teaching and if it is not like a teaching, it is something else. But we are always talking about the same thing. For example, if we ask each other what this teaching is, each person has their own idea. So from one question, manifold answers arise. Then someone asks how come they see all this reality, how did everything manifest, or for example when someone asks, "How can I understand that everything is unreal?" But it is enough that we observe this. One single explanation leads to many lines of interpretation, and one single thought can create millions of developmental thoughts because of our infinite potentiality and then it becomes something real. Then tomorrow people are doing different things and this idea becomes more and

We understand this is more or less our condition. For example, if you are interested, you can study Santi Maha Sangha where you will find all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism. You can find practical examples. Santi Maha Sangha does not say this is the only tradition, you should do this way otherwise something terrible will happen, it is just giving an example of all different aspects and methods. Then when we apply methods and we understand better how they are related to each other. We do not do this at the level where we must 'establish' something, but we understand how this knowledge is good for us, we see, we become more relaxed and freer, because we see we do not need to establish something outside of us. We don't need to show anything. When we understand this aspect and we become more relaxed, we can do everything with the idea of freedom. You can observe in yourself that this freedom becomes something real. Maybe you had this idea before, "Oh I want to be this or that", and then this idea slowly releases.

We understand that this is not a real need. Nothing really changes if we are something or something else. We open our eyes well and see what our possibilities are. At the end we do what makes sense and slowly we become more open and compassionate with people. We start to understand that the teaching is spread everywhere; we can find that the essence can be found in many aspects of our culture. There are experiences and knowledge that are very similar.

Sometimes we are into this idea that things are similar or different, that they are, and we should understand that they are expressed differently. 'Being' does not exist. We cannot enter this knowledge of being – because we understood in these days that being is connected with existence and existence means it is our consideration. So there will always be mind creating this existence, this condition, and everything related. And as this exists, also the Buddha exists saying everything is unreal.

So when we understand these aspects, we understand that 'being' does not exist. Then we can say expression exists or more traditionally, manifestation of this being, and we understand our culture better because it is based on a similar principle. Then we can interpret why there is the

understanding of compassion; when compassion is applied in many tantras it explains that compassion becomes something like love that pervades all. Then many things start to sound more familiar.

When I was child I went to school with nuns. These nuns were dressed in grey and black and white, covering the hair and all, and only the face was exposed. Some were young and some old, some a little bit horrible and some a little nicer, but all said they were married to Christ. I always thought that idea was a little bit strange. So then I asked, "So how is it being married with Christ?" They would say it is not like mother and father, they are married, this marriage is different. I was five years old. They said that they apply and remain in the love of God. Then I asked how is this love? They always answered it is not important how it is, but that we are in it, otherwise we lose the meaning of being nuns.

I thought this is a very good teaching because it is similar to Buddhism. We say we should stay in the presence of our natural condition, not that we should think about it. We should observe and remain in this clarity, not that we create clarity. And then love comes naturally just like compassion, when we have an understanding of emptiness. So some people do these kinds of jobs, but we are all similar. We make a different kind of choice, but the situation is very similar. We can understand if someone chooses some way to live and renounces some aspect of life; if the understanding is correct then slowly the fruit will manifest.

What we do say is that not all people have the opportunity to meet a teaching like Ati yoga or Dzogchen. And the principle is to open your eyes and observe your condition. When you see your condition you understand all your limitations. Then you release your tension. You work with your limitations and then you develop through this awareness and you become freer. When this freedom or relaxed state manifests then there is opportunity to develop. So it means there is nothing to judge or to fabricate with mind. It means you if have the opportunity, you try to do practice collectively and together. You try and release all your tensions and have a more normal life; you try to understand who is subject of actions, of sentences, of thoughts, because we need to understand why we are doing something or saying something, or why we are creating some thought.

The most important aspect we have understood is related to the three roots. In general in Vajrayana, and most of all in Ati yoga and Dzogchen, it is said that without the teacher there is nothing, in the sense of nothing opposite of something else. It means if there is no teacher, there is samsara. When there is a teacher there is samsara and nirvana and we start to understand there is not only one aspect of ourselves. If there is samsara and nirvana, automatically awareness of this exists and we understand that both exist as places in our mind. Then we have a better opportunity to understand what our real condition is.

We need capacity and the first capacity we need is to find the teacher; to see there is teacher.

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Recognition means the possibility to see. For example, if someone sees someone like a politician as an important person, that is really an obstacle. Instead of recognizing the teacher with his or her own qualities, it means capacity is missing. Capacity connected with mind doesn't exist. Often we read in texts this teaching follows capacity corresponding to lower, medium or higher capacity of the students, but this has nothing to do with mind.

For example, I can go to some lecture and I can recognize someone with some kind of knowledge. Then every time that person is going somewhere I am convinced I have to be there. Listening, collaborating, working together, for example this is considered very high capacity, no doubt, like recognizing mother or father, but this is something different than attending the lecture and thinking, "Well, he is saying something interesting but I don't really understand and maybe it means this or that." This means average capacity because there is personal judgment, the idea of self. It means there is an argument that I should be convinced of somehow, this person should convince me.

This is the level of dialectic communication, based on communication at the level of energy. At the lower level we criticize this person and we need to have a curriculum vitae that says this person has the recognition of twenty-five incarnations, something like this, and when this happens we can really understand what the obstacle of mind means. We are very fortunate because this teaching has a very, very strong trans-

mission because it is an essential teaching. So even if someone has a lower capacity but cannot change his or her life, maybe for example they would like to attend this lecture but something happens, they cannot go and are not totally convinced, and then later something else will happen and sooner or later they will arrive at the same point. You can speak with each other here and discover that a lot of people arrived at the teachings without will, without judging, connected at a different level, and this means the power of transmission. We have cause and cause can be anything; then the fruit manifests, which is being in contact.

Then the second root is the deva or yidam. We have had this since the beginning. We know in Dzogchen teaching that we do not consider acquiring siddhis or conquering, we do not need the siddhi of life, the siddhi to change people's minds, or the siddhis to heal people. The only siddhi we need is the one we already have, which is recognizing and discovering our real nature, discovering our real teacher in every moment in life and discovering our real nature instantly. So this is a high level siddhi, the others we consider lower. The highest siddhi is when we talk about rainbow body, when our condition integrates totally into the nature or elements. This does not happen everyday.

When we talk about the third root, the dakini, we are talking about the action of the teaching. That means we are working more with the aspect of energy, just like deva means we are working more with the aspect of method. We

can understand the famous lunar and solar energy from our own condition. We can understand all this with our ordinary life.

For example, when we say lunar and solar energy, we consider lunar male and solar female. We say solar energy corresponds with the sun and with that solar energy everything grows on earth and with the moon nothing grows. That is why we say method corresponds to lunar and when we are generating life, men collaborate with seed and this collaboration takes some effort, but it doesn't have any other aspect. Then the female has the aspect of growing life; it doesn't need to do anything, it is naturally growing. So with this we understand that we have two different aspects and that is why we say deva and dakini.

We need to understand that all these aspects have a specific meaning. So we apply the principle of paramitas when they are needed, the first five paramitas corresponding with method. That means that we relax and wait for the right moment with the right experience. It means we don't run with our minds, we wait, we observe, and we learn. The sixth paramita is about energy. When the moment arrives with the right experience and knowledge, we apply. Then the mind, instead of creating problems, is a slave of our awareness. When we say Prajna Paramita, the base as discriminating nature of mind, meaning thinking, judging and working with mind, it becomes more important when we understand the nature of mind.

All of this we can understand from our ordinary life. Then our life becomes part of this path, this fruit and so on. This is what we mean when we talk about Dzogchen, Atiyoga. Our life becomes our contemplation. Presence is always and our life is always, when life changes state it is not life anymore, but death. Until this moment we have this condition and we work with it. And then what we try to do is keep this presence and keep this connection with the three roots.

With this connection of the three roots we identify with the Guru and do Guruyoga; the essence of the three roots and Guruyoga means we recognize our own state. When we want to do a longer Guruyoga we unify all teachers. Without this opportunity there is no understanding. Ordinary presence means we observe ourselves and if there is action, feeling and thought, we observe. Then we try to see what is the most simple and effective way to do. This is more the real samaya of Atiyoga Dzogchen.

The real samaya of Atiyoga Dzogchen is to behave well and go back to the principle of the three jewels; we have a teacher and we try to behave correctly with the teacher. The teacher is one aspect, and the same way we behave with the teacher, we do with the teaching and with each other. Then through collaboration with each other, we understand if have this knowledge or not. When we are doing things together and we are collaborating, we don't need many words. We don't need so much judgment, but we can do things and behave. The ground of all of this is work. We observe that when we collaborate together and apply a lot of rules, it does not work. So we observe ourselves, work more with presence, apply more awareness and everything goes better.

To end this retreat, I hope that this explanation can be useful in your life and that somehow you understand not only from the words, but from your own experience. Then when you face the knowledge of the teaching you think again about how to see everything in a more open way. Most of all, you learn how to work with reflections, because every time we work with the level of the mind and the knowledge there can be reflection. Just like a mirror everything reflects; there can be someone from another religion, from science, from whatever.

When we have this moment of communication we try to understand our condition better. We don't have this judgment, "I have better this, he has better that", etc., or, "I am this and he is that", but we always enter deeper and deeper into our understanding. In this way all tensions release and slowly there is more ground and space for this awareness to grow. When there is more space, we understand what bliss and clarity are. To understand this is up to us and should happen not only on retreat, but in every moment of our lives. Otherwise it is like a laboratory, we do a laboratory for a few days and then we try something that we already know. Then from this experience we try and define universal law, but we know we cannot reach this understanding through research but through ordinary life and then integrating whatever experience appears.

Transcribed and edited by N. Zeitz

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opportunity to focus on the very essence of precious methods. The teaching contains precise explanations about when and how to practice: how to determine correct time of the day for the practice, and how to use position and gazing to do the practices. Many people added from the dharma shop a new item to their practitioner's toolbox: the meditation stick used to control energy points in the positions of Longde. And we were also promptly warned about following our ego: we should not show off or make exhibition of any kind when it comes to important practices. In this case we should not visibly carry around our meditation sticks to make the point that we are practitioners of Dzogchen. Instead we should keep secret things secret and dedicate seriously to practice. That way we can have real benefit.

As at all retreats, we also practiced Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance. Alessandra Policreti was in charge of the beginners' group of Yantra Yoga in the morning, while Bodhi Krause and Adriana Dal Borgo taught the Dance of Three Vajras for beginners. In the evenings there was a complete thun of the Vajra Dance and a session of Yantra for people who

were already more familiar with the practices.

The retreat was not only hard work and serious study, but in true Dzogchen Community style, there was also fun and play. On December 8th we celebrated Rinpoche's birthday. We started the day with the long-life practice of Mandarava, followed by that day's session of Longde teachings. After the teachings we had a lunch with Rinpoche in the dining hall. There were various kinds of performances: instrumental music, singing, Tibetan dances performed by Community people and Latin dances performed by children from the village of Pedro Gonzales. After Rinpoche left, people were still in a mood for a dance and improvised a samba fiesta powered by water can drumming and a guitar. When the retreat finished with a Ganapuja, after the practice we watched several films from the Shang Shung Institute archive. The short films showed Rinpoche and the Community in its early days in Italy, and evolving to international scale. Then we continued with Chinese documentary films showing Tibetan dances. To many, myself included, however, the nicest time of the retreat was going to the beach with Rinpoche. What could be

# Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Schedule 2010

January 16–18

Italy, Merigar West, Introduction to the state of Ati

Jan. 23—Feb. 5 **Argentina**, Short retreat before Anniversary Tashigar Sur

February 6–12 **Brasil**, Lhundrubling

February 19–21

Italy, Merigar West, The Base
(Essence, Nature and Energy) and
Contemplation

March 1–13 **Hungary**, Budapest, restricted retreat

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

April 1–6 **Italy**, Merigar West, Narag Ton Trug

better than swimming and floating in warm water under warm sun in the joyous company of the Master and vajra kin? Such a simple pleasure, just to relax and enjoy, perfect advice for living our 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, Dekytling

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

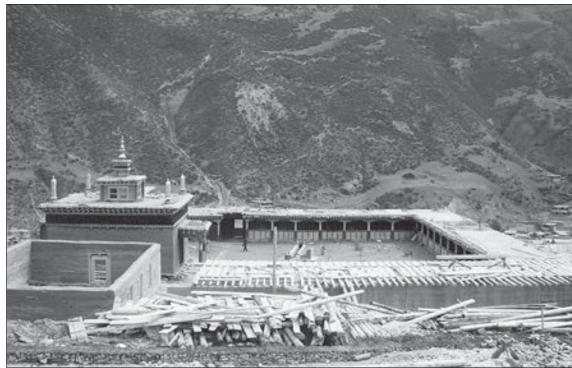
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**ASIA Onlus** 

Via San Martino della Battaglia 31 00185 Rome, Italy Tel +39.06.44340034 Fax +39.06.44702620 info@asia-ngo.org www.asia-ngo.org Association for International Solidarity in ASIA, Inc. ASIA, Post Office Box 124, Conway, MA 01341-0124 USA Phone: 413.369.4153, Fax: 413.369.4473 andreamnasca@yahoo.com www.asia-ngo.org/en/ Förderverein ASIA Deutschland e.V. c/o Gisela Auspurg Königswieser Str. 2 82131 Gauting Tel.: 089 / 127 630 32 info@asia-ngo.de www.asia-ngo.de





The reconstruction of Galingteng College

Dear Friends,

e have reached the end of the year and, as usual, the time has come to reflect on and take stock of the situation.

After the revolts and the tensions of 2008 the Tibetan people are living a new and very difficult phase in their troubled history.

Up to now there are still many areas that are prohibited to foreigners and subject to strict control by the authorities of the People's Republic of China.

ASIA – though with great difficulty – has remained one of the few International Organizations and the only Italian NGO that is present in the Tibetan area with projects to protect culture and to support health and education.

In the areas where we have worked for more than 15 years and where local communities have been involved in projects that they had really wanted, traditions and everyday customs have been preserved and enhanced. We have not only managed to maintain the autonomy of many of the schools that we have built, but within these structures we have also developed activities aimed at strengthening the ethnic and cultural roots of the new generations. As Tashi Tsering - the headmaster of a primarymiddle school built in 1997 in Qinghai Province – recently said, "The schools built by ASIA are

special schools in which children continue to be Tibetans. In addition thanks to long distance sponsorship we can offer them decent living conditions and a good education in order to make a better future for themselves".

In the sector of cultural protection we have also had great results: the reconstruction of Galingteng College, one of the most important cultural and spiritual centers in East Tibet and particularly precious to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Yeshi Namkhai.

As you know, the College burnt down last February and was rebuilt in six months thanks to the participation of the entire Dzogchen Community, which responded generously to the appeal that ASIA sent out on the advice of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

In a short time, we collected 176,000 euro and were able to sign the contracts with local companies for the reconstruction of the two buildings of the College.

In July reconstruction of the student dormitories and the retreat houses began, followed by the reconstruction of the housing for the spiritual masters and the small classrooms near the temple.

At present work is coming to an end and the monks of Galingteng will be able to go back to live at their College before the end of the year, as we promised them.

Thank you everyone!



Students dormitories and retreat houses at the back.

This experience has encouraged us to dedicate ourselves even more and to increase our efforts for **Adopt Tibet**, with the awareness of the precious cultural and spiritual legacy held by its people.

Adopt Tibet means taking part actively: doing something con-

......

cretely and showing your commitment in favour of the Tibetan people. For this reason we have created a new T-shirt to be given as a gift to those who start up a long distance sponsorship and to show participation in our next

objective: 500 new long distance sponsorships.

Long distance sponsorship offers a great opportunity. It is a very effective way of supporting the most vulnerable sectors of the population that have a key role in Tibetan society. The new generations, the future: **the children**. The custodians of traditions, the memory: **the elderly**. The holders of ancient knowledge and of the spirituality of Tibet: **the monks**.

Thanks to your support we have managed to reach this and many other great results over the years.

Now we ask you to participate actively in this new challenge by supporting our **Adopt Tibet** campaign.

Help us to extend our network of people who adopt Tibet by getting your friends, relatives and colleagues at work to become "distance parents" of the Tibetan people.

If you would like to know more about our campaign you can contact us by phone at (0039) 06 44340034 or by email at comunicazione@ASIA-onlus.org

# or through our website www.ASIA-onlus.org

Our sincere thanks and our best wishes for the holiday season from all the staff at ASIA!

The Director Andrea Dell'Angelo

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# Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Schedule 2010

>> continued from page 1
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

### Membership in the Shang Shung Institute

oog is quickly coming to an end and the new year is fast approaching.

In 2009 we celebrated our 20th anniversary. It was a very intense year for the international Shang Shung Institute and there were many highlights:

- · We celebrated our 20th anniversary with public TIBET DAY events in Bucharest (Romania) and Ardicosso (Italy);
- We finished the second SSI raffle and awarded 10 magnificent prices;
- · We started preparations for a new branch of the Shang Shung Institute in London;
- · We printed and distributed the first brochure of the international Shang Shung Institute;
- We started work on a film about the international Shang Shung Institute;
- · In Rome and in Barcelona we successfully launched Rinpoche's extraordinary and long expected book "Light of Kailash";
- · Besides "Light of Kailash" we also published three other public books: "Birth, Life and Death", "Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart" and "Kathog Situ Chökyi Gyatso: Togden Shakya Shri. The Life and Liberation of a Tibetan Yogin";
- · We gave many talks about the work and activities of the Institute in places such as Budapest, London, Bucharest, Belgrade, Kunseling (Wales), Yeselling (Austria), Conway (USA), Arcidosso, Merigar East, and Merigar West;



- We started a new initiative called the "Tibetan Language Study Program";
- · We held the 7th Translator's Training, part of the Ka-ter Translation Project, in Merigar;
- The very first Western students studying Tibetan Medicine graduated and received their diplomas in a dignified celebration at the Shang Shung Institute in America;
- We started the "Archive Transcription Program" and several retreats and talks have already been transcribed;
- · We continuously worked on producing new books, DVDs, and MP3s as support for the Dzogchen Community;
- We managed all the open and closed webcasts of the Teachings of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, Sogyal Rinpoche and Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo;
- We continued our work on the archive of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu's teachings;
- We managed all courses of Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga and Santi Maha Sangha.

# So far we have planned the following activities for 2010:

 To open a new branch of the Shang Shung Institute in London with an exhibition on Khyung Lung and several courses related to Tibetan culture open to the public;

- To publish at least three more public books;
- To concentrate on marketing SSI products to a larger audience;
- · To continue training Western students in Tibetan Medicine;
- · To hold "Tibetan Language Study Courses" in several cities and countries;
- To finish a film about the Shang Shung Institute and make that film available to all interested people;
- · To plan several events related to the preservation of Tibetan culture (i.e. book launch) including exhibitions in several cities and countries;
- · To concretely start the "Museum Project";
- · To continue all existing programs.

You can support all our activities in different ways, so that we are able to continue our work also for the future,:

You can donate funds, renew your membership, or become a first-time member of the Institute for 2010.

Everyone who either renews their membership or becomes a member of the Institute for the first time by the 15th of January 2010 will have a chance to win a very beautiful prize: gorgeous handmade silver earrings. Become part of our activities and

Become part of our activities and join in now.

#### Ordinary Membership 2010

Ordinary membership lasts from the date of payment until the 31st of December of the same year. It is not renewed automatically. Ordinary members have the right to attend the annual general assembly of members. Each ordinary member receives a crystal with the logo of the Shang Shung Institute printed inside or the "Merigar Calendar" for 2010/2011; a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI; full access to our web shops. In order to receive restricted material from our web shops one must be a current member of the international Dzogchen Com-

mission from the Master. Price: Euro 50.00 or US \$70

munity and have received trans-

#### Sustaining Membership 2010

Sustaining membership lasts from the date of payment until the 31st of December of the same year. It is not renewed automatically. Sustaining members have the right to attend the annual general assembly of members. Each sustaining member receives a crystal with the logo of the Shang Shung Institute printed inside OR the "Merigar Calendar" for 2010/2011; a CD OR a DVD (produced by the SSI) of your choice from our website; a very nice and useful time scheduler for 2010 called TEAMWORK (25,5 x 17,5 cm); a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI; free mailing of these gifts to everywhere in the world; full access to our web

In order to receive restricted material from our web shops one must be a current member of the international Dzogchen Community and have received transmission from the Master.

Price: Euro 108.00 or US \$160

#### Meritorious Membership 2010

Meritorious membership lasts from the date of payment until the 31st of December of the same year. It is not renewed automatically. Meritorious members have the right to attend the annual general assembly of members.

Each meritorious member receives a crystal with the SSI-logo printed inside or the "Merigar Calendar" for 2010/2011; a crystal with a Tibetan A printed inside; one CD or DVD (produced by the SSI), and one book (produced by Shang Shung Edizioni) of your choice from our website; a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI; a very nice and useful time scheduler for 2010 called TEAMWORK (25,5 x 17,5 cm); an SSI calculator; full access to our web shops; free mailing of these gifts to everywhere in the world.

In order to receive restricted material from our web shops one must be a current member of the international Dzogchen Community and have received transmission from the Master.

Price: Euro 360.00 or US \$500

Get your membership in one of our online shops: Webshop of SSI Austria Webshop of SSI Italy Webshop of SSI USA

Thank you and very best wishes,

Anna Bartenstein, Luigi Ottaviani and Oliver Leick Directors of the International Shang Shung Institute www.shangshunginstitute.org

# The Direct Journal

n 2010 the Video Journal will evolve into the Direct Journal.

The Direct Journal will be a video system on demand based on the web which will allow viewers to follow all the events linked to Rinpoche's travels (just like the current Video Journal). It will have the advantage of offering the most up-to-date contents and the possibility to enjoy them in a simpler and more immediate way. In addition the Direct Journal will also include footage from the archives of the Shang Shung Institute.

For those who do not have an ADSL line or who prefer a more classic system, the Direct Journal will also be available as a collection of the online video shots and will be sent to subscribers twice a year.

Annual subscription costs will remain the same as the current cost of the Video Journal (50 euro, or according to membership terms established at your Gar).

For further information and subscription, contact:

info@shangshunginstitute.org

# SSI Translation Projects

Dear Supporters of the Ka-ter Translation Project and the Program for the Publication of the Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the year 2009 is coming to a close and it is time to give you a report on the activities in the year 2009 of the two translation projects of the International Shang Shung Institute, which are the Ka-ter Translation Project and the program which is dedicated to the translation of the Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The aim of our endeavor is to make the teachings written in Tibetan of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, as well as selected works of other great Dzogchen masters, available in Western languages.

Both projects are coordinated by the Shang Shung Institute
Austria and include

- · translation and publication of teachings of Chögyal Namkhai
- translation and publication of Dzogchen Tantras and other important texts,
- translation and publication of texts that Rinpoche offers as

the base of some of his public retreats,

· training in Tibetan for aspirant translators.

The principal translators are Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco. Jim Valby and Fabian Sanders are working in a part-time capacity for the Ka-ter Project.

As the coordinator of these two projects, I want to express my sincere gratitude to our translators who have been doing such an excellent job all these years. I want to thank the whole team of the Shang Shung Edizioni for publishing books for a general audience as well as for the Dzogchen Community, and especially I want to thank Nancy Simmons for her brilliant editing of the books published in English.

Here is a short Report of Activities for 2009:

#### **Publications**

A very important, successful and intense year for the Ka-ter Translation project, 2009 has seen three outstanding books published in English in the Ka-ter series by Shang Shung Edizioni:

· Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Birth, Life and Death according to Tibetan Medicine and the Dzogchen Teachings, original translation from Tibetan in English by Elio Guarisco.

- Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart, commentary by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Longchenpa text translated by Elio Guarisco.
- Kathog Situ Chökyi Gyatso:
   Togden Shakya Shri. The Life and Liberation of a Tibetan Yogin, translated from the Tibetan and annotated by Elio Guarisco.
- · Also published by Shang Shung Edizioni in 2009, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's The Light of Kailash. A History of Zhang Zhung and Tibet, an innovative and profound study of the cultural and spiritual heritage of Tibet, translated from the Tibetan by Donatella Rossi, was an absolute milestone for the Shang Shung Institute. Its production was also an outstanding example of excellent collaboration among all people involved in the translation and publication of that latest book of Rinpoche.

# Translators and their Translations Elio Guarisco:

Forthcoming Books by Shang Shung Edizioni

 The Nyingthig Yangti, a Chanchub Dorje terma, an annotated transcription of a retreat given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Australia in 2009.

- The Mejung Tantra and its preface by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, translated in collaboration with Adriano Clemente and Jim Valby.
- 3) Kyedzog, Easing the Beginner's Way: the Essential Points of Creation and Completion, by Jamgon Kongtrul, translated and annotated.
- 4) An Explanation of the Medium and Long Thun and The Ganapuja, coordination of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teachings.

# Elio's work in 2010 will be dedicated

- to the revision of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's book on Moxa and its preparation for publication, with the collaboration of Susan Schwarz;
- 2) to the editing of the Osel Nangcha teaching of Paltrul Rinpoche, the subject of a retreat given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2007 at Merigar, an annotated translation from the Tibetan in collaboration with Oriol Aguilar;
- 3) to completing the revision and preparing the Mejung Tantra for publication;
  - >> continued on the following page

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- >> continued from previous page
- 4) to completion of the translation of the Rdo rje lus kyi sbas bshad, The Vajra Body, of Gyalwa Yangonpa;
- 5) to a new edition in English of the Bardo Thodrol, The Tibetan Book of the Dead, translated into Italian from Tibetan by Giacomella Orofino and Enrico dell' Angelo in the 1980s;
- 6) to a prepublication assessment of a new enlarged edition of a book on Tara including the Twenty-one Praises, coordinated by Julia Lawless;
- 7) to a prepublication assessment of the Advice of Dorje Lingpa, subject of a Chögyal Namkhai Norbu retreat, transcribed and edited by Nina Robinson.

#### **Adriano Clemente:**

Forthcoming Books by Shang Shung Edizioni

- I) Rainbow Body. The Life and Realization of Togden Ugyen Tendzin, the biography of the uncle of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu; translation from the Tibetan with extensive historical research on the footnotes of this book.
- 2) The Vajra Dance Book, with precise translation of the steps of the three Dances, reviewed with the principal Dance instructors.
- 3) Rmad Du Byung Ba, revision and editing of the translation, together with Elio Guarisco.
- 4) Collaboration with Enrico Dell'Angelo on The Biography of Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Wangchug.
- 5) Collaboration with Enzo Terzano on The Gomadevi Thun Book.

# Adriano's work in 2010 will be dedicated

1) to completion of The Book on the Vajra Dance: the sections de-

- voted to the dreams related to the history of the Vajra Dance,
- to completion of The Book of Divination with Dice of Dorje Yudronma,
- 3) to completion of Atiyoga: the Essence of All Teachings, a book containing most of the tawah or point of view sections of Santi Maha Sangha, levels One and Two,
- 4) to completion of the Bepai Gumchung The Small Hidden Collection of Buddhagupta.

#### Jim Valby:

Jim has worked on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's ka dag khregs chod kyi dgongs pa gsal bshad klong chen 'od gsal, which is his commentary on his own terma named klong chen 'od gsal mkha' 'gro'i snying thig las ka dag khregs chod kyi man ngag.

#### **Fabian Sanders:**

Fabian is completing "The Book of the Gompa of Merigar".

Jim and Fabian in the immediate future will dedicate themselves to the completion of the above mentioned works.

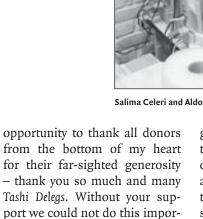
# Training for Translators from Tibetan

In summer 2009 the Seventh Annual Training for Translators from Tibetan of a one month duration was successfully held in Merigar taught by Fabian Sanders.

In 2010 one week courses will be offered in various European cities, and the Eighth Annual Training session will be held again in summer at Merigar.

#### Finances

As you perhaps know, the Kater project and the "Complete Works" are financed exclusively by donation. I want to take the



ture generations.

From the 1st of January until the 15th of November of this year, the Shang Shung Institute has spent more than 61,000 Euro for the translating and editing of unique texts in the English language, as well as in the training of future translators, the instruments that will allow many to have access to these marvelous teachings.

tant work, essential for the pres-

ervation of the teachings for fu-

This year we did not receive the total sum of funds needed to realize our goals, and therefore we want to invite you with special urgency to participate in these precious projects and to support this activity of benefit to all beings. Only with your generosity can we

guarantee precise translations of the teachings of Rinpoche and other great Dzogchen masters, and offer the possibility to interested and talented people to study the Tibetan language and become qualified translators from the Tibetan.

There are so many marvels we are dedicated to revealing, but we need your kind help to do so!

# You can send your donation via bank-transfer

Bank: Raiffeisenbank Ilz Address: Hauptstr. or the English revision Address: Hauptstr. 39, 8262 Ilz,

Austria
Bank Code: 38151

Account number: 30387 in the name of Shang-Shung Institute Austria.

BIC (= SWIFT): RZSTAT2G151, IBAN: AT19 3815 1000 0003 0387

# Photo: L. Graf Or you can make your donation online with your Visa or Master-Card.

Please send us your credit card information either by fax (+43 3386 83218) or by post, or you also can use our web-safe credit card payment site. Important note: never send your credit card information by e-mail.

Thank you so much for your collaboration and support, and our very best wishes,

Oliver Leick
Director of the Shang Shung
Institute Austria
Coordinator, the Complete
Works of Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu and Ka-ter Projects
Gschmaier 139
8265 Gr. Steinbach, Austria
Tel.: 0043 676 3221365
www.shangshunginstitute.org
www.ssi-austria.at
www.completeworks.info



# Santi Maha Sangha Exams

In order to apply to take any of the Santi Maha Sanga exams, please check the new exam procedure well in advance on the following website:

dzogchen.it/santi maha sangha or contact the coordinating

sms@shangshunginstitute.org

centre at

# Shang Shung Institute USA News

Please take a moment to check out these two new online resources for Tibetan Medicine.

Tibetan Medicine – Alive in the West! is a new blog hosted by the Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine graduates. It can be found at:

www.blog.tibetahealingarts.com

If you like it, please become a follower to show your support!

Below is the link to a developing directory of collaborating doctors and centers of Traditional Tibetan Medicine practicing in the United States:

#### www.tibetanhealingarts.com

Feel free to link either of these two resources to any webpage that you may feel is related.

### Save at the Healing Center

SSI School of Tibetan Medicine Graduate Check out our new facebook fan page. Become a fan and save \$10 on your next visit to the healing center!

Shang Shung Tibetan Healing Center Fan Page: http://www.face book.com/pages/Northampton-MA/Shang-Shung-Tibetan-Heal ing-Center/210603650019?ref=ts

Thank you! Shang Shung Tibetan Healing Center Staff

# Matching Scholarship Grant/ SSI USA

Dear all interested in the Shang Shung Institute,

he American Branch of the Shang Shung Institute has recently received a very generous offer from a Dzogchen Community member with a long-time interest in Tibetan Medicine. This member would like to help us start a scholarship fund for students of the School of Tibetan Medicine. The donor's businesses, JCROWS.com and J. Crow Company look to support this very positive development in holistic health care by establishing the scholarship for 2010.

This donor has agreed to match donations to start a School of Ti-

Medicine Scholarship fund, up to \$2500, for a total of \$5000 seed money to start the scholarship fund. We have 90 days from today to receive all donations towards the matching grant, so the deadline for all donations is:

March 9, 2010.

The Scholarship will be need-based, and students will be asked to apply.

The board and staff of the SSI-USA will choose the winner or winners for the first year's scholarship(s) by the beginning of the Fall, 2010 semester.

To send a donation, please contact me, Anna Bartenstein, through email at: **a.bartenstei n@shangshunginstitute.org** or call me through the SSI office telephone at 413-369-4928

Thanks very much for your help, and we look forward to starting this wonderful new project. We, and our students thank you immensely for your support of our program, and their studies.

Best wishes,
Anna Bartenstein
Administrative Director
Shang Shung Institute – USA ©

# Available At SSI Bookstore Conway

# Ornament of the State of Samanthabhadra

Kunjed Gyalpo Series Vol. Two Written in Tibetan by Khenpo Zhenphen Oser Translated into English by Jim Valby

Ref.# j1002 \$30 Product description:

Jim Valby's second translated volume of the Kunjed Gyalpo Series. Ornament of the State of Samantabhadra: Commentary on the All-Creating King of the Pure Perfect Presence of the Great Perfection. Volume Two: Commentary on Chapters 11–29 of the Kun.byed rgyal po by Khenpo Zhenphen Öser.

Note: This is an unrestricted item. In order to buy unrestricted items one must be a Shang Shung Institute member, or a current member of the Dzogchen Community

Contact:

shop-us@shangshung.org

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# Interview with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

From a video interview done by Jerome Monnot for the Shang Shung Institute at the time of the first Tibetan Medical graduating class ceremony in Conway Massachusetts, USA in October 2009. This interview covers the history of the medical program as well as its current status and vision for the future.

Lhajeh (Dr.) Phuntsog Wangmo received her advanced degree from the Lhasa University School of Traditional Medicine in 1988 where she also served a two-year residency after completing her five-year training program (1983-1990). During that time she studied with the Khenpos Troru Tsenam and Tsulkrim Gyaltsen, two of Tibet's foremost doctors who are credited with the revival of Tibetan Medicine within Tibet under the Chinese. Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo had the exceptional opportunity of extensive clinical training under Khenpo Troru Tsenam for four years. Thereafter, she dedicated many years of work as a doctor in Eastern Tibet where she collaborated and directed the implementation of A.S.I.A. the non-profit organization founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Since that time, she has worked on behalf of A.S.I.A. setting up hospitals and training centers in the remote regions of Chamdo Perfecture.

From 1996-present, she has been the A.S.I.A. project coordinator in Tibet for the development of Gamthog Hospital in collaboration with expatriate personnel as well as the overall health coordinator and practitioner of traditional Tibetan medicine supervising health activities throughout the surrounding region of Chamdo Perfecture. Prior to 1996, she was on the faculty of Shang Shung Institute in Italy where she gave numerous seminars and conference presentations on Tibetan medicine. Dr. Wangmo remains in residence at the Shang Shung Institute in America where she is the director of the Institute's Traditional Tibetan Medicine Program.

**Jerome Monnot:** Can you tell us how the Tibetan Medical School began?

**Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo:** I came to the United States in 2001 when I was invited by the Shang Shung Institute in America to teach Tibetan Medicine. I was not sure if I should come but I received a letter from Rinpoche saying he thought it best I come, so I decided to try.

In the beginning we mainly did monthly workshops. There were a lot of requests to study Tibetan Medicine but there was no school in the West, so I thought it would be good to have a Tibetan Medical School and also at the same time it would help maintain Tibetan Culture.

At the end of 2003 into 2004, I proposed to Shang Shung Institute to change the monthly workshops into a real Tibetan Medical program and they said it was a good idea, but something very difficult to do because you needed a very detailed curriculum and there were no financial resources. So for all of 2004, together with my friend and Tibetan doctor Yangdron Kalsang from San Francisco, we wrote the curriculum.

At the end of 2004, beginning of 2005, we finished the curriculum and gave it to Shang Shung Institute and I said, "Now I have written the curriculum and have done what you asked. I really want to open this medical school because it is very important. One thing is that we can make many people happy, we can preserve Tibetan culture because Tibetan Medicine is a unique aspect of Tibetan culture and that is the function of the Shang Shung Institute, to preserve that unique cultural heritage, and this medicine can benefit all sentient beings. It is a great treasure and I really want to try." They agreed and said if I really wanted that I

So we started to the school in September of 2005 and five people came. I was working with those five people and my English and their Tibetan was not so good, so together as a team we tried to start the school. When I was teaching, the students would help me find the English words and then we would work together like a family. Then the semester finished and another lady joined and we became six people. Then after one year another lady started and then we had seven people in the second year.

This is how we began our school. During those four years I tried to work with the students quite strongly, because the main problems were different cultures, different characters, and then also different languages. A good aspect was that most people knew Buddhism and most were dharma students, which made it easier. Also many of them were members of the Dzogchen Community, so they were like family. The students worked very hard. It was a very big challenge for them; there was the language together with a medicine that was totally different from what their culture explained. We all had some difficulties but we also enjoyed a lot because, even though the language was sometimes difficult or the lack of this or that, the students took it very seriously and found Tibetan Medicine very interesting.

**JM**: Can you say something briefly about the program?

PW: Tibetan Medicine is not that simple. No healing science is very easy, but Tibetan Medicine is quite complicated because it is a very large and deep body of knowledge, so for that reason it is quite an endless study. I have been practicing Tibetan Medicine for twenty years, I studied for five years in school, and I also had apprenticeships with other teachers, but truthfully it is difficult to describe everything.



Photo: J. Monnot

Tibetan Medicine is mainly based on the five-element theory and there are many books, textbooks, and commentaries. There is one book called the Four Tantras of Tibetan Medicine, rGyud Bzhi, and we start with this text because it is the most wellknown and most standard text of Tibetan Medicine. All Tibetan Doctors, scholars and teachers agree on this book, which contains the origin and the foundation of Tibetan Medicine. The aim of the SSI Medical School is to stay close to the root tantra of this rGyud Bzhi. There are many commentaries and explanations, but since the students are limited by the lack of Tibetan language, I thought it would be easier to stay with the root text. I want to teach in the traditional way. The main method I use is the traditional Tibetan style, because I learned that way and from some great teachers. We had so many great teachers in Tibet and most of them have already passed away.

Some people have said the course is too long and maybe Westerners are not interested in all that detail. Since I am teaching Tibetan Medicine, it is my job to teach in the pure tradition. I am not Buddha so I cannot create something. If I try to make something new it becomes false and has no value. The only value is if I stay with the root Tantra. The experience with this text has evidence and proof. So again I will say that my commitment is that everything is based on the traditional system. I will teach pure Tibetan medicine as is taught in the rGuud Bzhi, and also how I learned it from my teacher. When I teach, I explain the root tantra word by word, and then the meaning, so we did each single word in that way. In the second year the students said our program was too short and that four years was not enough time. For that reason we did a lot of summer programs and ended up with four and a half years; so it is four years of classes and six months of internship.

The other text we use is a standard national Tibetan Medical textbook. It has twenty-six volumes. It is divided into the root Tantra, anatomy, physiology, etc., so we use this book because it is a standard text used in Tibet. We have to meet the standards of the doctors trained in Tibet, so if we use the same text then we

can have the same kind of training and knowledge. Originally when they wrote this book, many scholars from all over Tibet collaborated so I thought this book would be the most accurate. I also felt it was important in case our students were able to go to Tibet for their internships, and that did happen.

On the practical level, Tibetan Medicine is quite new in the West and people are not familiar with it so we do not have large numbers of patients. We are not recognized so we have no insurance coverage. Also even if we wanted to do certain practices with Tibetan Medicine, we are still missing some criteria to make it a complete system in the West regarding rules and regulations. Also regarding our pharmacy, many of the Tibetan herbs are grown in a certain climate at over 3000 meters above sea level, and these herbs are not here. Also we do not have any factory or pharmacy where we can make medicines in this country. For all these reasons I thought the students should go to Tibet for the internship to have real knowledge.

In the third year we tried to have contact with Tibet hoping we would be able to go to Tibet for the internship. We made contact with the Northeast Tibetan Medical University in Tibet. We had already received a license as a professional school under the Massachusetts Education Department in our second year. Many places from Tibet made contact with us and we chose the Northeast Tibetan Medical University because we felt they were more positive and helpful in accomplishing our goal.

Then in 2008 we invited the Dean of the Northeast Tibetan Medical University to Conway and we organized some teaching workshops, he also taught our class, but mainly we worked on how these two schools would collaborate. I showed him the entire curriculum and the exams, and he was very surprised at what we are doing and how much we were learning and how much material we had covered. He saw that we were not missing one word from the rGyud Bzhi, because there was no way to miss anything since we went word by word.

The Dean said he thought for studying our school is probably better than their school and our

curriculum looked richer than theirs. I said I am not interested to become better but to become standard. Then we negotiated and talked about how we could collaborate and make a contract. I told him that when our students go there, I want them to receive a complete teaching from highly qualified teachers - not only to learn theory - but also the wisdom and blessing from them and their vast experience. We also want to see how all the doctors are working, the pharmacy and everything, and we also want to receive traditional transmission of the rGyud Bzhi. Then once we receive all these things, I want the University to give the exam to all our students. For me the exam would show how well our program was working. The Dean agreed to prepare the exam in English and he said he thought we should make one diploma just for our students, because they are quite good quality.

At the end of 2008 the Dean went back to Tibet and discussed this possibility with his supervisor Dr. Wo Tsochen, who is the president of many aspects of Tibetan Medicine in Tibet, primarily in Northeast Tibet. Dr Tsochen is the president of the University, the Tibetan Medical Hospital and the pharmacy. Dr. Tsochen agreed to the collaboration and came to Conway in the beginning of April 2009 to sign the contract with Shang Shung Institute, and we went to Tibet. So the main purpose of our trip to Tibet was mainly for clinical practice and receiving teachings from other teachers and to take that exam to see how our program is working and which part is weak.

In the beginning of July our students went on an herb walk collecting herbs and took the traditional herbal exam on the mountain. They passed the exam very well. Then at the beginning of August they took the final exam in two parts: theory and practical. The theoretical exam is based on diagnostics and the practical on pathology. All of our students passed and did better then their average students and the doctors were very surprised. Then they gave the students the certificates that said: Doctor of Tibetan Medicine.

The day of the ceremony many people participated and also a group of seven students from Stanford University, California who are studying Western medicine. Once a year the Stanford students spend one month at the hospital there observing the methods of Tibetan medicine, how to approach the patient, etc., and they have some classes there. All the leaders of the hospital and the University, and the head of each department of the hospital, so altogether about thirty or forty people came to our graduation ceremony. The main guest who gave the diplomas was the head of Tibetan Medicine in Qinghai. So our method and curriculum worked well.

>> continued from previous page

JM: Can you talk a bit about ATMA (American Tibetan Medical Association)?

**PW**: When we opened the school here in Conway, people called and asked, "After I study, what can I do?" So we researched. Some people said it was illegal and some people said not. Once we heard the word 'illegal' we were a little afraid. Many Tibetan doctors who came to this and other countries had to do other jobs and could not practice medicine. They gave up their profession. Legality was the main issue. From the research I could not find any documents saying that practicing Tibetan Medicine is illegal. The truth is that no one ever applied for licensing. No one even knew what Tibetan Medicine was. So we needed to educate people about Tibetan Medicine by teaching and the other point was that the graduates needed to be licensed. We needed an organization to work with legislation to make Tibetan Medicine standardized in the US. The SSI Board said fine, but it was my job to make a new board with my Tibetan doctor friends and SSI would support it. So we founded ATMA.

The aim of ATMA is to have Tibetan Medicine recognized in the West so that we can practice and help people. Our aim is not to make business, money and power but to serve humanity. ATMA's aim is to protect and promote Tibetan Medicine and help support Tibetan doctors. We need to be authorized with correct knowledge and understanding. So ATMA needs to make Tibetan Medicine and its practitioners standardized and recognized by the government. Standardized also means not to lose the essence of the Tibetan Medicine. We want to maintain

and preserve Tibetan culture and to protect people's health; so if the doctors are legitimate there is less harm for people. We want to make standard rules and regulations for the doctors to protect patients and we do not want Tibetan Medicine to get a bad name. Tibetan Medicine is thousands of years of Tibetan culture and based on the hard work of many ancestors and great masters. This is a very deep, concrete and practical knowledge and we don't want it to get a bad reputation or become useless because it has lost the essence. At the same we want to protect the people we are helping. For that reason we formed ATMA.

So now we have a very good base and solid foundation for the Shang Shung Institute Tibetan Medical School, and we need to continue and improve things. The Tibetan Medical program will grow in a good way. We have

very good leadership in Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and this program is Rinpoche's vision. He is an extraordinary being, so I am sure he has a very clear view. Also we have the support of the international Dzogchen Community, which is a big family, and third we have a very professional group of teachers/faculty, very good people with concrete knowledge and pure motivation. We also have a good staff working for Shang Shung Institute, goodhearted people, and we now we have a very good network and contact with another university. Shang Shung Institute has now received invitations from many universities. Now we have a very good cooperation with Qinghai Medical University in northeast Tibet and many schools in Tibet and the US are interested in collaborating with us. Until now not many knew that Shang Shung

Institute existed. Now I think we

have a very good future for the Shang Shung Institute and the Tibetan Medical School.

JM: Thank you very much, Dr. Wangmo.



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	No.	Names in phonetics	
		Kun-dhey	kun-bde
	2.	kyuru-25 khyung-nya	skyu-ru-25
	3.	khyung-nya	khyung-Inga
	4.	Nı-la	khyung-Inga ni-la
	<u>5.</u>	Gur-khyung	gur-khyung
	6.	Gurkum-13	gur-gum-13
	7.	Ba-sam	<u>'ba-bsam</u>
	8.	Nyi-kyil	nyi-dkyil
	9.	Dhali-16	<u>da-li-16</u>
	10.	Poekar-10	spos-dkar-10
	Ш.	Pangyen-15	spang-rgyan-15
	12.	Men-sil	man-bsil
	13.	Mutik-25	mu-tig-25
	14.	Tsendhen-18	tsan-dan-18
	15.	Dashel-37	zla-shel-37
	16.	Da-due	zla-bdud
	17.	Yuril-13	gyu-'dril-13
	18.	Sengdeng-25	seng-Ideng-25
	19.	Sam-nor	b sam-nor
	20.	Serdhog-11	gser-mdog-11
	21.	Aru-10	<u>aru-10</u>
	22.	Agar-8	agar-8
è	23.	Agar-15	<u>agar-15</u>
ŧ	24.	Agar-20	agar-20
	25.	Agar-35	agar-35
	26.	Tragur-8	khrag-gur-8
	27.	Nyenpo-18	gnyen-po-18
	<u>28.</u>	Sang-dak	gsang-dag
	29	Sang-dak bde-dpag	
	30.	Jangchoe-3/	byang-chos-37
	31.	Gawa-16	dga-ba-16



10

In this issue of The Mirror we Focus on Tibetan History and are pleased to present excerpts from two of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's historical works: Drung, Deu and Bön, Narrations, Symbolic Languages and the Bön Tradition in Ancient Tibet published in English in 1995 by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and the revised edition of The Necklace of Zi, On the History and Culture of Tibet published by Shang Shung Edizioni in 2004. In addition there is a transcription of part of the talk given by Rinpoche at Tibet House Barcelona last November during the presentation of his recently published work The Light of Kailash (Shang Shung Publications 2009).

Today Tibetan culture, history and teaching are on the brink of dying. In the areas of China populated by Tibetans, the Tibetan language has been neglected in schools and workplaces and Chinese has become the lingua franca. With the disappearance of language, culture soon follows in its wake.

Moreover, there has been an almost universally accepted theory both in Asia and the West that considered Tibetan language and culture as an offshoot of Indian civilization, and that Tibet did not even have a form of writing until the advent of Buddhism there in the 7th century A.D.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, aware of the imminent danger to Tibetan religion and culture, has dedicated years of academic research to trace back and establish the emergence of his country's culture in the ancient realm of Zhang Zhung nearly 4000 years ago and to identify the original Tibetan system of writing from which the present cursive characters have evolved

Rinpoche's historical works offer a new and dynamic approach to the history and culture of Tibet but most of all are intended to be like "seeds in a field" to encourage the new generations of Tibetans to continue research and to show them the value and antiquity of their culture.

# The Importance and Value of Tibetan Culture

The following is an excerpt from a transcription of the talk given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu during the presentation of the first volume of his trilogy The Light of Kailash at Tibet House in Barcelona last November.

#### Kailash - the source of Tibetan culture

am going to explain just a little about my book, which is called 'The Light of Kailash'. Why does it have this title? Tibet is a very large country and Kailash is in the west. The area around Mt. Kailash and Lake Manasarovar was the source of ancient Tibetan culture. Indian people also consider this mountain and lake to be very sacred because it is the source of all the four main rivers like the Ganges and Brahmaputra and is considered to be a place sacred to Shiva. At the same time, Tibetans also consider it to be an important sacred mountain because when the Buddhist tradition developed in Tibet, Mt. Kailash was considered to be the sacred place of Chakrasamvara in the Vajrayana tradition. Of course the origin of the ancient Bonpo was around Kailash so they also consider it to be very important. Thus I gave this name to show that the source of ancient Tibetan history and culture was west

In general when we study Tibetan history a little, Tibetans refer to the time of the first Tibetan king, who was called Nyatri Tsenpo, up to the time of the king of the Buddhist tradition, a period which covered 31 or 32 different generations of kings. The origin of all these traditions, the way the kings governed and the kind of culture that existed in the country at the time of these kings originated in west Tibet where there was already a kingdom called Zhang Zhung. During the period of the eighteen very famous kings of Zhang Zhung, the kingdom of Tibet did not exist yet. But how are Zhang Zhung and Tibet connected and why is Zhang Zhung the origin of Tibetan culture? We have many different kinds of explanations about the source of the Tibetan people, but the most ancient explanations are found in the Bön tradition.

### The origins of the Tibetan people

The Bön tradition is a teaching, a kind of religion, and its culture existed before the Buddhist tradition in Tibet and also before the start of the Tibetan kingdom. When we study ancient history even in the Buddhist tradition, we find that the origin of the Tibetan people is called mi'u gdung drug, which means 'the six brothers'. But where did these six brothers come from? There are different explanations about this. For example, in the Bön tradition, which is more ancient, it is written that there existed a kind of primordial egg, something like the concentrated energy of the five elements. When this egg opened, three kinds of beings emerged: lha, divinities or superior beings with greater capacity, klu or naga who are considered to be water beings because in the dimension of our globe the greater part is water. Then the third being was called gNyan, sometimes called the class of Ma-sangs, which dominate space, earth and mountains. These kinds of beings called Masangs gradually developed into human beings. So human beings are considered to have descended from these six brothers who came from the class of beings called gNyan. This ancient history is widely diffused in ancient Bön.

Of course, these six brothers did not live in the same place but divided and lived in different places throughout Tibet. The people of the kingdom of Zhang Zhung descended from the clan of one of the brothers called the sBra or Khyung clan. The clans of the other brothers developed in central Tibet, in east Tibet, in Amdo and in different places. So we can understand that Zhang Zhung and Tibet had the same origin. But of course when different places develop their lifestyles and their customs, they also develop slightly different languages and attitudes.

#### **Zhang Zhung script**

In the sBra clan in Zhang Zhung, in ancient times, there was a teacher of the Bön teaching called Tönpa Shenrab. He invented the writing of Zhang Zhung, the first writing called Mar (sMar) in the language of Zhang Zhung, but when we translate it into Tibetan it is called lha. For example, in Tibet our capital is called Lhasa. Sa means 'land', land of the divinity, land of the deva. In the Zhang Zhung language Lha is mar. This writing was also called mar yig, or invented by Tönpa Shenrab, and all his teachings in that period were written in that language and writing.

In that same period, the descendants of all these other brothers developed into different tribes and some of them became very powerful, going around on horseback and fighting etc., but they had no form of writing. Writing only existed with the people of Zhang Zhung. Later over many generations of the Zhang Zhung kings, the Bön tradition slowly developed and then spread to different parts of Tibet.

For example, there is a place that is a little south of central Tibet called Kongpo where there is a mountain that is famous to the Bonpo. In ancient times, it is said that Tönpa Shenrab visited that place and empowered the mountain so that it became sacred. He also taught Tibetans around Kongpo how to use rites for the dead called Khrus bshal and other rites for having good crops and creating prosperity in the country, although there is not much history about that.

So some aspects of the Bön tradition had already developed at that time. But there was no Tibetan kingdom; that started much later. Before that there were these famous 18 kings. If you want to know something about this historical period, my first book [in this series] explains mainly about the situation of Zhang Zhung.

#### Drung, deu, bon

I have written three volumes on the ancient history of Tibet and advised people who are interested in studying ancient Tibetan history to divide it into three periods because nobody has approached Tibetan history in this way. Even when I was studying about Zhang Zhung while I was working at the University teaching Tibetan language and literature, nobody explained or spoke about Zhang Zhung. But I was interested because I understood that we needed to do research into ancient Tibetan history.

I taught Tibetan language and literature for many years at University but we had no course of study and teaching like other languages. For example, other languages like Indian, Japanese, Chinese, Persian, etc., had a four-year course of study leading to a degree in that language, while with Tibetan, Korean, Mongolian etc., we only had a two-

year course. So I did a kind of research to see why we only had a two-year course of study while other languages had four and some of the older professors explained to me that it was because Tibetan language and literature came from India or China. That officially it only dated back to the time of Songtsen Gampo, the dharma king who developed the Buddhist tradition, because all Tibetan scholars of the Buddhist traditions had presented Tibetan culture and history as starting from that period. Before that time they considered that there was no form of writing in Tibet and consequently if there was no writing, there was no Tibetan culture

So how did more than thirty generations prevail, starting from the first [Tibetan] king? In this historical account, it says they continued with drung, deu, bon. Drung means that someone explains how things were in the past and this is passed from generation to generation. Deu means a kind of divination used by ministers who needed to have a little more capacity in order to govern. And then they mainly used the culture and the religion of the Bön tradition and everything related to it that came from Zhang Zhung. None of them existed originally in Tibet.

Then some of the Tibetan kings were not satisfied. For example, starting from Nyatri Tsenpo, there were seven famous kings. After that there was a king called Trigum Tsenpo who understood that the Tibetans were dependent on Zhang Zhung because they did not have their own particular culture and writing. He decided to eliminate all the Bonpo and traditions of Zhang Zhung and carried out many negative actions during that period, even though his intention was good. He thought that if [the country] was totally Tibetan, it would become more powerful, just like Zhang Zhung. But of course when he had destroyed everything related to the Bön tradition, in that period there was nothing left for governing. So he did not succeed and later on he was murdered and once again the Zhang Zhung tradition of Bön continued to develop and became more powerful from generation to generation.

#### Songtsen Gampo

Then after 31 or 32 generations there was this famous king, Sontsen Gampo who, in Tibetan, we say was an emanation of Avalokitesvara. In any case, he was very clever and also did not want Tibet to be dependent on Zhang Zhung because then it would never become a powerful kingdom. He thought it was essential to create a new Tibetan culture. Firstly, he did not take any negative actions against the Bonpo and became very friendly towards the kingdom of Zhang Zhung. The last king of Zhang Zhung whose name was Ligmikya was also a very powerful king at the time, but Sontsen Gampo was very clever and he took his second wife, Lithigmen, from the prince of Zhang Zhung and he also gave his sister in wife to the king of Zhang Zhung. So the two kings had a very close relationship for many years and Sontsen Gampo became more and more powerful and gradually tried to take control of Zhang Zhung.

The king of Zhang Zhung had not given a very high position to the sister of Sontsen Gampo and she was almost at the third level as a queen and naturally was not happy about this and communicated this fact to her brother several times. For years Sontsen Gampo prepared and studied how to conquer the kingdom of Zhang Zhung.

At that time there was a small kingdom called Azha in ne area which is known today as Qinghai. It was governed by Zhang Zhung for many years and the king of Zhang Zhung often went there to visit. One day king Ligmikya went to visit Azha taking a route which passed very close to central Tibet. Sontsen Gampo's sister informed her brother about this journey and when they knew the precise time of his visit, Sontsen Gampo himself led a group of very powerful people who went on the road and murdered the king of Zhang Zhung. When this happened there was nobody in Zhang Zhung powerful enough to continue to govern and the Tibetans immediately dominated the kingdom. This is the second historical period and the second volume [in the trilogy], from the time of the start of the Tibetan kingdom and the continuation of the kingdom of Zhang Zhung.

#### Zhang Zhung and Tibetan script

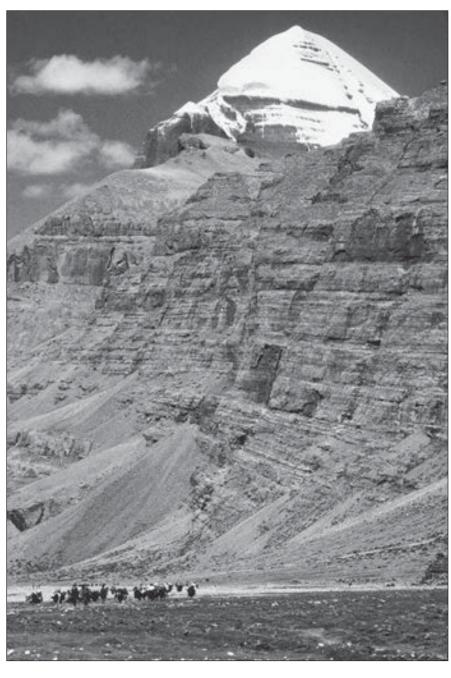
After that, Sontsen Gampo brought a wife from Nepal in order to introduce Buddhism into Tibet, to create a new culture and also took a Chinese queen for the same reason. He sent one of his ministers, Thönmi Sambhota, to India to study Sanskrit and to invent Tibetan writing. In the history books it states that Sontsen Gampo said, "We Tibetans need to have Tibetan writing". He didn't say, "We don't have any type of writing and we need to invent one,"

because in Tibet they had always used the writing of the Bonpo tradition. And gradually the original Zhang Zhung script developed into an easier way of writing.

For example, nowadays in Tibet we have two kinds of writing: one is called uchen, which means we can also use it for block printing etc., and was invented or created by Thönmi Sambhota with its origin in the Indian tradition. The Zhang Zhung script, however, became more and more developed with the passage of time and was called umed. How can we understand that? It is very simple. When we write uchen, we always start to write the heads [the upper parts of the letters] from left to right and then we write the rest, which means that we need more time to write. When we write umed it is from right to left and for that reason when it developed it became very fast to write. Thus my idea is that there are two different origins of uchen and umed.

We had a fantastic scholar in Tibet called Gendün Chöpel who did some very good research about the history of the ancient Tibetan kings. When he explained about writing, he said that when we write uchen quickly, it becomes umed. I agree with everything that Gendün Chöpel explained, but I do not agree with that because, for example, in Bhutan where they have always used the original letters of uchen writing, they don't use umed. They write uchen very quickly but even so, it has never become umed because the character is different. So then if what Gendün Chöpel said is true, why didn't the writing in Bhutan become umed? They call it khuug-yig ('khuug yig), which means a very fast form of writing uchen. But even though they write it very quickly, it is never as fast as writing umed. For example, if they write one line of khyug-yig, this fast form of uchen, and I write in umed, I can write three lines. That is an example to show it can never became as fast as umed.

So you see then for that reason, in my book I insisted that Tibetans used a form of writing because even though there was no Tibetan writing like that invented by Thönmi Sambhota, they used the writing of Zhang Zhung. Some people say that it is difficult to understand how Zhang Zhung writing existed because the modern Bonpo tradition does not use this writing but uses the writing that Tibetans use. We only know that it existed in ancient times. However, I am not the only person who has explained this. There are also other histories, for example there is a Dharma history book written by Ngadak Nyang-ralpa, an ancient master, who explained that some generations before Sontsen Gampo, some Tibetan kings used another form of writing. He didn't say it was Zhang Zhung script but he said they used writing.



Mount Kailash.

a lot of magic power in Tibet because they no longer had a king. Moreover, the most important wife of the Zhang Zhung king was still alive, even though she had no power, and she asked the Bonpo teachers to exert their magic power over the king, Songtsen Gampo. Through that magic power he received a very heavy illness that affected his nerves, gave a lot of pain and didn't let him walk.

138 机棒机车8部层差别65引到55岁到5 णा जामनाराउकस्का हमन्द्र। भयन **国部运送(学型岩 虹 至 至 三 宝 宝 宝 云 3 0 1 日** मार्क्ट्रा व्वरणा रमम्भा मुष्रा भ्यामुग्रिक्ष व्यव्यव्यव्या र्यू।

At the beginning, when I started to explain, I found it very difficult because I had to proceed logically in my explanations. For example, in the ancient Bön tradition, there were many kinds of medicine, many kinds of astrology and also ju thig, a very complicated form of divination. If there had been no writing there would have been no way to understand all these things, so it is logical that some form existed, that they used some type of writing, although I didn't have any way to prove this.

#### The Power of the Bonpo

You see on the first page of The Light of Kailash there is a seal in Zhang Zhung writing, the original Mar, which is the seal of the last king, Ligmikya. After he was murdered, the Bonpo governed everything and in that period, they used

Later on it became customary for all Tibetan kings to have two Bonpo masters in order not to receive the negativities of the Bön. When a prince was born in Tibet, the Bonpo masters would do a type of purification; Buddhists could not. The name of the king was given by the Bonpo and for that reason most of the Tibetan kings had names in the Zhang Zhung language, particularly in ancient times, before the time of Songtsen Gampo. We don't know what many of these names mean although in the Zhang Zhung language they are very elegant. And you can find some of these explanations here.

The Bonpo teacher of Songtsen Gampo said that he had been afflicted by magical power from Zhang Zhung and that there was little they could do about it. He said that they needed to invite the Bonpo master who was responsible for the king's condition from Zhang Zhung, and so they sent two ministers to search for him. His name was Nangher Löpo and he was the first Bonpo teacher invited from Zhang Zhung.

He performed ceremonies and rituals for some days and a kind of therapy and Songtsen Gampo became healthy. As a result of this, the king gave this group of Bonpo a place halfway between Lhasa and Shigatse where they founded a Bonpo monastery called Meri. The Bonpo lived there for generations, and even though later on some Tibetan kings expelled the Bonpo to the borders of Tibet, they couldn't do anything about Meri monastery because Songtsen Gampo had given it to the Bonpo.

So the seal on the first page of the book is that of the last king and is in the Zhang Zhung script. I found it in India at the Bonpo centre, where there is a monastery and where they have transferred all these things.

The last volume [of the three] explains about the period after the kingdom of Zhang Zhung ended and covers the period of the kingdom of Tibet up to the last king. Some people suggested that I continue the history of Tibet up to modern times but I didn't want to do that. Modern history moves into the political situation and I didn't want to have any problems for our organization ASIA for developing schools and hospitals in different villages in Tibet, so I stopped there. So these three volumes explain mainly how Tibetans used this ancient writing and language.

The history of Songtsen Gampo – how he received this magic power from Zhang Zhung and how he murdered the last Zhang Zhung king – all of this can be found in the Dunhuang documents. When scholars study and do research, if their work in based on documents from Dunhuang, everybody accepts it and this explanation can be found there. I explained this in my books so you can understand the value of Tibetan history is and what an ancient tradition it is.

Transcription & editing by L. Granger



# Drung, Deu and Bön

Narrations, Symbolic languages and the Bön tradition in ancient Tibet

An excerpt from the 'Introduction' to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's historical work entitled Drung, Deu and Bön, published by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in 1995.

he study of the Bön religious tradition, that was present in Tibet for many centuries before the spread of Buddhism, is an indispensable reference point for research into the birth and history of the civilization of the 'Land of Snows'. Originally the term 'bön' designated the various existing religious and magico-ritual traditions, very probably based on elements common to the heritage of pan-Asiatic Shamanism.<sup>1</sup> Etymologically the term derives from the verb bon pa, 'to recite magical formulas', because the power its practitioners obtained derived from the recitation of mantra, syllables or sounds with the capacity of influencing certain energy dimensions. In fact through the vibration of mantra the ancient Bönpos came into contact with, and succeeded in controlling, the invisible energies and occult forces that govern existence.

In a historical era which can probably be dated about the beginning of the second millennium B.C.<sup>2</sup> one stream of the several ritual traditions gained supremacy over the others, conquering them so to speak, and absorbing them into its own system. The foundation of this stream, which was to become 'official' Bön, is ascribed to the master Shenrab Miwoche who lived in Shang Shung, in that area between Mount Tise (Kailasa) and Lake Mapham (Manasarovar) which can in all respects be considered the cradle of Tibetan culture. The name Shenrab Miwoche means 'Great Supreme Man of the Shen'; Shen was the name of the clan to which he belonged and to which historical sources attribute the names of his ancestors for several generations.3 The most remarkable innovation in his teaching was the abolition of the ancient cruel sacrifices and the adoption of the use of clay or butter 'effigies' to replace the human or animal victims, a tradition still observed today not only in Bön but also in all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism.4 Thus the main aim of his mission was to renew and reform the pre-existent cognitive and ritual traditions, as clearly transpires from the theoretical principles and methods of practice comprised in the 'twelve lores', twelve types of Bön that were spread in Tibet at the time of the first king, Nyatri Tsenpo.5 According to the historical sources these represent the whole of Tibetan culture as it existed until the definitive advent of Buddhism in the eighth century.

Let us dwell a moment on the history of Tibet in order to have an overall picture of the origin and evolution of the country. Broadly speaking it can be divided into three historical periods: in the first only the kingdom of Shang Shung existed; in the second Shang Shung coexisted with the new kingdom of Tibet located in the fertile Yarlung valley; the third, which starts with the annexation of Shang Shung by Tibet, ends with the collapse of the Tibetan empire in the ninth century.<sup>6</sup>

The centre of the kingdom of Shang Shung lay in what is now the region of Guge in western Tibet, but its dominion spread over practically all the territory subsequently encompassed in central and eastern Tibet. The government of Shang Shung probably did not exercise direct control over those regions, limiting itself to levying annual taxes, however its civilization and culture, based on the Bön traditions, spread widely in all parts of Tibet. The beginning of this era probably coincides with the life of the master Shenrab Miwoche and of his royal patron Triwer Sergyi Charuchen.<sup>7</sup> As regards the name Shang Shung', probably the original name was simply 'Shung' and 'Shang' (zhang: maternal uncle) was added later as a sign of respect, as many Tibetan kings had married princesses from Shang Shung. The word 'shung' (zhung) corresponds to the Tibetan khyung, the garuda eagle<sup>8</sup> that in this ancient civilization symbolized the energy force linked with fire, considered the most active of the five elements in Bön. Still today in the vicinity of Mount Tise there exists a place called Khyunglung, 'khyung valley', which was for a time capital of the kings of Shang Shung.9

The second period saw the rise of the dynasty of the kings of Yarlung, a small kingdom in central Tibet, which was to lay the foundation of the Tibetan empire of the succeeding centuries. But the culture of the kingdom was that of Shang Shung, as was its religion. All the historical texts report that for thirty-three generations of kings, from the



Rinpoche in Khyung Lhung.

Courtesy of A. Siedlecki

time of Nyatri Tsenpo to that of Songtsen Gampo (died 649), the state religion was Bön and the king was always accompanied by one or more royal priests called kushen (sku gshen). These priests served as the king's bodyguards and were essential for maintaining his prestige and well being as well as ensuring the prosperity of the people and the nation. Nevertheless there were occasions when the kings attempted to rebel against the power of the priestly caste, which was directly tied to the interests of the kingdom of Shang Shung that initially enjoyed a sort of supremacy over the new state: it is sufficient to observe that traditionally the names of the Tibetan kings were conferred by the Bön

murdered and with the accedence of his successor Pude Kungyel<sup>II</sup> Bön was reinstated in its prestigious position. In the light of subsequent events Trigum Tsenpo's failure can be explained by the lack of a culture to pose as an alternative to the Bön of Shang Shung, because the endeavour to disengage the political power from the influence of the clergy was not accomplished until the reign of King Songtsen Gampo who, availing himself of the Buddhist culture from India and China, succeeded in laying the foundation of a new culture and religion capable of bearing comparison with the autochthonous religion.

With this king begins the third and last phase of an-



Petroglyph representing a tiger, symbol of the element wind, and deer. This photo appears in The Light of Kailash, chapter V – The Civilization of Ancient Zhang Zhung.

Courtesy of A. Siedlecki

priests in the language of Shang Shung. Trigum Tsenpo¹o (c: 1st century A.D.), the eighth king, was the first to try to suppress Bön for political reasons, exiling all the priests and enforcing a harsh repression of the clergy. He was concerned about the growing prestige of the priestly caste and feared that Shang Shung could conquer Tibet, a kingdom quite young in relation to the other and which still lacked adequate political and military power to protect its independence. But Trigum Tsenpo's persecution did not achieve its desired ends for long, however, as the king was

cient Tibetan history, corresponding to the annexation of the kingdom of Shang Shung and the culmination of the Tibetan empire, which in a short time became one of the greatest powers in central Asia. Forging diplomatic ties with the rulers of Nepal and China, Songtsen Gampo promoted the introduction of Buddhism, although it was only in the reign of King Trisong Deutsen (742–797) in the following century that Buddhism came to be officially adopted as the state religion. Having laid the foundation for the diffusion of a new culture Songtsen Gampo prepared

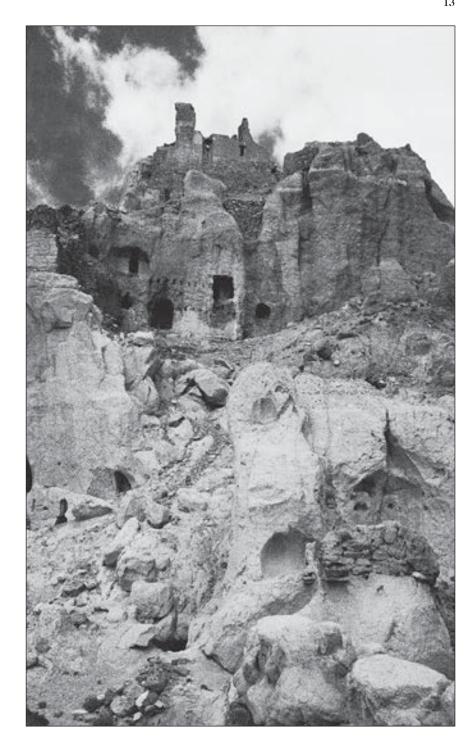
momentous occasions.

an ambush for King Ligmigya<sup>12</sup> of Shang Shung and murdered him, thus consummating the annexation of Shang Shung. This marked the beginning of the decline of the ancient Bön religion, but in spite of this throughout the period of the Tibetan monarchy until its collapse, which according to tradition coincided with the murder of King Langdarma in A.D. 842, the king of Tibet continued to be flanked by a Bönpo priest whom he asked to perform the most important rites to propitiate fortune and glory, on the birth of a prince, at a royal matrimony and on other

Until this period the basis of Tibetan culture, as we have suggested, had consisted in the 'twelve lores' of Bön, where we find the ritual knowledge and traditions that, merged with the principles and practices of Buddhism, have characterized Tibetan culture and spirituality up to the present day: medical and astrological cognitions, methods of divination, apotropaic and propitiatory rites, cosmogonic narrations etc. When Bön was subsequently classified in 'nine ways' (theg pa rim dgu) these 'twelve lores' were incorporated into the four 'Bön of Cause' (rgyu'i bon), so called to distinguish them from the five 'Bön of the Fruit' ('bras bu'i bon) officially considered as higher teachings. 13 Let us try to understand the possible origin of this classification. The five 'Bön of the Fruit' contain mainly teachings that can be found in the Mahayana and Tantrayana Buddhist traditions, so one can assume they were introduced into Bön in a period later than that of the 'twelve lores'; the authenticity and originality of the ninth and last 'way', comprising the Dzogchen teachings, alone is beyond doubt as its historical inception can be correlated with the kingdom of Shang Shung.<sup>14</sup> In any case we can hypothesize that the Bönpos absorbed elements of Buddhism without recognizing them as such, as some scholars maintain, 15 or that they did so in order to survive, to counter the great success of the Buddhist faith. The fact remains that in the contemporary Bönpo canon can be found some of the most important Buddhist texts, albeit with different titles, and even the iconography of Shenrab Miwoche emulates that of Buddha Śākyamuni. 16 There may originally have been valid reasons for this work of transformation and adaption of Buddhist elements, perhaps for the very preservation of the authentic Bön teachings, but this principle was soon forgotten and the importance of the original traditions was neglected in favour of the philosophical teachings derived from Buddhism. It was probably at this point that the original Bön was classified as 'Bön of Cause', that is as inferior or preliminary to the 'Bön of the Fruit'17 and the authentic principles of the ancient Bön culture were misconstrued and almost excised by the protagonists of

official Bön. The fundamental principles of the ancient Bön tradition are not expressed in philosophical concepts and are rarely found in the canonical texts.<sup>18</sup> Rather they must be 'distilled' from the mythological narrations contained in the ancient ritual texts which act as prelude to the rites and guarantee their efficacy. Reading these myths we can understand the principles underlying the various rites and identify the most particular characteristics of the ancient Bön tradition: a practical and concrete knowledge of the various aspects of the energy of the individual in relation to the dimension in which he lives, whereby it differs greatly from Buddhist philosophy which is more centred on the nature of the mind and its manifold psychological aspects. This was the original wisdom of the Tibetans, which has imbued all the cultural and religious aspects of Tibet but which today runs the risk of sinking into obliv-

Today, as is well known, Tibet is under the domination of the People's Republic of China, and of its vast territory the central and western regions and a small part of eastern Tibet form the 'Autonomous Tibetan Region' under Chinese rule, while the eastern region has been absorbed into four Chinese provinces (Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan). Ladakh, a country with Tibetan population and culture, in under Indian rule and only the small state of Bhutan, also culturally Tibetan, enjoys political independence. The Tibetan population, including refugees who have settled down mainly in India and Nepal, does not seem to total over six million people, and such a small number of inhabitants in a territory as large as Tibet, which is almost a quarter the size of modern China, is clearly insignificant compared to one billion Chinese. The consequence of this fact is the danger that the Tibetan people and culture may be destined to vanish. The only way to save the identity of a people is to preserve its culture, and in order to appraise the culture of a country to enable it to survive it is necessary to search for its genuine



The silver palace of the Garuda Valley,
Khyung Lhung. Courtesy of A. Siedlecki

roots, which in Tibet's case undoubtedly derive from the ancient Bön tradition and civilization of Shang Shung.

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Drung, Deu and Bön Translated from Tibetan into Italian, edited and annotated by Adriano Clemente Translated from Italian into English by Andrew Lukianowicz Library of Tibetan Works and Archives 1995

- 1 Some types of Bon were certainly based on principles and practices similar to those of Shamanism, which is proved by the numerous elements that still survive in Bon rites and in the rites derived from Bon adopted by the Buddhists. For example, the issue of the abduction of the soul (bla) by spirits and its recovery by the shaman (or in this case, the bon po) through his power, is common to many shamanic traditions, and not only Asian ones. However exhaustive studies on the relationship between Bon and Shamansim have yet to be undertaken. For a general overview of the argument cf. Nebesky, 1975, pp. 538ff.
- 2 Doubts have at time been cast on the historicity of the master gShen rab mi bo che by western scholars, although his name appears in the Tun Huang manuscripts (Chapter XI, xi). In the present work the author suggests a date for his birth based on traditional Bon texts (chapter XI, VIII).
- 3 gShen rab mi bo che's clan is considered to be descended from the dMu deities (Chapter V, vii). dMu is also the name of one of the four original tribes of Tibet (rus chen bzhi). Cf. Tarthang Tulku (ed.), Ancient Tibet, 1986, pp. 114–119.
- 4 These rites are dealt with mainly in Chapter VI.
- 5 There are several uncertainties regarding the chronology of the first Tibetan kings, just as there are for all the history previous to the great empire of the seventh century. Some traditional Tibetan texts ascribe the date 126 B.C., others 414 B.C., to the appearance of the first king. In The Necklace of Gzi the author suggests that the king may have been a contemporary of Śākyamuni Buddha (6th century B.C.). Cf. Namkhai Norbu 1081, p. 11.
- 6 The author has written a book in Tibetan on the ancient history of Zhang Zhung and Tibet under the title Zhang bod gna' rabs kyi lo rgyus nor bu'i me long published by Si kron mi rigs dpe skrun khang in 1990. An expanded version in three volumes is to be published in the near future under the title Zhang bod kyi lo rgyus ti se'i 'o'd.
- 7 Khri wer la rje gu lang gser gyi bya ru can, traditionally considered a contemporary of Shenrab Miwoche (Op. 81, p. 34) is listed among the 'eighteen kings of Zhang Zhung in horned headgear' (zhang zhung gi rgyal po bya ru can bco brgyad), who held different regions of the ancient kingdom as their realms. In Gangs ti se'i dkar chag (Op. 25), a Tibetan guide to sacred Mount Kailash, the names of each king and of his palace are given. Cf. Namkhai Norbu and Prats 1989, pp. 127–128.
- 8 See Chapter IV, note 21.
- 9 E.g. Khyung lung dngul mkhar, residence of Lig mi rgya (also Lig mi rhya, Lig mi rkya) the last sovereign of Zhng Zhung.

10 According to tradition Gri gu bstan po was the first king to leave mortal remains, unlike the first seven kings who on dying ascended to the sky by means of the 'dmu cord' (dmu thag). In a duel the commoner Lo ngam rta dzi cut the king's 'dmu cord' with a sword and killed him, so that in order to carry out the funerary rite bon pos who were specialists in performing these rites had to be expressly invited from Zhang Zhung and other countries (see Chapter III, iv). Cf. Karmay 1972, pp. 66ff.

- 11 There were important innovations during sPu lde gung rgyal's reign, in the fields of agriculture and metallurgy. According to certain sources he was a contemporary of the Chinese emperor Wu ti of the Han dynasty, who ruled from 140 B.C. to 85 B.C. Cf. Shakbpa 1984, p.24.
- 12 Bon sources give king Lig mi rgya as a contemporary of Khri srong Ide'u btsan (see Chapter XV, x), but according to the Tun Huang documents, the king who had him murdered and who definitively annexed Zhang Zhung was Srong btsan sgam po (Gedun Chos-'phel 1978, p.67). The Bonpo scholar Tenzin Namdak has attempted to resolve this contradiction by explaining that lig mi rgya was a term used as an attribute by many kings of Zhang Zhung, corresponding to the Tibetan srid pa'i rje, 'King of Existence, and that it was only during the 'last' Lig mi rgya, contemporary of Khri srong Ide'u bstan, that Zhang Zhung was conquered (Op. 81, pp. 44 and 152; also pp. 42–46 for his interpretation of the fall of the Zhang Zhung kingdom).
- 13 The 'Nine Ways' of Bon have been studied by D.L. Snellgrove in The Nine Ways of Bon (see Bibliography), which contains extracts from gZi brjid, the 'extended' biography of gShen rab mi bo che. First published in 1967, this work represents the first real study of the Bon religion in its totality of autochthonous traditions and elements assimilated in later periods. Cf. Chapter III. iii.
- 14 The most authoritative collection of rDzogs chen teachings of the Bon tradition is the Oral Transmission of rDzogs chen of Zhang Zhung (rdzogs chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud), whose masters were usually also protagonists of the tantric cycle of Zhang Zhung Me ri, in which lineage one also finds the name of king Khri Ide Icags kyi bya ru can of Zhang Zhung. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. 50.
- 15 This is the opinion held by D. L. Snellgrove. This would validate those contemporary Bonpos who hold that their teachings were imported into Zhang Zhung from Tag zig, a region generally identified with Persia but which may have indicated all the area west of Pamir, which in those times included the regions of Bactria and Sogdiana, where the Buddhist doctrines were spread owing to the intense activity of the caravans on the 'silk route'. Cf. Snellgrove 1987, pp. 390–391.
- 16 A very particular iconographic description of gShen rab mi bo che, contained in Srid pa spyi mdos, an ancient ritual text which, as it is apparently without Buddhist influences, clearly brings to light the characteristics of original Bon. In this text, widely quoted from by the author in Bod kyi lo rgyus las 'phros pa'i gtam nor bu'i do shal, the Bon master is depicted with long blue hair, wearing a cloak of vulture feathers and a rainbow kilt and holding a 'cosmic egg' in his hand (Op. 86, p. 2; Op. 56, pp. 4 and 36). This text was the object of a thesis presented at the I.U.O. of the University of Naples by E. Dell'Angelo under the title Contributo allo studio dell'insegnamento di gShen rab mi bo che.
- 17 It should be borne in mind that in all its traditions Tibetan Buddhism has been influenced by Bon as regards its ritual aspects. It is for this reason that in the present work there are several passages from Bon rites 'adopted' by the Tibetan Buddhist schools
- 18 A work which systematically expounds the fundamental principles of Bon cosmogony and metaphysics is *Srid pa'i mdzog phug* (Op. 83), in which, however, alongside ancient mythological narrations one finds philosophical interpretations that are strictly Buddhist.

# **Presentation of** "The Light of Kailash" in Rome

n Saturday, November 7th, the first volume of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's trilogy, "The Light of Kailash, A History of Zhang Zhung and Tibet", was presented in the Aula Magna at the Faculty of Oriental Studies at La Sapienza University of Rome. The event was organized by the International Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies and the Faculty of Oriental Studies, under the aegis of the Province of Rome.

Prof. Donatella Rossi, the translator of the work, opened the event during which Matthew Kapstein, Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Chicago Divinity School, Per Kvaerne, Professor Emeritus at the University of Oslo and Professor Charles Ramble from the Univer-

sity of Oxford and President of the International Association for Tibetan Studies each spoke about different aspects of the origins of Tibetan culture.

Finally Chögyal Namkhai Norbu took the podium and thanked the speakers for their interest and participation. He went on to speak about the danger posed to Tibetan culture and language today and the importance of the research being done by western scholars in order that it did not become something that only finished up in a museum. His aim, he said, is to show the value of Tibetan culture and he hoped that, in the future, Buddhist scholars would learn to be more open about the roots of Tibetan culture.

He spoke at length about his deep research into ancient Bon rituals texts as a source of study and into the source of writing which dated back before the time of Songtsen Gampo with the script of the kingdom of Zhang Zhung. He concluded by saying that he



wished to dedicate his research to the new generations of Tibetans, "like seeds in a field", to encour-

age them to do their own research into their ancient culture.

At the end of the conference, Rinpoche spent time signing books and greeting the numerous participants at the event.

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# "Yantra Yoga. First time in Russia"

Darya Mikhaylova

▼rom September 11-13, during the "Sport and Style 2009" festival, the Moscow "New League" fitness club presented its new "Body and Mind" school section and Yantra Yoga was presented as the main part of this project.

"New League" is one of the famous and well-equipped gyms in Moscow and has three floors with transparent walls full of people taking care of their bodies and health. You can see the schedule of the gym and find cardio and power training, dance classes, Pilates, cycling, aerobics, box and step. Among them now you can also find Yantra Yoga classes, two times a week.

The head of the "Body and Mind" school invited Yeshi Silvano Namkhai and our local Yantra Yoga instructor, Marina Sukhanova, to give a presentation and open a Yantra Yoga class during the biggest and the most famous fitness festival in Moscow. Just imagine, in a huge hall in front of the Kremlin, right in Red Square with five different stages, music

and movement everywhere. The "Sport and Style Fitness Moscow" Festival has been held by the Moscow City Government since 2005. The main goal of the exhibition is to develop sport, fitness and a healthy lifestyle in Moscow and every year 30,000 Moscovites visit this exhibition.

New Liga had its stage just in front of the podium, where Adidas and Nike were presenting their latest collections of clothes. Over two days, two presentations were given by Yeshi Namkhai and three open classes of Yantra Yoga were held on this stage and an-

other Oriental stage, with more than 100 people participating in open classes, including artists, businesswomen, hairdressers, journalists and professional sportsmen. The latter were mostly interested in the Yantra Yoga breathing system, which can give benefit by saving energy and therefore give as lasting and good results as in gymnastic or power training. Yeshi Namkhai explained basic things about our three levels and how to work with energy and breathing, and Marina showed the audience the

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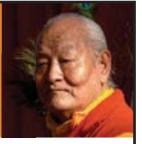
1st group of Yantras, Tsandul and Tsijong.

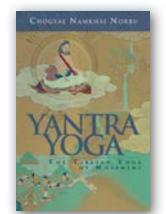
We also had the opportunity to present the new Yantra Yoga book and to announce the forthcoming Russian edition. Afterwards there was a presentation of Dzogchen to all participants and the Vajra Dance and the Mandala immediately became the focal point in the exhibition hall and attracted reporters from three TV

Besides being a great opportunity to present the Teaching to the general public, this small project of the Moscow Dzogchen Community, guided by Yeshi Namkhai, supported by Rinpoche, and with the great help of Fabio gave us a good experience of collaboration and happy moments of working together. We started by building a relationship with the gym, organizing the stage, choosing the program for lessons, then we worked during the festival and are now continuing to develop public relations and trying to present Yantra Yoga to a wider audience. All the people participating in the project have been working together very smoothly, helping and supporting each other.

After the festival, the Body and Building magazine came out with an article about Yantra Yoga and a photo of the master class doing the 1st group of Yantras with Marina. On the cover, near a photo with Hilary Swank, they wrote "Yantra Yoga – first time in Russia".

# Books by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu





- Yantra Yoga
- Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light
- Dzogchen Teachings
- The Supreme Source
- Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State
- The Crystal and the Way of Light



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# **Barcelona Days**

Jampel Dell'Angelo

₹rom the 14th to the 18th **♦** of November our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave the teaching "Dudtsi Jonshing" in Barcelona. Our Master explained that this teaching is related with the Dzogchen Upadesha series, "Dudtsi" means nectar and "Jonshing" means lively tree. The meaning of the title of the teaching in English would be "Nectar that comes out from a lively tree". The title of the text states that this is related with the methods for achieving clarity and manifestations and that this is a very deep and important teaching. As this teaching has some secret parts I don't really know what else I can say, so better I stop here.

This year the retreat was organized in the centre of the town in an important auditorium that usually is used for music performances and important business meetings. Differently from the previous years we were not near the beach, but right in the middle of the town in the most modern and busy part of Barce-



Photo: L. Graf

lona. It was quite funny to see the contrast between the busy world of businessmen, offices, banks and shops that surrounded the auditorium, and our Vajra brothers and sisters following the teaching. When Rinpoche used to arrive one of our Vajra sisters would play a very loud conch shell outside the Auditorium, it almost seemed like one of those sounds you could only hear in a

valley on the top of the Himalyas.

I saw Rinpoche laughing a lot every morning for this sonorous welcome on his arrival.

The days of the teaching were really warm and sunny, I don't know if it's the fantastic weather of Barcelona or climate change but it really didn't seem like mid November. People walked out of their houses in the morning just wearing t-shirts. I also know that one day, although the timetable of the retreat was very intense,

our Master said "Let's go for lunch on the beach today, it's so beautiful".

At the beginning of the retreat Yeshi Namkhai also arrived in Barcelona and visited Kundusling where he gave an essential explanation and we did a practice together. Kundusling gave him the T-shirt of the Barcelona Football Club, as a gift, which he really liked.

Before the Dudtsi Jonshing retreat started, on the 11th of November, the day of Adzam Drugpa, our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was invited to the "Casa del Tibet" of Barcelona where he gave the worldwide transmission through web cast. Afterwards, at the "Casa del Tibet" Rinpoche was also invited to present his recently published book "The Light of Kailash, A History of Zhang-Zhung and Tibet". This important book is being published by the Shang Shung Institute in three volumes. At the "Casa del Tibet" there were many new people and this was a great occasion to meet our Master and get connected with the teaching.

The retreat ended on the 18th of November and the afternoon after the last explanation there was a Ganapuja followed by a lottery and some music performances. The lottery had incredible prizes and there was a very young girl of only few months that became a real key player as she won more than ten times! Finally after some experimental music, some flamenco guitar and a very funny Yiddish piece Rinpoche said, "Goodbye everybody!" and the retreat finished. ⊚

# Rinpoche's Birthday December 8 at Tashigar North

Dubravka Velasevic

n Dec 8th we celebrated Rinpoche's birthday and it was a particularly beautiful and exciting day. After his precious teachings, everyone was invited to have lunch with Rinpoche in the Comedor. One of the first gifts presented to our teacher was a pair of lovebirds

that he immediately released. They flew out into the sky above the Gar to enjoy a life in tropical paradise.

Tashigar Norte members organized a very nice program for the birthday party. There were various kinds of performance: instrumental music, singing, Ti-

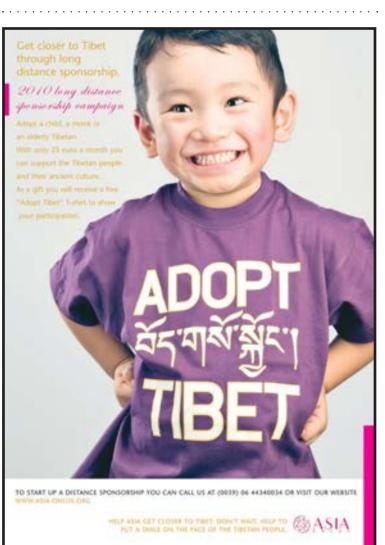




Photo: Rainbow

betan dances performed by Community people and Venezuelan dances performed by local children dressed in colorful national costumes. Carlos, a Gar member who lives nearby, danced with the children disguised in a wonderful mask and costume with a big green horse head, long bird feathers, and a huge, black hat from the Andes. After birthday cake, everyone enjoyed Rafael's melodramatic Russian songs and we danced and drank a little wine until the evening. When Rinpoche left, people were still in a mood for a dance and improvised a samba fiesta powered by water can drumming and a gui-



Photo: V. Babanov



16

# Bön and the Bönpos

The following is an excerpt from chapter 3 of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's work 'The Necklace of Zi' published by Shang Shung Editions. 'The Necklace of Zi (gZi yi phreng ba)' is the revised and extended text of a lecture given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1975 to the annual meeting of young Tibetans in Switzerland. Some years later, 'The Necklace of Zi' was published in Dharamsala in both Tibetan and English, and immediately provoked great interest for a completely new approach to the history and culture of Tibet.

Bin is an ancient Tibetan term with the same meaning as today's verb bzla (pronounced da, to recite mantras). In the old texts, the verb bön was sometimes replaced by the term gyer, to invoke. Originally, the word probably derives from the fact that by reciting mantras the ancient Bönpos drove away illness and negativity, both for their own benefit and to help others, and performed ferocious magic against the entities provoking disturbance.

In 1717, when the Zungar Mongol tribes invaded Tibet, many Nyingmapas and Bönpos were put to death. Those Tibetans who went to meet Zungar chieftains had to stick out their tongues to show that they were neither Nyingmapas nor Bönpos, whose tongues, through constant repetition of mantras, were believed to have turned black or dark brown. This habit continued, and ever since Tibetans usually show their tongue as a gesture of respect before high officials or important Lamas. All this amply demonstrates that the Bönpos have always had a reputation for assiduous practice of mantras.

Just as the word Sangyepa (sangs rayas pa) refers to Buddhists, so the term Bönpo is generally ascribed to a specific religion, but this view is not historically correct. Before Buddhism was introduced in Tibet, the designation Bönpo was applied to all those who, gifted with special faculties and powers, performed certain kinds of rites, recited certain types of mantra and the like: bön was the term indicating such ritual action. Therefore, it is not possible to trace, or reduce, Bön to a single origin. When the master of Bön Shenrab Miwoche came to this world, there already existed various types of Bön practitioners – the Düd Bön (bdud bon), whose powers derived from the Düd (demons), the Tsen Bön (btsan bon), whose practice was based on the cult of the Tsen (a class of harmful beings), and others who employed animal sacrifice. Shenrab Miwoche prohibited this usage, and substituted rites of payment such as the Dö (mdos), the Ye (yas) and the like, replacing cruel sacrifices – as is substantiated by the ritual texts of these traditions<sup>12</sup> – through the substitution of animal statuettes for living beings. It is probable that the Düd Bön, the Tsen Bön and the like existed many centuries before the appearance of the great master. At any rate, official Bön, the so-called Yungdrung Bön or Immortal Bön, was the result of the modification and improvement of the existing Bön tradition by Shenrab Miwoche.

Some Western scholars who have studied or investigated Bön have hypothesized that what is known as shamanism originated in Bön and that the very term shaman is a corruption of the word Shen, the name by which the kin of Shenrab Miwoche are known: thus shamanism would mean the 'tradition of the Shen'. This hypothesis is not absolutely without justification: just as the ancestors of Buddha Shakyamuni belonging to the royal clan of Shakya practiced the religious cults of ancient India, it is probable that the ancestors of Shenrab Miwoche practiced the Bön which was widespread in their epoch, like the Tsen Bön, the Düd Bön and the like. However, to derive shamanism from the Bön of Shenrab Miwoche on the basis of a single, simple clue, the family name Shen, reveals a lack of critical capacity and ignorance of the origin and historical development of Bön.

Shenrab Miwoche was born in Shang Shung, and was therefore a Tibetan, or better a Shang-shung-pa, though the Bön that he taught soon spread far beyond Shang Shung, to countries like Tazig (Persia or Tadzhikstan), India and China. Some credible Bön sources report that the great sages Mutsa Trahe of Tazig, Hulu Baleg of Sumba, Lhadag Nagdro of India, Legtang Mangpo from China, and Serthog Chejam of Khrom translated into their respective languages and spread in their native lands the teachings of Shenrab included in the four series (or four gates) of 'divine Bön' (lha bon sgo bzhi) – the Shen of the Cha (phywa gshen), the Shen of the Universe of Phenomena (snang gshen), the Shen of Existence (srid gshen), and the Shen of Magic Power ('phrul gshen)<sup>13</sup> – and in the three



Shenrab Miwoche, drawing by Lopön Tendzin Namdak.

series known as the Divine Bön of Ritual Offerings (bshos kyi lha bon), the Bön of Village Funeral Rites (grong gi 'dur bon) and the Bön of Perfect Mind (yang dag pa'i sems bon).

Just as Tibetan Buddhists, recognizing in India and Oddiyana the birthplaces of the Buddhist teachings, always gave maximum importance to everything that came from these lands, while dismissing whatever originates in Tibet, so Tibetan Bönpos who survived the the spreading of Buddhism, imitating this example, have shifted the origin of Bön to Tazig, and have located there Olmo Lungring, the place where Shenrab Miwoche was born and gave his first teachings. But in the Lineage of Existence (Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang), a text attributed to the Bönpo master Trenpa Namkha, a contemporary of Trisong Deutsen, and in the Concise Biography (Mdo 'dus) of Shenrab Miwoche, it is clearly written that the great master and all the Bön teachings came from Shang Shung. Later Bönpo scholars maintain that Shenrab Miwoche reincarnated in India as Buddha Shakyamuni, to preach Buddha Dharma, then in China as Kongtse Trulgyel to teach astrology, and so forth. In this way, they make of him a figure similar to the ten avataras or incarnations of Lord Vishnu in the Hindu religion. While such assertions are without historical foundation, what is certain is that the Bon of Perfect Mind (Yang dag pa'i sems bon) taught by Shenrab Miwoche was an archaic form of Dzogchen: in fact, we possess the list and the histories of all lineage masters of Dzogchen of the Oral Transmission of Shang Shung (zhang zhung snyan brgyud).14 If Shenrab Miwoche taught Dzogchen, which is also the apex of all the teachings transmitted by Buddha Shakyamuni, we cannot doubt his extraordinary qualities; we can, moreover, deduce that Tibet in that period had not only a culture, but also an exceptional form of spiritual knowlege.

Some may object that Dzogchen has its origin in Oddiyana and therefore could not have been taught by Shenrab Miwoche. The arising of Dzogchen (that is, of its Buddhist tradition) can undoubtedly be traced to Master Garab Dorje of Oddiyana, and Oddiyana has traditionally been considered the native land of all the Buddhist Anuttaratantras, but it is difficulty to fix a precise geographic location for that country.

Many Western scholars identify Oddiyana with the Swat region of Pakistan, while others are still conducting research in this regard. In any case, all the ancient records concur in situating Oddiyana somewhere to the northwest of India. Analogously, the legendary land of Shambhala, which figures so significantly in Buddhist literature, has never been geographically identified, but examining the texts which treat of it, we are led to place Shambhala in the same area as Oddiyana. In many texts it is explained that at a certain point Oddiyana and Shambhala became pure dimensions, disappearing from common view. In reality, it seems more logical to imagine that these countries were conquered by the Islamic armies of the Turkish populations called in some texts the Turukas. As a result, the Buddhists would have been converted to Islam, and the Buddhist teachings, as well as the various aspects of Buddhist culture, annihilated root and branch. Then, with the passage of time, every trace of the history, and even the existence, of this civilisation was lost.

Thus it is probable that the lands renowned in antiquity as Oddiyana and Shambhala, reached with immense risk and sacrifice by the Indian Siddhas, belonged to the kingdom of Shang Shung or may have bordered on it. This could lead us to hypothesize that the archaic Dzogchen taught by Shenrab Miwoche gradually developed afterward into Buddhist Dzogchen. In fact, in the history of the Oral Transmission of Shang Shung we read that the thirteenth master of the Dzogchen lineage in descent from Shenrab Miwoche was a certain Shang Shung Garab, 15 who may have been the same person as Garab Dorje, while the tradition of 'twelve primordial masters' reported by the Buddhist Dzogchen literature<sup>16</sup> could also derive from the twelve teachers who preceded Shang Shung Garab in the lineage of the Dzogchen of Shang Shung. explaining history in such an irregular manner may surprise and upset many Tibetan scholars, but it is indispensable to accurately investigate and reflect upon the authentic origins of the culture and spiritual traditions of Tibet.

At any rate, the true principle of the Dzogchen teaching is knowledge, meaning the understanding of the original, natural, unaltered state of every individual, male or female as they may be. Thus Dzogchen cannot be equated with a religion or a philosophical doctrine, nor even with the content of some sacred scripture. Ancient Dzogchen texts state that even among primitive populations, never reached by Buddhist teachings, there could be many yogins and yoginis possessing perfect knowledge of the state of Dzogchen. On this premise, it is not surprising that in both Bön and Buddhism exist teachings which explain how to realize this state of authentic knowledge. We need not maintain a rigid and limited view, wanting to attribute the origins of Dzogchen to Bön or alternatively to the Nyingma tradition. Dzogchen is a knowledge which transcends the limits of time and space: indeed it is said that innumerable masters holding this knowledge and its teachings are present throughout the universe. In particular, the tantra entitled The Transcendent Sound (sgra thal 'gyur) states that the Dzogchen teaching is widespread in thirteen dimensions called thalwa or 'beyond our solar system'. Therefore it is fundamental to rise above the biases of a restricted view.

The Necklace of Zi On the History and Culture of Tibet Translated from Tibetan into Italian and edited by Adriano Clemente Translated into English by Barrie Simmons with thanks to Nancy Simmons Shang Shung Editions 2004

12. See the Srid pa spyi skong or Srid pa spyi mdos (The General mDos of Existence) by Sangs po khri na khod (VIth century), manuscript in the Merigar library. (An interesting study of this text is E. Dell'Angelo, Srid pa'i spyi mdos: Contributo allo studio dell'insegnamento di gShen rab Mi bo che, unpublished university thesis, Naples 1982).

13. See the g.Yung drung bon gyi bstan 'byung (The Origins of the Teaching of Immortal Bon) by dPal Idan tshul khrims (1902–1973), Delhi 1972, p. 190, line 6 ff.

14. See the rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud kyi bon ma nub pa'i gtan tshigs (The Reason Why the rDzogs pa Chen po of the Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung did not Disappear) by Gyer chen sNang bzher lod po (VIIIth century), Delhi 1968, p. 260, leaf 1, line 5 ff.

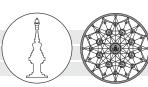
15. From the Zhang Zhung snyan brgyud kyi rnam thar (The Story of the Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung) by Gyer chen sNang bzher lod po (VIIIth century), Delhi 1968, p. 10, line  $\varsigma$  ff.:

The third, Master gSang ba 'dus pa, miraculously born and gifted with the magic capacity of assuming any appearance, transmitted (the instructions) to IHa bon thod dkar; he to Ye gshen bsam 'grub; he to Gyer spungs legs grub; he to rGyung yar btsad po; he to Khre sras rgyal ba; he to Zhang zhung dga' rab; he to Ra sangs bsod nams brtseg; he to Zhang zhung bKra shis rgyal mtshan; he to sNang bzher lod po.

16. From the Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga ston (A Dharma History called Feast for the Learned), by dPa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba (1504–1566), stod cha, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Beijing 1986, p. 562, line 12 ff.: Even if in general, in the series ol teachings common to all, there is reference to the presence of a thousand masters in this fortunate kalpa, in the rDzogs pa chen po, (the vehicle) of the fruit of secret mantra, there is mention of twelve masters. The Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud says: "In the epoch of time without beginning, a precious jewel was lost. When the jewel was lost, appeared darkness and light, and because of the four conditions (rkyen bzhi), concepts and impure vision, there manifested the dimension dGa' ldan brtsegs pa. This had a pure lotus as its base, and there originated the great tantras of secret mantra. Mi 'khrugs pa was present, and the Thal 'gyur, king of tantras, was taught." [...]



**International Community News** 



**Merigar West** Arcidosso 58031 **GR** Italy

phone: 39 0564 966837 fax: 39 0564 968110

merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it www.dzogchen.it

# Calendar of Events 2010

### January January 2-3

2nd weekend of Dance of the Song of the Vajra With Rita Renzi

#### January 4-6

Course of Yantra Yoga 4th Series With Tiziana Gottardi, supervised by Laura Evangelisti

January 10, 11 am Kumar Kumari for children With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi

January 13 SMS Base Level study and practice With Fabio M. Risolo

January 15-17 Course of Yantra Yoga 1st and 2nd With Fabiana Esca, supervised by Laura Evangelisti

January 16-18 Yeshi Silvano Namkhai **Teaching retreat – Introduction** to Atiyoga

January 30-31 SMS Base Level study and practice With C. Albini and F.M. Risolo

January 31, 11 am Kumar Kumari for children With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi



Yeshi Silvano Namkhai will be holding three retreats of Dzogchen teachings at Merigar West from January to April 2010

#### Yeshi Silvano Namkhai

"Introduction to the state of Ati" January 16th to 18th

"The Base (Essence, Nature and Energy) and Contemplation" February 19th to 21st

"Narag Ton Trug" April 1st to 6th

#### February February 6-7 3rd weekend of Dance of the Song of the Vajra

February 12-24 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Retreat of Dzogchen Teachings and

Webcast from Tashigar Sur

With Rita Renzi

February 14, 11 am Kumar Kumari for children With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi

February 13-14 Dance of the 6 Spaces combined with 6 Lokas practice With Rita Renzi

February 14 LOSAR – TIBETAN NEW YEAR 6 am – Mandarava practice

February 15 Explanation of Sang and Serkyem practice With Aldo Oneto

#### February 16

Sang and Serkyem practice Hanging the prayer flags on the 3rd day of the new years

February 17 SMS Base Level study and practice With Fabio M. Risolo

February 19-21 Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Retreat on the Base (Essence, Nature, **Energy) and Contemplation** 

February 21 Kumar Kumari for Children

February 27-28 Weekend of Yantra Yoga With Tiziana Gottardi

February 27 SMS Base Level study and practice and Explanation of the Dzogchen Empowerment of Garab Dorje With Costantino Albini

February 28, 5 am Anniversary of Garab Dorje Webcast of Worldwide Guruyoga transmission

#### March

March 6-7 4th weekend of Dance of the Song of the Vajra With Rita Renzi

March 8-12 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu **Dzogchen Teaching Retreat** Webcast from Tashigar Norte

Worldwide Day of Vajra Dance With Rita Renzi

March 13-14 Explanation of the Tibetan calendar With Rita Leti

March 14, 11 am Kumar Kumari for children With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi

March 20-21 SMS Level One explanation and practice With Elio Guarisco

March 21, 11 am Kumar Kumari for children With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi

March 27-28 SMS Level One explanation and practice With Elio Guarisco

March 28 Psychosomatic relaxation workshop With Gino Vitiello

March 31 SMS Base Level With Fabio M. Risolo

#### April April 1-6 Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Narag Ton Trug Teaching Retreat

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April 7 SMS Base Level With Fabio M. Risolo

April 10-11 Yantra Yoga Beginners course With an authorized instructor

April 11, 11 am Kumar Kumari for children With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi

April 14 SMS Base Level With Fabio M. Risolo

April 15-19 Chod retreat with explanations and practice With Costantino Albini

April 17-18 Om A Hum Dance Course for children With Rita Renzi

April 24-25 5th weekend of Dance of the Song of the Vajra With Rita Renzi

April 30-May 2 Mandarava Retreat explanation and practice With Nina Robinson

# Merigar West Update

fter a busy summer/autumn period during which the Gar hosted three important retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as well as a variety of Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, Santi Maha Sangha and Teacher Training courses, the pace of life at Merigar West has calmed a little, giving space to the new Gakyil to develop and consolidate some of the projects that have been in the pipeline for some time or are in the phase of being defined.

#### Project development

One of these projects is for the Museum of Tibetan Culture, which is being developed by the Shang Shung Institute in collaboration with Merigar. Most probably the building that will house the Museum has been located in the nearby village of Arcidosso, just below the Aldobrandescan Castle. Rinpoche has already prepared a number of his own personal objects to be donated to and put on exhibit at the Museum and also gave a generous donation this summer to help realize the project.

Another major project in the process of development and awaiting planning permission is the new Solar Mandala project. It envisions the creation of a Solar Mandala that will be closed as well as two Universal Mandalas that will be 'open', or without protective housing. The project also plans to include a new dormitory with several separate rooms, a large kitchen and refectory which should, in the future, take the place of the current kitchen and refectory at Serkhang (the Golden House). As mentioned in the last issue of The Mirror, the complex will be built on the hill behind the stands that are used in the summer for retreat enrollment. The project has received initial approval from the local authorities but still has a long road to travel before being approved

by the provincial and then the regional authorities. If all goes well, we hope to start construction work in the spring. Of course, the creation of the new Solar Mandala in the future will free the area at the Capannone currently used as a Mandala Hall and will permit the Shang Shung Institute to move all their offices

#### Communication

Thanks to the work of Luigi Ottaviani at the Shang Shung Institute, the webcast system for transmitting the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Yeshi Silvano Namkhai will now make video webcast available to everyone. We feel

that it is important to point out that the costs of the entire webcast system are paid for by Merigar West and are considerable. We hope in the future that the other Gars will be able to share the costs of this important service with us and will shortly be publishing more details about this.

The project for the new website is going ahead and we expect to have the final version completed before the end of the year. We are planning to create a space for the Lings linked to Merigar to be able to publish information and reports about events and programmes of activities at their centres.

>> continued on the following page

### 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.

>> continued from previous page

The new Gakyil is also working to improve communication with local practitioners and has set up a system of communicating urgent or last minute activities by text messaging. In addition, members of the Gakyil are now available before the ganapujas to explain about ongoing projects and answer questions from practitioners. As last year, the Merigar gakyil will continue to offer a free online subscription to The Mirror to all members in order to facilitate communication within the Community.

#### The Gonpa

At the moment work is going on at the Gonpa to build and decorate a series of Tibetan style benches in wood to provide seating around the perimeter of the building. Migmar and Mateuz have finished building the benches and Migmar is working with a small team to decorate them in Tibetan style, with colourful flowers and borders. In addition, restoration work will soon start on repairing some of the original painted figures on the beams above the windows, which have been affected by the passage of time and changes in temperature. There are plans to carry this detailed and meticulous work during the winter.



Migmar painting the new benches.

Photo: L. Graf

This winter we have planned three important retreats with Yeshi Silvano Namkhai (see announcement on previous page) as well as several courses of Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga, regular weekly meetings for study of the Santi Maha Sangha base and first levels with Fabio Risolo and Costantino Albini as well as in depth courses with Elio Guarisco.

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# Merigar West Membership

Dear Dzogchen Community Members

uring these last years there has been a considerable progress in the Community, thanks to Rinpoche's inexhaustible energy and to everybody's commitment, generous offerings and voluntary work. Merigar West has blossomed and become bigger and even more beautiful. The Gonpa has been enlarged, the roof has been repaired and it has been provided with Tibetan style temple furnishings. During these last few years, thanks to the webcast, it has become easier to follow Rinpoche's retreats even when he is away.

The Dzogchen teachings are spreading everywhere also thanks to the tireless efforts of Yeshi Silvano Namkhai who has started teaching here at Merigar and around the world. Much has been done but still much remains to be done, many new and important projects:

on the hill above the Gonpa three new dance mandalas will be constructed a new dormitory, a meeting hall, with a new kitchen and dining room. In the town of Arcidosso, near the castle, there will be a permanent museum space dedicated to Tibetan culture, a form of collaboration between Merigar and the Shang Shung Institute. We have also begun the organization for the celebration of the 30th anniversary of Merigar, which will take place in the year 2011. Last summer, Rinpoche, as always, worked very hard to prepare various lotteries and auctions that, thanks to the

generosity and participation of many practitioners, gave important results. Rinpoche has personally offered substantial funds to the various projects to which we can all contribute according to our desires and possibilities.

To optimize the management of the Gar we are analysing all the expenses of Merigar in order to understand where and how to save money, taking into consideration any alternative ways we could utilize which are more cost effective as well as respectful of the environment.

Keeping ever present our deepest gratitude to the Master, now that we are near the end of the year, we would like to remind everyone that the best way to confirm our commitment to the preservation and development of the Teachings and the Community is to renew our membership.

This year, to meet everybody's demands and needs, besides online payment, we are also offering the possibility to spread payment over the year. The Merigar Gakyil would like to ask everybody for their collaboration, advice, proposals and karma yoga. Constructive criticism is also welcome.

Membership fees for 2010 will remain unchanged and, as an additional bonus, this year ordinary and reduced members will be entitled to receive "The Mirror" online for free. "The Mirror" is the official in-house publication of the Dzogchen Community.

In 2010, **The Video Journal** will become a fully web based video on demand service called **The Direct Journal**. **The** 

Direct Journal will continue to allow us to follow all the events related to Rinpoche's journeys, with the additional advantage of quicker updates and the possibility of enjoying The Journal in an easier and more immediate way. The Direct Journal will continue to be enriched with historic video documents belonging to the Shang Shung Institute Archive. For those without a DSL internet connection or who prefer a more classical delivery system, The **Direct Journal** will also be available as a collection of videos, that will be sent to registered members' homes twice a year. The price of the annual subscription will remain the same as The Video Journal, 50 Euro.

Finally, we remind all members who have regularly renewed their membership to request their password in order to have access to all closed web-casts.

Meritorious Membership, 1500 euros, gives 100% discount on all Retreats and courses in Europe\*, a free copy of new publications by Shang Shung Editions for the current year, a free subscription to The Mirror (paper and online) and the Direct Journal (twice a year), free use of the retreats cabins and a special gift.

Sustaining membership, 500 euros, gives 80% discount on all Retreats and courses\* in Europe, a free subscription (paper and online) to The Mirror and a 50% discount on the Direct Journal (twice a year). It also gives free use of the retreat cabins at Merigar for personal retreats.

**Ordinary membership,** 129 euros, gives 20% discount on Retreats and courses\*, and a free subscription to The Mirror online.

Reduced membership, 50 euros, is for members of the Community who have economic difficulties. This type of membership gives 50 % discount on Retreats and courses\*, and a free subscription to The Mirror online.

(\*) With the exception of courses

organised by the Shang Shung Institute, Santi Maha Sangha Exams and Trainings, Yantra Yoga and Dance of the Vajra Teacher Trainings. In 2010 new ordinary and 're-

In 2010 new ordinary and 'reduced' members will be able to deduct the cost of their membership at the time of registering for their first Retreat of the year.

**New Sustaining members for 2010** will have a Retreat of their choice for the current year.

For the wellbeing of the Sangha The Gakyil of Merigar West

#### To Apply for Membership:

At Merigar: contact the office (Anna De Sole)

At the Lings and in the cities: contact the Yellow Gakyil or the person in charge

#### To Renew Membership:

By bank transfer Banca Etruria, Castel del Piano GR branch, Italy Account no. 1718 ABI 05390 CAB 72190 IBAN code IT68 Y053 9072 1900 0000 0001 718

SWIFT/BIC code ARBAIT33126
By postal account
With a deposit or money order to

postal account 10445583, in the name of: Comunità Dzogchen – Località
Merigar – I GR 58031 Arcidosso – Italy
By paypal or credit card

Our e-mail address for payment is: paypal@dzogchencommunity.net Località Merigar – I GR 58031 Arcidosso – Italy

For further information contact The office (Anna De Sole): 39 0564 966837

ag o504 900837
merigaroffice@tiscali.it
Administration (Pia Bramezza):
39 0564 966322
piabram@tiscali.it

#### Austria

The Dzogchen Community Austria Regions is pleased to invite you to Yeselling to participate in the retreat

#### The Vision of Clear Light

A pure vision of Mingyur Namkhai Dorje on the key point of the Dzogchen practice in the words of Patrul Rinpoche Dzogchen Retreat led by Elio Guarisco

Fri. 19th—Sun. 21st of February 2010

This teaching, committed to writing by Paltrul Rinpoche (1808-1887), is a pure vision of the renowned master Mingyur Namkhai Dorje, in which his master Jigme Gyalwai Nyugu with few words leaves him a sort of spiritual testament pointing out the key point of the Dzogchen practice with essential instructions on Tregchö of Dzogchen Upadesha.

In a vision of clear light Mingyur Namkhai Dorje received this teaching in the form of a testament from his teacher, Jigme Gyalwai Nyugu, one of the foremost disciples of Jigme Lingpa. Gyalwai Nyugu was a wonderful master embodiment of the selfless compassion of Avalokiteshvara. No pretentious behavior was ever witnessed on his part in any circumstance. He displayed utter simplicity, benevolence, service and an incomparable yogic asceticism imbued with a total disregard for any difficulty in pursing the spiritual path. That what made arise in his mind the total realization of the primordial state, and made his activities blossom to influence in a lasting way to a great extent the transmission of the Dzogchen Teaching.

Mingyur Namkhai Dorje, the 4th Dzogchen Rinpoche, devoted his entire life in practicing and expounding the Dzogchen teachings. He was famed all over Tibet for having realized the great perfection and, for his clairvoyance. His activity continually manifested from his altruistic heart and steadfast armor of patience and non bias toward all beings. Never straying from the luminous state of his own mind, his actions were the expression a state of contemplation that knows no boundaries between meditation and non meditation. Among his other activities, with Gyalse Shenpen Taye he founded the famous Sri Singh college of Kathog Monastery.

A student of both Gyawai Nyugu, whom he served for many years, and of Mingyur Namkhai Dorje, Paltrul Rinpoche is famous, above all, for having lived an unconventional life of total detachment from worldly glamour, in complete accordance with the teaching, a life exemplified by his compassion, humility, humor, and direct way of communicating the Teaching. It is said that, at his time, there was no renowned master of eastern Tibet that somehow did not establish a spiritual relation with him, among them some of the most famous were Ju Mipham and Adzom Drugpa.

This invaluable teaching is for those who have received already a direct introduction into the Dzogchen state and

>> continued on the following page



SMS Level 1 training at Merigar West with Igor Berkhin Photo: L. Granger

>> Austria continued from previous page are sincerely interested in applying the Dzogchen method for discovering their own innate enlightenment.

Elio Guarisco is a long time student of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, authorized teacher of Santi Maha Sangha, and one of the main translators from Tibetan for the Ka-ter Translation Project. It will be the second time that Elio leads a retreat in Yeselling.

Costs: 190 € with the usual discount for members of the Dzogchen Community. You can get an "early-bird rate" if you register until the 1st of February 2010:

Ordinary members: 114€, afterwards 152€; reduced members: 71€, afterwards 95€; sustaining members: 28€, afterwards 38€

Please book your accommodation in one of the nearby guest-houses.

It would be a pleasure for us to welcome you in Yeselling and to follow this wonderful retreat together with you!

Very best wishes to everybody and hope to see you soon in Yeselling.

Dzogchen Community Austria Regions Gschmaier 104, 8265 Gr. Steinbach Tel.: +43 676 3221365 Fax: +43 3386 83218 E-Mail: yeselling@speed.at Website: www.yeselling.at Blog: http://yeselling.blogspot.com/ Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/ Grosssteinbach-Austria/Yeselling/197 258588168

#### Denmark

Dzogchen Community Denmark has a new homepage with a new address: www.dzogchencommunity.dk

### France

#### **New Ling**

We are happy to announce the birth of a new Ling in Provence (South East France). Its name is "Paldzomling": "it possesses glory."

You are welcome to visit our place hosting a Solar Mandala during this coming Metal Tiger year!

For the fresh new Gakyil, Michel Bricaire, director michelbricaire@gmail.com

Address of Paldzomling: Fo4110 Reillanne (1 hour away from Aix en Provence or Avignon)

## Germany

Upcoming Courses 2010

Beginners Course of Yantra Yoga
with Saadet Arslan
January 5-7, Dargyäling Cologne
Info and Registration: Christian Pogoda
Tel. +49 208/376 29 10
christian.pogoda@dzogchen.de

Long Life Practice of Mandarava with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants February 12–23, Höfen Info and Registration: Christian Pogoda Tel. +49 208/376 29 10 christian.pogoda@dzogchen.de

Santi Maha Sangha I with Jakob Winkler February 19–21, Dargyäling Cologne Info and Registration: Jil Self Tel. +49 221-421 09 11 jil.self@dzogchen.de

Tibetan Language for Beginners I with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants
February 27–28, Dargyäling Cologne
Info and Registration: Jil Self
Tel. +49 221-421 09 11
jil.self@dzogchen.de

Beginners Course of Yantra Yoga with Elke Glander March 5-7, Munich Info and Registration: Christian Pogoda Tel. +49 208/376 29 10 christian.pogoda@dzogchen.de

Tibetan Language for Beginners II with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants March 13–14, Dargyäling Cologne Info and Registration: Jil Self Tel. +49 221-421 09 11 jil.self@dzogchen.de Santi Maha Sangha I
with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants
March 19–21, Höfen
Info and Registration: Jil Self
Tel. +49 221-421 09 11
jil.self@dzogchen.de
Beginners Course Vajra-Dance with
the Vajra-Song Part II
with Karin Heinemann
April 2–7, Dargyäling Cologne
Info and Registration: Evelyne Kleinmayer
Tel.: +49 170/432 11 70
evelyn.kleinmayer@dzogchen.de

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Santi Maha Sangha Base with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants May 22–23, Berlin Info and Registration: Jil Self Tel. +49 221-421 09 11 jil.self@dzogchen.de

Jnana-Dakini Practice and Vajra-Dance

June 4–9, Höfen with Karin Heinemann Info and Registration: Evelyne Kleinmayer Tel.: +49 170/4321170 evelyn.kleinmayer@dzogchen.de

25 Thigles of Samanthabadra Practice with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants October 8–10, Höfen Info and Registration: Christian Pogoda Tel. +49 208/376 29 10 christian.pogoda@dzogchen.de

Santi Maha Sangha Base with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants November 12–14, Höfen Info and Registration: Jil Self Tel. +49 221-421 09 11 jil.self@dzogchen.de

### **Netherlands**

We are pleased to announce that a **Dutch translation** of Rinpoche's Dzogchen Teachings was published by leading Dutch Buddhist publisher Asoka in arrangement with the Shang Shung Institute. We have taken great care to produce a book that would both be a close rendering of the Snow Lion original and appeal to a wide audience in terms of its aesthetic qualities. For further information and web orders visit: www.asoka.nl/page/boeken/sub/detail/id/1957.

Pieter Kiewiet de Jonge

Photo: G. Giromella



Italy



New Gakyil of Naples.



Yantra Yoga with Gino Vitiello in Naples.



Improvers' course of Dance of the Vajra with Adriana Dal Borgo in Venice. Photo: G. Giromella



Mandarava retreat with Nina Robinson at the Centro S. Alvise in Venice.



Yantra Yoga Second Series December 12–13 with Marco Baseggio and Laura Evangelisti.
Photo: S. Raga



# MerigarEast



Merigar East Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen 23 August 907005 Constanta

Romania

phone: 0040 746 26 08 61 office@dzogchen.ro wwww.dzogchen.ro

## Merigar East Membership

he Gakyil of Merigar East would like to inform you about activities, plans and considerations for the year 2010 at Merigar East.

As you probably know, task number one is to build the Gonpa on our land with mandalas, stupas, roads and gardens in the shape of the Longsal symbol, according to the vision of Yeshi Namkhai. In 2009 the Gakyil managed to get all necessary permission to start construction work and now we are just actively waiting for the signature of the President of the county council in Costanta without which we cannot start the actual work. The roads in the shape of Longsal have been built and we have also planned the project for the land.

The wooden barn on the Land has been rebuilt (kitchen, toilet, shower, gonpino) and insulated and is serving as a home for the Geko couple. The fence all around the land has also been built. We have started the project of the gardens, camping and composting toilets on the basis of permaculture, as we are trying to build a self-sustaining Gar.

In February 2010 a course of the Dance of Six Spaces of Samantabhadra will be organized in Oradea.

In March 2010 we would like to participate in the Body, Mind and Spirit Festival in Bucharest together with Shang Shung Institute, the Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance presentation.

In May 2010 we are trying to organize some event with the Shang Shung Institute in Bulgaria (Merigar East is just few km from the border with Bulgaria) and in June 2010 The Dance of the 6 Spaces of Samanthabadra in Vama Vece.

Merigar East will be very happy to host the Teachers Training of 1st level of Vajra Dance from July 12th – 18th.

The teaching retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at ME will be July 20th -25th.

From 26th-29th July there will be the Exams of the 1st level of SMS followed by Teachings of the 2nd level of SMS from July 30th to August 10th.

The ME Gakyil is looking for experienced people ready to take part in the responsibility for organizing these

The idea of having one Merigar suggests the idea of also having one budget and one membership policy for both Gars. There are the same membership fees, members can attend retreats and courses according to their preferences and the same discounts apply at both Gars. Each Gar is legally a separate non-profit organization with its own members, payments, cash-flow, book-keeping and for this administrative reason European countries are divided into two groups.

Countries situated in the Western part of Europe pay their membership fees to Merigar in Italy: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Countries located in the Eastern part of Europe and near ME, pay their membership fees to Merigar in Romania: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey.

Membership fees for 2010 will remain unchanged and, as an additional bonus, this year ordinary and reduced members will be entitled to receive "The Mirror" online for free. "The Mirror" is the official in-house publication of the Dzogchen Community.

Finally, we remind all members who have regularly renewed their membership to request their password in order to have access to all closed web-casts.

In 2010, The Video Journal will become a fully web based video on demand service called The Direct Journal. The Direct Journal will continue to allow us to follow all the events related to Rinpoche's journeys, with the additional advantage of quicker updates and the possibility of enjoying The Journal in an easier and more immediate way. The Direct Journal will continue to be enriched with historic video documents belonging to the Shang Shung Institute Archive. For those without a DSL internet connection or who prefer a more classical delivery system, The **Direct Journal** will also be available as a collection of videos, that will be sent to registered members' homes twice a year. The price of the annual subscription will remain the same as The Video Journal, 50 Euro.

Meritorious Membership, 1500 euros, gives 100 % discount on all Retreats and courses in Europe\*, a free copy of new publications by Shang Shung Editions for the current year, a free subscription to The Mirror (paper and online) and the Direct Journal (twice a year), free use of the retreats cabins and a special gift.

Sustaining membership, 500 euros, gives 80 % discount on all Retreats and courses\* in Europe, a free subscription (paper and online) to The Mirror and a 50 % discount on the Direct Journal (twice a year). It also gives free use of the retreat cabins at Merigar for personal retreats.

**Ordinary membership,** 129 euros, gives 20% discount on Retreats and

courses\*, and a free subscription to The Mirror online.

Reduced membership, 50 euros, is for members of the Community who have economic difficulties. This type of membership gives 50% discount on Retreats and courses\*, and a free subscription to The Mirror online.

In 2010 new ordinary and 'reduced' members will be able to deduct the cost of their membership at the time of registering for their first Retreat of the year.

New Sustaining members for 2010 will have a Retreat of their choice for the current year free.

(\*) With the exception of courses organised by the Shang Shung Institute, Santi Maha Sangha Exams and Trainings, Yantra Yoga and Dance of the Vajra Teacher Trainings.

We kindly ask you to send membership fees for the year 2010 to Merigar East by the end of January, using our bank accounts:

in EURO
UniCredit Tiriac Bank SA
30, Constantei Str., bl. H1a
RO-905500, Mangalia, Romania
Swift Cod: BACXROBU
Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea
Dzog-chen
IBAN Cod:

RO50BACX0000000267513001

in LEI
UniCredit Tiriac Bank SA
30, Constantei Str., bl. H1a
RO-905500, Mangalia, Romania
Swift Cod: BACXROBU
Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea
Dzog-chen

IBAN Cod: RO77BACX0000000267513000

For general information, please contact office@dzogchen.ro

For questions regarding courses and activities organized by the Blue Gakyil, please contact blue(adzogchen.ro)
Regarding Karma Yoga or any kind of help for the Gar, please contact red(adzogchen.ro)
For any question regarding membership, please contact

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Warm greetings to you all the Gakyil of Merigar East www.dzogchen.ro

yellow@dzogchen.ro

# New Yellow Gakyil needed

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Dear Vajra Family, Merigar East Gakyil is seriously searching for a Yellow Gakyil member who would like to take on the responsibility of membership issues.

Working in the Gakyil is a great experience for you and your practice.

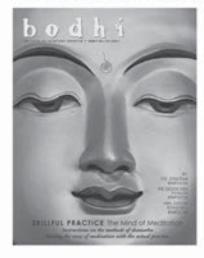
It is a perfect occasion to discover more about yourself and to work directly with the transmission of our Master. Sometimes you might even feel that you are doing something useful for others. Mostly this task can be done via the internet from your home or wherever you are in the world. The applicant needs skills such as conversational English and database handling (Excel) and possibility to take part in the Gakyil Meetings in Merigar East once every one or two month.

We are a good group of people from all over Europe and we need your help right now. If you have time and feel like taking this amazing, but serious responsibility on your shoulders, please do not hesitate to contact our Yellow Gakvil:

yellow@dzogchen.ro

bodhi

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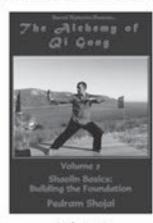
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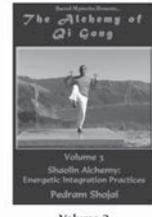
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## First trees planted at Merigar East

#### Fijalka Turzikova

nce again from different parts of the Europe the Gakyil members came to meet at this amazing place in Romania called Merigar East. This time we brought Saviana Parodi with us, well known in the Community as a permaculture instructor, who has been helping at Tashigar South and North as well as at Merigar West.

Our Land is a piece of more or less flat ground between the fields and we are at the starting point, an important moment which has a lot of potentiality. Since September 2009 there has been a fence around the land, which was

sponsored by our Master. Thanks to the fence we are now able to start planting trees and other plants which was impossible before because anything that was left outside without a guard was immediately stolen.

Now we have a lot of issues to work on to create beautiful gardens with evergreen trees to be used as windbreakers, fruit trees, vines, a vegetable garden, flower beds and a camping area that will be full of trees in the future giving people much appreciated shade in the summer.

Saviana explained about the principles based on the most efficient use of incoming energy into the system. In a few days we managed to start planting trees and bushes to create a windbreaking barrier. We designed and prepared the ground for a vegetable and herbal garden. We collected fallen



leaves and seaweed for mulching and providing minerals for the earth.

Saviana listened to the ideas and experiences of the Geko and the Gakyil, then she presented the long term project for Merigar East. Due to post communism conditions in Romania and the current situation of the state,

unfortunately we still haven't managed to complete the last step in our quest to get permission for the construction of the Gonpa. However, before the summer retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, we are planning to construct a camping site with an outdoor kitchen, showers, composting toilets, gardens with swales (which help the plants to manage the water) and more.

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In spring 2010 together with Saviana, we are planning to organize two weeks of karma yoga workshops at Merigar East. So all of you who are interested in the development of the youngest Gar and want to learn something about permaculture, please save some of your time and stay in touch!

More information - blue@dzogchen.ro

# Yeshi Silvano Namkhai in Czech Republic and in **Phendeling**

Pavel Spanily, Tereza Starkova

even years after Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's visit to Prague, the Czech Community was very happy to have the precious possibility to welcome Yeshi Silvano Namkhai. Yeshi Namkhai spent eight days in November in the Czech Republic and participated in various programs. At the beginning of his visit he held a public talk in the historic center of Prague, which was attended by around 200 participants. The next day he moved to Cesky Krumlov, where a threeday teaching retreat on the Four Contemplations in the Dzogchen Semde was organized. For many participants it was their first meeting with Yeshi Namkhai and the feedback from the retreat was very positive. Most of the people appreciated it as it was very help-



Yeshi Namkhai and participants at Pendeling.

ful for a better understanding of the teaching.

The place for the retreat was chosen not only because it is a very beautiful historic UNESCO town but more for its proximity to the newly growing Czech Community center, Phendeling. Yeshi Namkhai had chance to see the Ling with its freshly covered roof, which was the key part of the reconstruction. Two buses were organized for practitioners so 120 participants from the retreat came with him to see the place and to do Sang and Serkyem there (followed by small picnic). This visit to the Ling in the middle of the Blansky forest natural reserve was a nice part of a very interesting retreat.

Yeshi Namkhai spent the last two days in Prague again, where he also had a meeting with YPO representatives (global network

Photo: R. Lencova

connecting business leaders) interested in topics such as whether business life is compatible with the teaching and if it could be useful for them in their professional life. He also gave an interesting

interview, which was published

in the Personal management section of the Czech national newspaper "Lidove noviny".

The collective dinner with community members and Black Light Theatre Show on the last evening was nice conclusion to an extraordinary visit from our special guest. We hope it is not the last time that Yeshi Namkhai comes to the Czech Republic to teach us and spend his precious time with us.

### Estonia

Upcoming

Yantra Yoga Course on the third and fourth series of Yantras with **Pranayamas** 

led by Maaja Zelmin with supervision by Laura Evangelisti Schedule:

20 Jan 18:00-20:30

21 Jan 18:00-20:30 22 Jan 18:00-20:00

23 Jan 10:00-13:00 and 15:00-17:30

24 Jan 10:00-13:00 Place: Kalamaja's Secondary School

Vabriku street 18, Tallinn, Estonia Cost: 70 €

Additional information: phone: +372 534 90556 Maaja email: blue@dzogchen.pri.ee Pille, Gakyil of DC of Estonia

### Hungary

The Hungarian Community is very happy to announce three forthcoming retreats in the first quarter of the next year! We share them with you now, in order to calculate them into your schedule, although not all details have been defined.

### Yantra Yoga 2nd level

supervision with Zsolt Somogyvári Supervisor: Laura Evangelisti 3–7 February, 2010 Venue: Budapest, Gate of the Dharma **Buddhist College** 1098, Budapest, Borzsöny utca 11. www.tkbf.hu/foiskola/elerhetosegek Program: 3-4th group with their pranayamas with correction from the 9 breathing till the 2nd group, and the 5th gr., if we have time Schedule: 3rd, 4th, 5th: 5-8 pm. 6th: 9.30-12.30 am and 3.30-5.30 pm 7th: 9.30-12.30 am and 3.30-5.30 pm & a closing ganapuja

Requirement: Practical (not theoretical J) knowledge up to the 2nd group The course will be in English (with Hungarian translation).

#### SMS 1st level study and practice

with Elio Guarisco 11-15 February, 2010 Venue: Budapest, Gate of the Dharma **Buddhist College** 1098, Budapest, Borzsöny utca 11. www.tkbf.hu/foiskola/elerhetosegek Schedule: 11th, 12th, 15th: one evening session; 13th-14th: 2 sessions daily Requirement: Base Level exam has been

#### Yeshi Silvano Namkhai **Restricted retreat**

3-11 March Budapest No other details are fixed yet. More info will be published as soon as they are fixed. Contact: info.dzogchen@gmail.com

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### Poland

Polish Gakyil is glad to announce, that we have still available two retreat houses, and that the costs for winter season are lower:

Longde House 3 euro / day ONLY!!! Dakini's House 4 euro / day ONLY!!! During wintertime a running water is available only in the main house. Paldenling is Polish beautiful ling situated south of Poland, in middle-height mountain area, with breathtaking views and wild nature.

Everybody, who has done a practice there, knows the power of this place...

In springtime there will be third retreat house - dark retreat cabin!

For further details about conditions

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and available booking times please contact our geko: paldenling@dzogczen.pl You can also visit our site www.dzogczen.pl see you in Paldenling!



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### Romania

Yantra Yoga beginners course in **Bucharest with Tiziana Gottardi** by Greg Ladra

■hanks to Irene and George and their perfect 75 m2 fully equipped hall in the center of the city of Bucharest with the view of Casa Poporului (The People's House - now Palace of the Parliament), for the 10 participants December 4-6 was a very supple weekend. After Tiziana's explanations, demonstrations and supervision all the participants were able to learn how to breathe correctly and to understand the deep meaning of breathing for our condition and daily life. Although it seems to be easy, Yantra Yoga movements really caused sweating. The group of interested people - for the majority



Participants at the Yantra Yoga course in Bucharest with Tiziana.

that course was the first contact with the Teachings – worked hard and asked many questions: not only regarding the techniques, but also about seriously fol-

lowing the practice. It is a good sign for Merigar East. Spreading information in a practical way bears fruit and hopefully we will see some new faces next

Photo: G. Ladra

The Romanian Parliament as seen from the retreat place.

Photo: G. Ladra

summer at the Gar during Rinpoche's

My final impression after the course, while I was looking through the window towards the huge and monumental building of Parliament was... it looks like the Potala!

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#### The Six Spaces of Samantabhadra with Rita Renzi

In Constanta, Romania, November 6–11 By Greg Ladra

■irst people should know that we are here, then they will come and ask, get interested in and finally come to listen to the teachings and practice". The wishes and guidelines of Rinpoche clearly show that in a place like Merigar East, where there are only two practitioners living on the spot, the most important and the very first step towards developing, is to give and spread information all around about who we are and what we do. However spreading information doesn't

mean only to talk or write about what we do - there is a more effective way of showing and experiencing things, especially important for the newcomers, who haven't met Rinpoche or Dzogchen teachings yet.

Accordingly, at the beginning of November, the Gakyil of Merigar East organized a course of Vajra Dance (the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra) with Rita Renzi, in Constanta, the second biggest city in Romania, situated only 35 km from the Gar. The beauty and esthetics of the Vajra Dance Mandala, the harmony of the movements, the balanced sounds of the music, the perfect introduction and explanation of Rita made the Dance, the principles of the Dzogchen teachings and aim of the

Dzogchen Community understandable for the participants. Although the reason for taking part in the Vajra Dance course was different for each participant, the movements on the Mandala brought everything to the same point: in Dzogchen teachings we work with different circumstances but the goal is

People have a connection with the teachings in many different ways and places and certainly Constanta is not an exception. We hope one day more and more people will recognize that the Dzogchen teachings are very very close: 35 km from the city, in the middle of the fields, on the coast of the Black Sea. The Vajra Dance course is just an indica-

# Russia Activities of the Russian-speaking Community in autumn 2009

n the Russian-speaking territory, which includes Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Latvia, we have always had many activities - courses and retreats on Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance.

Here we want to tell you about the courses held during the autumn period

This time we had important events in Russia: a public talk and retreat on Narag Tontrug Practice with Yeshi Silvano Namkhai in St. Petersburg, and retreats on Mandarava practice with Nina Robinson in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Also this time Fabio Andrico gave many different courses in our territory that increased people's interest in Yantra Yoga. In St. Petersburg he gave a harmonious breathing course. Then in Kunpenling Fabio led a retreat on the Seven lotuses, and in Moscow he did the supervision for candidates Svetlana Suprun (Angarsk) and Natasha Larina (Moscow).

Another important event was the presentation of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance during the Moscow Festival of Fitness. This event was held with the collaboration of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Yeshi Silvano Namkhai, Fabio Andrico, local teachers of Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga, and the local Gakyil. This demonstration was held over two

days at the Manezh complex near the Kremlin. At the beginning teacher Marina Sukhanova and experienced practitioners showed the movements, and then Yeshi Namkhai gave an explanation of the meaning. And then visitors could try to feel the taste of this special Tibetan yoga of movement. Then the demonstration of Vajra Dance began. Six pamo and six pawo, all dressed in special costumes, moved harmoniously, showing people the Dance of the Six Spaces.

The results were articles in the media, new useful contacts and an agreement about permanent Yantra yoga courses at a popular Moscow fit-

Teachers of Yantra Yoga Eugene Rud and Victor Krachkovskii gave courses in several cities of Russia and Ukraine such as Nizhniy Novgorod, Kazan, Uzhgorod, Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Moscow and Ufa. In December 2009 they have been invited to Astrakhan and Murmansk. In Moscow ongoing Yantra Yoga sessions and training courses are held with local instructors Marina Sukhanova and Oleg Tanakov.

In our territory we have three authorized Santi Maha Sangha teachers: Igor Berkhin, Alexander Pubants and Alexander Gomonov. This year they travelled a lot, and in autumn gave SMS retreats in the following cities: Moscow, Dnepropetrovsk and Donetsk, while this December they are planning to visit Perm, Krasnodar, Rostov, Elista, Kiev and Astrakhan. Also in September the Donetsk Dzogchen community organized a big retreat with intensive practice of SMS and Yantra Yoga in the Crimea, led by Berkhin Igor and Victor Krachkovskii.

Igor Berkhin gave some public lectures and training in presence and awareness in three cities in Ukraine, which attracted the attention of new people. One of lectures was organized at the Buddhist art exhibition of Nikolay

Vajra Dance instructors Yana Sokolova, Lyudmila Kislichenko and Oleg Novikov held retreats in Kiev, Rostovon-Don, Samara and St. Petersburg. In Moscow, Tatiana Pronicheva held an open training retreat of Vajra Dance for all comers. Starting in December there are now regular weekends of Vajra Dance sessions held in Moscow with a special version of the Dance of the Three Vajras which gives participants the opportunity to have more experiences and combine them with the state of contemplation in a Thun which lasts 1 hour and 18 minutes.

Celebrate the New Year with us and participate in the Vajra Dance retreat from December 31 to January 10, 2010 in the foothills of the Caucasus Mountains in the Krasnodar Territory (reservations: raduga.n@gmail.com).

There is also a Namkha website (www.namkha.ru) with information about the special Tibetan object, recently created Lena Hertz, where she invites everyone to learn to make a Namkha in order to harmonize their energy and that of their loved ones.

Next year in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Crimea there will be retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Also Yeshi Namkhai will come to Russia and Ukraine to give teachings: in April – to Kiev and Donetsk, May and December - to Moscow, May - to Crimea, September - to Izhevsk.

In July 2010, the 1st level Teacher Training Course of Yantra Yoga will be

held in Crimea, and in November Jim Valby will give a retreat on the Base level of Santi Maha Sangha in Kiev.

Practitioners from the Russian Speaking community are always glad to see vajra brothers and sisters from other countries, practice and collaborate together. Hope to meet you next

You can read about all our activities on our website

www.dzogchencommunity.ru Translated by Mariya Stepanyk

# Land purchased in Crimea

he Gakyil of the Russian-speaking countries is happy to announce the purchase of land in Crimea, Ukraine.

The Dzogchen Community now owns 3.4 hectares of land very close to the village of Goncharne. It is 3 hours drive from the international airport of Simferopol and 15 minutes drive to hotels and resorts at the seaside, with a public bus stop 1 km from the land.

Everybody is welcome to join Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's retreat there in June

Later you will find more information on our website

www.dzogchencommunity.ru (the English version is due to be launched in January).



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# Narag Tontrug retreat with Yeshi Namkhai in St. Petersburg

20-22 November

#### Elena Bobylskaya

n November 2009 a joyful event was held in our city – Yeshi Silvano Namkhai came for the second time. The following program was planned: a public talk, teaching on the practice of Narag Tontrug, and also a Community meeting for Gakyil elections and talks to prepare for

tersburg State University. This event aroused active interest not only among members of the Dzogchen Community and their friends, but also students of the University and people who are interested in philosophy, Buddhism, and nature of mind. The hall was overcrowded, some peo-



Photo: N. Anikeev

the retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in June 2010.

The public talk "About nature of mind" was held at a place with an amazing environment and a perfect reputation – St. Pe-

ple even had to sit on the floor, and others listened about nature of mind standing. Yeshi used simple words, clear for everyone, giving examples from our everyday life – it was quite an unusual approach!

The retreat was dedicated to practice Narag Tontrug, a teaching given in 1996 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Before Yeshi Silvano Namkhai's arrival we had never done this practice in our community, and for many of us it seemed to be very complicated. During the three days of retreat we received detailed and at the same time clear explanations of each stage. And we understood that each practice, even the most complicated, may become simple and clear if the approach of Dzogchen teaching is used. Doing this practice with Yeshi Namkhai, we gained precisely this experience.

There were also some unexpected moments. The first community meeting at which Yeshi Namkhai was present was quickly stopped by him. How could this happen? The goal of the meeting was to talk about the forthcoming retreat with Rinpoche and the Gakyil elections. Our community has 200 members, but only 30 of them came to the meeting. And the people who were preparing the retreat did not seem to be ready to collaborate... Yeshi even had to make his voice louder and slam the door! Of course, for many of us it was a shock, but this shock helped us to wake up and take an attentive look at ourselves and our actions.

The meeting that eventually took place was amazing, short and essential. We elected a new Gakyil, more than 2/3 made up of new people. Yeshi clarified for



Photo: A. Kostiuchik

us not only the technical aspects of the organization of the forth-coming retreat with Rinpoche, but also, and most importantly, showed us how any actions may become practice and methods of collaboration. We were lucky to receive Yeshi Namkhai's wisdom and hear all those instructions.

Now that Yeshi Silvano Namkhai has left, we have a task to use all his instructions in our everyday life and in collaboration with our vajra brothers and sisters. Finally let me tell you about one marvelous little story. When we were preparing the apartment for Yeshi Namkhai, one of our vajra sisters who was getting flowers for him, came with a peacock feather. She told us that she had just received it as a gift from a stranger on the street. On our streets you can find anything – advertising or political booklets – but not a peacock feather. When people such as Yeshi Silvano Namkhai come to our city, miracles begin to happen!

#### China



 $\label{thm:condition} \textbf{Vajra Dance with Tracy Ni} \ \textbf{and Wes Guo in Guangzhou China}, \ \textbf{Nov.} 6-8.$ 



Yantra Yoga in Guangzhou China with Tracy Ni, Nov.13-15.



### Vajra Dance Mandalas from China

As you may know, we are manufacturing Vajra Dance Mandalas in China, making them more available to Vajra Dance practitioners all over the globe.

The good news is that the weight of the Vajra Dance Mandala has been reduced to about 20 kilos, which means it can be carried by a single person.

The Mandala is digitally printed on Vinyl, with fresh colors.

The price ranges from 550-680 euro depending on size (small, medium, large), with about 80 euro of shipping costs (takes about 45 days), or about 200 euro shipping costs (takes about 7 days) to West Europe (such as Italy).

You can see a photo of the Vajra Dance Mandala with practitioners taken during a recent course in Guangzhou, China.

May Vajra Dance spread to all over the globe! Wesley Guo

thevoidone@hotmail.com





Namgyalgar Dzogchen Community in Australia PO Box 214 Central Tilba NSW 2546 Phone/Fax: 61 02 4473 7668

secretary@dzogchen.org.au www.dzogchen.org.au

## Namgyalgar North

Namgyalgar

and Pacific Rim

uring his visit to Australia in 2009, Rinpoche recommended that a Gar be established in northern Australia, specifically in the Glass House Mountains region of southeast Queensland. The Namgyalgar Gakyil has now launched the "Namgyalgar North" project and is seeking donations to help purchase a property for the new Gar.

The Glass House Mountains are the eroded remnants of volcanoes that have interesting shapes, some with vertical columns and cones on them, which are visible from the property.

Historically, the region was a special meeting place where Aboriginal people

once gathered and is still considered spiritually significant with many protected ceremonial sites still in existence.

The mountains are situated approximately 70km north of the city of Brisbane, and are easily accessible by car, train and bus. The Brisbane Domestic and International Airports are less than 30 minutes drive north to the mountains that is very convenient for international visitors. It is also possible to fly from Brisbane to Maroochydore on the sunshine coast and hire a car there.

The desired property is located close to the town of Beerwah in southern Queensland, Australia, and is not far from Caloundra and other coastal towns which boast sunny beaches, shops, cafes, clubs, holiday accommo-

dations, etc. The subtropical sunshine coast averages seven hours of sunshine daily and residents and visitors enjoy year round warm balmy temperatures. Summer temperatures range between 16°-34°C and in winter 10°-28°C.

This is a very exciting project for the International Dzogchen Community and it is hoped many Vajra brothers and sisters from around the world can come to visit the wonderful new Gar!

If you would like to pledge a donation for Namgyalgar North please see the Pledge Form on the Namgyalgar North page of the Namgyalgar Website at: www.dzogchen.org.au

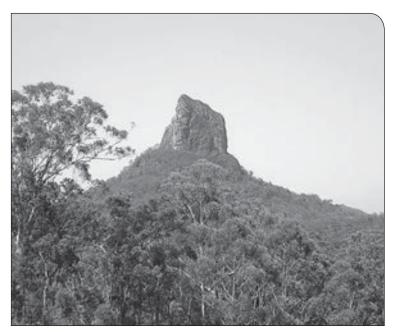


Photo: I. King-Salter

### Oiling the Hinges... It's Yantra Yoga Time!

Highlights at the Melbourne temporary Ling

Bruno Irmici

hresholds can be scary places. Despite the attempt to be discreet and respectfully silent, when any new visitor steps into Fleming Park Hall, at the first gentle pulling of the door they are suddenly welcomed by the sound of the squeaky hinges. Like alarming sentinels seems to warn: "Pilgrim, by passing this threshold you will leave behind your desire for just an empty and calm state, and you will be called to enjoy movement as well."

There is always someone inside the hall that turning the eyes to the ceiling hopes 'someone else' will finally provide the oil for those hinges.

But now, let's pass this threshold and explore the first eight months of activities of the temporary Ling in Melbourne.

As I wrote in a previous article (Mirror 97 p27) we do not have our own Ling but we are making good use of a beautiful large Hall that we hire from the local council on a regular basis all year long for many hours a week, for a quite cheap hourly rate.

We have taken the momentum generated from the recent teachings in Melbourne by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Yeshi Namkhai as the impulse for the community to move ahead, to make this necessary new evolutionary leap.

Nowadays there are available so many tools supporting the local Dzogchen communities, also with newcomers learning, from books, audiovisual, websites, web cast retreats, and qualified instructors. Somehow this makes easy to start a Ling with a rich program of activities. Everything is somehow ready, needing

only the people who are willing to activate it.

In fact In Melbourne we have started in May with an ambitious program that I believe many be perceived almost like a shocking jump ahead. We have designed the program making best use of all the hours we have been able to book the hall each week. Starting with a rich program, we aimed also to invite the community to a frequent use of the hall, so to become rapidly familiar to the new space.

Usually the program presents every week with:

- · 3 Yantra Yoga practice sessions
- · 2 sessions of Vajra Dances
- · An explanation and practice session for new people
- · A collective practice.

According to the special days of the Tibetan Calendar and with Rinpoche's schedule, we have Ganapujas and Video web cast of the retreats and Video web casts of World Wide Transmission.

Once a month, we have SMS study groups sessions, Base and First level, with SMS teacher Angie Gilbert, in which we are connected via Skype Video linked to study groups in New Zealand and soon in other locations in Australia

During these first months we had two Yantra Yoga courses and one of Vajra Dance course.

The Yantra Yoga Courses have been quite impressive, (Melbournians would say: Fantastic!) because both of them have been attended by 23/24 people and most of them were new, just two or three people were members of the community.

The morning of the first course, we already had some bookings, but with a big surprise we saw many new people entering the door of the hall. It was almost like the Yantra Yoga spaceship had landed in Melbourne. With the portal opening to the bright sunlight shining outside, the silhouettes of many long awaiting human travellers were seen ready to come on board.



Yantra Yoga with Emily Coleing at Melbourne Ling.

I remember I felt quite a sense of joy to see the response of so many new people. I felt something I can describe as a "joy of the transmission". I suppose it was simply a feeling that the Gakyil's work to establish a temporary Ling in Fleming Park was beginning to show more tangible results.

The time is ripe for a larger diffusion of Yantra Yoga since the book was published by Snow Lion, and is contributing to more interest in Yantra Yoga from the larger public. Many people are inspired from seeing Yantra Yoga presented in a systemized way for the first time. They can consult the book for support and now they are looking to learn from a qualified teacher.

During the Yantra Yoga weekend everything ran in a harmonious way, like in a balanced condition of prana. Emily's grace and confidence engaged easily with the people, and the hall appeared to be a perfect place for such a course held in this very good location. We have been quite impressed not just from the number of new people, but also by the motivation of many of them. Our new group of young university students are very enthusiastic to learn and collaborate. It reminds me of Rinpoche recently talking in Gawaling of the new generation of his students in Merigar being very dedicated and active:

"Much better than many of the old ones" (let me pause the article

for a moment, I feel the urgency to give a quick look of myself in the mirror... AAAaaaargh...)

The second Yantra Yoga course with Emily Coleing in November,

Yoga, one for the Vajra Dance as well one for Santi Maha Sangha.

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In fact we are planning for the next year to increase the number of courses, because the hall seems especially versatile for this function e.g. for the Vajra Dance Course the hall accommodated perfectly two mandala mats and so people had a precise and pleasant learning experience under the guidance of Lynne Geary.

Another good response of interest was at the last World Wide Transmission for the Anniversary of Adzom Drugpa on the November 11. Despite the web cast of the Guru Yoga practice starting in Melbourne quite late, at 11 pm, we had 23 people attending of which only six were people already of the community.

More than 10 people regularly



Worldwide Transmission at Melbourne Ling.

replicated the good outcome of the first one and again we had an encouraging attendance of 22/23 people. I will be not surprised if next year we will continue to have similar numerous attendance of new people. The Ling in Melbourne could develop as a 'leading' center for the Yantra Yoga.

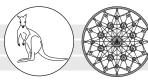
Given the interest shown in Melbourne for Yantra Yoga, Emily is now considering moving to live here to follow her students closely. If this really happens it will be a very good asset for our future program of courses because we will have 'in house' three qualified teachers, a teacher of Yantra

attend the base level Santi Maha Sangha study group with Angie Gilbert once a month. Also 4–5 are attending the First level, but other study groups are connected via Skype Video linked to New Zealand. We aim for the next year to extend the possibility to participate Via Skype to other groups in remote locations in Australia.

We are still at early stages of this new adventure, but the story of this temporary Ling has been mainly an opportunity for new people, and especially for a growing number of young people. This is good because we need the young energies to build up of a

>> continued on the following page

# Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



>> continued from previous page new generation of practitioners for the future.

From May until now we have 33 new people, with different degree of interest and participation who are finding their way in the Dzogchen Teachings and community. A growing number are already becoming community members.

Obviously the making of a Ling is an ongoing learning process. A Ling requires a new and more active way 'to be community', and we somehow have 'to build' the Ling community through participation.

In these first months the Gakyil moved at a fast pace focusing mainly to ensure the programs were actually happening, After this first necessary impact, in which somehow we have tested if we can sustain a new rhythm of activities, we will need to dedicate to the 'missing pieces'.

I am sure things will improve rapidly once the Gakyil can focus on to activate members collaboration and their richness of talents and skills. With even a small collaboration from many people, we can actually establish a Ling as a vibrant cultural place for the continuation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu teachings. I hope this could rapidly evolve into the possibility of having a Shang Shung Institute branch in Melbourne.

Meanwhile I want to thank Sam Pearson, Adam Kadmon, Miro Hodza and Jane Chandler who have been especially enthusiastic and collaborative with the Gakyil in these initial months.

So, let's go. Now it's time to oil the hinges of the Ling door.

And please keep pulling that door. Don't be scared.

You are welcome.

#### Karamea, New Zealand

# Retreat Cabin Project

www.dzogchen.org.nz/index.php/karamea

aramea is a rare coastal environment where native forest, rivers and wildlife meet the powerful Tasman Sea.

In 1987, Sean Jameson gifted 10 acres of land to the New Zealand Dzogchen Community. This land is on a high terrace that overlooks the Karamea River and the ocean.

Rinpoche indicated that we need to build one simple retreat cabin and one dual-purpose cabin that will also be used for dark retreat.

The isolated location, while being perfect for quiet retreat, requires special effort from practitioners to go there. We have a camping area for people with tents and envisage an outside location for a Vajra Dance Mandala.

You can go to this link to see a short video. www.youtube.com/watch?v=q udg4InjhPw

Rinpoche has already made a very generous donation to the project, although more funds are needed to bring the project to fruition.

To build both cabins and facilities we estimate NZ \$25,000.

Your money will be used specifically for the Karamea project when you indicate Karamea on the deposit. Please contact the Project Manager jerri.bassi@gmail.com

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#### **How to make Donations**

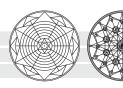
Paypal

To set up an account www.paypal.com
To Pay: jerri.bassi@gmail.com indicating Karamea Cabin in the Email to
recipient window

. Bank Transfer

Account Name: Dzogchen Community,
Account Number: 03 0187 0720787 003
Bank details: Westpac Banking Corporation, Wellington, New Zealand
The SWIFT code/BIC (bank identifier code) for Westpac New Zealand is:
WPACNZ2W

# TsegyalgarEast



DCA Tsegyalgar East

PO Box 479 Conway, MA 01341 USA Phone: 413 369 4153 Fax & Bookstore: 413 369 4473 secretary@tsegyalgar.org www.www.tsegyalgareast.org

# Calendar of Events 2010

January 30-31 'Purification' Practice Weekend with Jim Valby

February 18-24 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Dzogchen Teachings and Practice Retreat Webcast Retreat from Argentina February 27-28

(may be changed due to programming with Nina Robinson)
Zhine Practice Weekend with Jim Valby

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

March 31-April 9

Yantra Yoga, Advanced and Teacher Training with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti

TBA in April
Dzogchen Practice Retreat with Elio
Guarisco

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

For more information contact: secretary@tsegyalgar.org or 413 369 4153

We hope to see at Tsegyalgar East! Warm wishes from the Gakyil



Prana Weekend with Jim Valby at Tsegyalgar East October 31-November 1.

Photo: N. Zeitz



Beginner's and Advanced Yantra Yoga with Paula Barry at Tsegyalgar East from December 4–11, 2009.

Photo: N. Zeitz



### Passages

Married: Anna Bartenstein and Fabio Dallorto were married on December 15, 2009 in Conway Massachusetts. Congratulations to the happy couple! Photo: P. Barry Canada



 ${\bf Advanced\ Yantra\ Yoga\ in\ Toronto\ Canada\ with\ Naomi\ Zeitz\ in\ November\ 2009.}$ 

Photo: A. We

# THE MIRROR

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# **Tsegyalgar**West



Tsegyalgar West Baja California Sur, Mexico tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com

http://tsegyalgarwest.org

# Tsegyagar West Update

Los Cabos, Mexico

segyalgar West is preparing for a wonderful season of teaching and enjoyment. Casitas are rapidly being finished (doubling the number available last year), and practitioners from all over the globe are booking time for personal and group retreats. New staff has arrived, and we still have positions open for Pioneers (volunteers), Hospitality Manager, and more. Speaking both English and Spanish is helpful.

By the way, Los Cabos has remained free of both swine flu and the strife of some other areas of Mexico. The beauty of this mountain and beach region is remarkable. Visit our refurbished website with new photo gallery.

Please contact our Secretary, Angelina Ibarguen with any questions. Se habla espanol. www.tsegyalgarwest.org

#### **Programs:**

Nina Robinson and Bodhi Krause Monday Feb. 8th-Sunday Feb. 14, 2010 at the Gar.

Nina Robinson will teach "Purification of the Six Lokas". Bodhi Krause teaches "The Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra". This includes one afternoon trip to beautiful Santa Maria Beach, a cove where snorkels and kayaks can be rented.

Losar celebration Sunday Feb. 14th, 2010 at the Gar; Teaching, Yoga, Dance,

Elio Guarisco and Lynn Sutherland Monday Feb. 14-Sunday Feb. 21, 2010 at the Gar.

Elio Guarisco will teach: 1) Gomadevi practice 2) The Behavior of Equalizing all Tastes

from the Longsal 3) A simple form of Moxibustion with Tibetan medicine advice on Diet for the imbalances of the three Humors.

Lynn Sutherland will develop the Yantra Yoga she introduced in Los Cabos in December '09. This includes one afternoon trip to beautiful Santa Maria Beach, a cove where snorkels and kayaks can be rented.

Lastly, Yeshi Namkhai is returning to Tsegyalgar West in Sept 21-October 4, 2010!! Reserve your casita early.

Thank You Rinpoche, Joel Crisp, Tsegyalgar West Blue Gakyil

### USA Berkeley New Gakvil

The results of our October gakyil election, with Rinpoche's approval. Blue: Silvia Altamiranda, Leticia Recepter, Michael Whelan Red: Louise Anderson, Tana Lehr - Vice President, Logan Mclellan Yellow: Laurel Bellon - President Heather Murphree - Treasurer Rich Taylor – Secretary

# **New Portland** Oregon Website

Our community in Portland, Oregon, USA has a new website which also represents the other groups and practitioners in our state. Darren Littlejohn (Portland Gakyil - Blue) developed this

website for us with the intentions of welcoming practitioners who are new to our area, displaying the schedule for collaborative practices in person and via webcast, listing contact information for each location, sharing photos, and much more!

THE MIRROR · No.101 · November, December 2009

Please visit our site at: www.oregondzogchen.com



Dzogchen Community of San Diego California.

# **Tashigar**Norte





Tashigar North/Finca Tashigar

Prolongación de la Calle Bolivar Valle de Pedro González Isla de Margarita

Tel: 0058 0295 2580332 secretary@tashigarnorte.org www.tashigarnorte.org

# Calendar of Events 2010

**Upcoming courses** Dance of the Song of the Vajra II With Carmen Rivas, supervised by Adriana Dal Borgo January 4th-January 10th 2010 Cost: BsF. 1300 with usual discounts

### Santi Maha Sangha Base Level

With Elías Capriles January 10th-January 15th 2010 Cost: BsF. 390 with usual discounts

#### **Beginners Course on the Six** Spaces of Samantabhadra

With Elisha Koppensteiner, supervised by Adriana Dal Borgo January 12th-January 14th 2010 Cost: to be confirmed

Newly Scheduled! **Kumbhaka Course** With Fabio Andrico Mach 13th-March 17th 2010 Cost: BsF. 300 with usual discounts

#### 7th Lojong

With Grisha Mokhin April 1st-April 5th 2010 Cost: BsF. 300

How to arrive: You can find helpful information about how to arrive to Tashigar Norte at: http://margarita.wiki-site. com/index.php/Travel\_guide#Arrive \_at\_Tashigar\_Norte

Taxi Service: Carlos García Rad, (T) 0058-4165733464 picodeaguila@hotmail.com (Español / English)

#### Roberto Agreda

(T) 0058-4128401495 (Spanish-Español) (T) 0058-4266885002 (Spanish-Español) (T)0058-4141886209 Mumu7lunar@gmail.com (English-

Español-Russian)

Enrique Carlos, (T) 0058 -4248262905 enrique.carlos1@gmail.com (Español / English)

Robin Bennett, (T) 0058 -4248086566 thodrol@yahoo.co.uk (Español / English / Italian)

# New Gakyil in Costa Rica

Yellow: Gloriana Brenes (Titi) glorianabrenes@yahoo.com Red: Federico Herrero eloi\_jota@yahoo.es Blue: Michela Moraglia mikimor@hotmail.com The Ling is located in Barrio Amon en el centro de San Jose' For general info you can write us at: dzogchencostarica@gmail.com

# Tashigar<sup>sur</sup>





Tashigar South Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar Calle pública S/N

Tanti 5155 Pcia. de Córdoba Argentina

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

# Calendar of Events Jan-Feb 2010

January 29th-31st Yeshi Silvano Namkhai The Four Contemplations in Dzogehen Semde

February 8th Rinpoche's arrival to Tashigar South

February 10th-11th 1st Part Yantra Yoga Course - Level II led by Naomi Zeitz and supervised by Fabio Andrico

#### 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 A Terma teaching of Rigzin Changehub Dorje "Zhi Lam Dras" (Base Path Fruit) essential instructions and practices of Dzogehen

#### 25th-26th de February

2nd Part Yantra Yoga Course - Level II led by Naomi Zeitz and supervised by Fabio Andrico

### February 28th

Worldwide Guruyoga Transmission Anniversary of Guru Garab Dorje

#### More information:

www.wordpress.tashigar-sur.com.ar e-mail: 2010@tashigar-sur.com.ar www.tashigar-sur.com.ar e-mail: tashigarsur@gmail.com Tel: +54-03541-498-356 Fax: +54-03541-498-885

# A Weekend Retreat for 'Newcomers' at Tashigar South, **Argentina**

November 7-8, 2009

#### Ana García

n November 7th and 8th, 2000 Tashigar South organized a weekend retreat aimed at 'new people' (people interested in the teachings but that had never had the chance of attending a retreat before). People arrived early in the morning and we gathered in our small Gonpa where we all had the possibility to hear to the clear and straightforward explanations

of Sergio Oliva, who explained what Dzogchen meant and what the Dzogchen Community was. Sergio spent three hours (with a short break to have a delicious breakfast prepared by Alfredo with home-made bread impossible to resist to) giving explanations of different aspects of the Teachings that are never so easy to understand for new 'ears' and giving the chance to newcomers to ask questions to clarify their doubts. Then we stopped to have lunch and rest a while and came back at 4 p.m. when Carolina Mingolla (one of our Yantra Yoga instructors) gave explanations on the 9 purification breathings, helping attendants to the course with their body position and way of breathing to become more

>> continued on the following page

>> continued from previous page aware in their everyday life and teaching them how we usually start our tun of practice. After another break, we enjoyed together the tape recorded by our Master where He gives an explanation of Dzogchen contrasting it with Sutra and Tantra. When the film finished, we informed everyone about the summer retreats we are

organizing for next Summer with

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his

son, Yeshe Silvano Namkhai, to



celebrate the 20th Anniversary of our Gar and the opening of our new Gonpa.

The following day, as the Anniversary of Adzom Drugpa was coming and many people would have the possibility of receiving the direct introduction for the first time through the web, Sergio explained the importance of it in the context of our teaching and then gave a detailed explanation of the practice we perform on that occasion. Many ques-

tions followed. When it seemed no doubts remained, Alfredo was waiting for us with a delicious lunch to end the retreat in the best way possible.

THE MIRROR No. 101 · November, December 2009

Beautiful sunny days, time to talk about the Teachings, relaxed and joyful atmosphere, many questions, many books sold, delicious food, nice company. Isn't that what we call a great time?

Everyone said they would come back. We are waiting knowing if they will.

Photo: S. Mariani

### **Under the Trees**

Green Tara Retreat at Tashigar South

Raquel Ramponi translated by Ana García

hen I learned about a Green Tara Practice Retreat to be held at Tashigar South, it stirred something deep inside me and I contacted Ingrid Lucke, with whom I had shared a previous retreat, and immediately we booked our tickets. Thursday October 1st, the date when the retreat was supposed to start, we were already tidying up a warm and beautiful house in Tashigar Mandala, built very close to the sky, to enjoy the comfort and food supplies needed during our stay.

Friday 2nd at 9 a.m. was our first meeting. Luis, the geköe, and the secretary, Sole Mariani, were already in the hall of the main house, ready in front of the



Photo: S. Mariani

computer and the projector to play the video where Rinpoche explains and sings the practice.

The beginning was already a blessing: to see and listen to our dear Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu explaining, with the generosity that is a characteristic of him, the practice of Tara in depth with all details. And not only seeing our Master in the screen and

listening to him, but also practicing with him the correct pronunciation of every mantra and repeating it once and again until our voices felt sure of having found the exact sound.

In the afternoon, and the following two days, we went to the small Gonpa to practice. At the beginning Griselda devoted part of the time to remind us of Rinpoche's words and to think about them in a quiet dialogue. We also had the fortune that SMS Instructor, Ricky Sued, accepted the request of our coordinator and explained the Practice of Tara as the essence of lower Tantras, clearly focused from the perspective of a Dzogchen practitioner.

We were nine practitioners, some from the early years of Tashigar, like me, some others relatively new. The vision of the deep grove of the Gar coming through the windows of the little Gonpa created an atmosphere of peace and fullness. In this atmosphere the shared prayer for Beto Torres Rose, our Vajra brother who had had a terrible accident and was in hospital; also for a practitioner of faraway Prague that had written to us needing a job and for all our loved ones and for all beings.

However, not everything was practice. In our free moments we enjoyed the delicious and healthy food prepared by Alfredo and we explored Tashigar Mandala to see how the constructions of the new houses were progressing, and we followed the bricklayers' work of the gonpa, appreciating their progress.

We also did Karma Yoga everyday! The compassionate geköe chose some gardening tasks of the Master's house for us, and we also planted some flowering plants in the flowerpots adorning the Gar's entrance. All was true enjoyment, really in accordance with the beautiful presence of Green Tara.

Finally, on the last day, we went to practice outdoors, in the same place where the Master used to give his Teachings in the early retreats. There we sat on the fallen leaves, under the green trees, between patches of sunlight. And then, in that place, the melody of the practice that had grown during all those days exerted the magic of mixing with nature and awakes the potentialities lying dormant in the deepest parts of our consciousness.

# Lhundrubling, the center of the Dzogchen Community in São Paulo, Brazil

Otavio Lilla

hundrubling is the main center of the Dzogchen Community in Brazil. It is the only ling we have so far, and it's located in a very central area of São Paulo, the biggest city in the country. It is a very urban ling – on the 9th floor of an office building that is open 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. This is very convenient for the people who live in this big, crazy city, and who can only come for practices and Ganapujas in alternative hours, often after a hard day of work. Lhundrubling – "the self-perfected place", as our precious Master has called it – is a small ling, but it's also a pretty one, with a nice altar, some thankas, a small kitchen, a TV and DVD player for teachings and transmissions.

We could say the story of Lhundrubling started in 2005, during the first retreat with Rinpoche in Brazil in many years. Rinpoche had not visited Brazil since 1998, and those of us who were organizing the retreat had no previous experience with promoting this kind of event. We were just a small group of practitioners who used to meet in each other's

houses and sometimes travel abroad to attend retreats with the Master. So we were very excited when Rinpoche accepted our invitation to come to Brazil, but also a little worried. There were so many details to organize - it seemed above our capacity, especially in a big city like São Paulo. There were also very few active practitioners in Brazil at that moment, and some of them lived in other cities. However, the retreat went very well and many new people entered in contact with the transmission at that opportunity. At the last day of the retreat, Rinpoche told us: "Now maybe the next step for you is to find a fixed place for the Community here, so that interested people can get in contact with the teachings if they wish."

At the moment, it seemed an impossible mission. The Community didn't have a lot of money and the people who were active in the organization were very few, most of them also having to dedicate time to their jobs and families. However, we have been very lucky that Rinpoche decided to come to Brazil again in 2006.

So we had another retreat to organize, and more people to invite for practices and Ganapujas. But almost a whole year passed by, and we still couldn't find an affordable place for the Community in São Paulo. In any case, we continued to look for a place, and to organize our practices in each other's houses.

On a particular weekend in September 2006, we had a practice retreat of the Base of Santi Maha Sangha. The group of people present in that retreat was really very dedicated and interested. We did a lot of practices, with Semdzins, Rushens, etc. We also participated in the 24-hour Dakini Simhamukha chain that was organized by the international Community at that time, and we connected our recitation with a Ganapuja and intensive Naggon. Later we offered Sang and Serkyem and ended our retreat. As we parted, we reminded each other of all we had to do to organize the retreat, and also that Rinpoche had advised us to find a place, but that we still couldn't find anything.

Our short practice retreat finished on Sunday and exactly the next day, going to work, a practitioner saw an advertisement saying "rooms for rent" in an office building. So we called them and it was incredible – the rent was really affordable and the location was excellent and very central.

The building worked 24 hours a day, which was also very convenient. The place needed some repairs, but overall, it was an excellent find. However, we only had about 45 days until the retreat.

We found the place on Monday and by Friday we had already signed all the papers. We could find a group of people who committed to help with the rent, and a practitioner who was an architect started to think about the renovation and decoration of the place. We thought it would be impossible to have our small center ready for the retreat with Rinpoche, however, almost by miracle, the two ladies who were in charge of the renovations could finish everything just a week before the retreat – an impressive feat.

So in just over a month, just before the retreat with Rinpoche in 2006, Lhundrubling manifested itself. One day before the retreat started, Rinpoche visited and consecrated the place and later, on an auspicious date, he named it "Lhundrubling". It had seemed virtually impossible only one year before; maybe even only a few months before, but it had become true. And Rinpoche was right, as always: Lhundrubling would become very important for the activities of the Dzogchen Community in Brazil.

Since then, many practices are organized in Lhundrubling every week. The three Worldwide Guru

Yoga Transmissions are held there, and also many weekly practices, usually four Ganapujas per month, webcast replays, explanations and so on. In February 2009, we were also very lucky to receive the visit of Jim Valby for a fantastic retreat on the Base of SMS. Our practitioners come and care for the place – someone arranges the altar, another person takes care of the plants, someone else cleans everything, the secretary is in charge of emails; the yellow Gakyil of finances, and so on. It ended up working very smoothly. Money is always a little short, but at least enough - and we receive donations even from people who are not from São Paulo and cannot participate in our activities, but who think it is important to help maintain Lhundrubling.

In many ways, Lhundrubling was a gift from Rinpoche to us. First of all, it was his idea; then it was built with the dedication of people who shared interest for His teachings and with money collected during his retreats. Then it was consecrated and named by him - and it is kept alive week-by-week and dayby-day by his precious transmission and by his wonderful teachings. The name "Lhundrubling" couldn't be more appropriate. Thank you very much, Rinpoche. Lhundrubling is one more manifestation of the infinite potentiality of your teachings.

# How I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Condor and the Eagle Prophecy, The First Andean Stupa and the Supreme Source

#### Miguel Kavlin

have been a student and practitioner of Native American Ritual of the Andean, Amazonian and Native North American variety for over twenty years now. However, I always felt a connection with and was drawn to Tibetan Buddhist teachings.

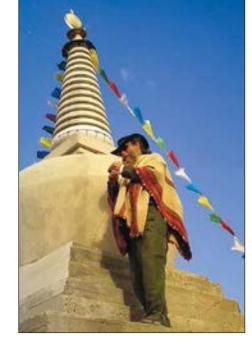
Around 1985 I went to Nepal and traveled on foot for over two months, hoping to find a spiritual teacher. What I found, toward the end of my journey there, was a precious book in a Katmandu bookstore: The Crystal and the Way of Light, by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The perspective and insight I gained from reading that book touched me deeply and helped me for many years to come. It was not until about fifteen years later, while doing a three-month retreat in the Peruvian Amazon, I reread that book and took a conscious decision to seek out Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

I was lucky enough that he was going to be in Argentina, next door to my native Bolivia, and so I went there to meet him for the first time. Undoubtedly he is hamper my awareness or decrease my clarity.

The First Andean Stupa actually first manifested in a vision I had while doing one of the Amazonian Rituals, where some Tibetan Lamas appeared to me and indicated a stupa had to be built in my land in the Bolivian Andes. I then consulted with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and asked permission to do so.

It took me about three years to get started, for it was an intimidating proposition, and I had no knowledge of building stupas. On one of my journeys to the US, also while conducting an Amazonian ritual, I received the instruction that one of the participants there was the person who would help me get started. His name is Max Fein from the northwest coast of the US. Amazingly he agreed, and within six months he volunteered his time to come to Bolivia. He received the blue prints from Jim Smith of Tsegyalgar East, and we began construction. Max could only stay three months at a time though, and it was very difficult to progress in his absence. We did persevere



er state, and I remember saying out loud: "Now the Condor and the Eagle have come together". Moments later, a most amazing thing happened, a sublime presence manifested in the room, not with a form but with a magnificent, noble, benevolent and powerful tangible presence. I am Jewish, and at that point I could do no more than prostrate myself flat on the floor, for I felt I was in the presence of the divine, and that presence was a great blessing onto all who were present. I had never experienced the Andes Mountains, the stars, the earth and all energies aligned in such a state of grace before.

My problems were not all finished though, as I continued to fall into negative patterns and despair. Nonetheless, slowly but surely, that presence began to manifest more and more often in a variety of different contexts, and it is now part of my daily meditations. This presence has also touched many of my companions on the path who participate with me in ceremonies.

The message it seems to be conveying is that the Messiah is here; the Messiah as a divine presence that is accessible to all who wish to connect, serve and bring compassion and peace to their lives. Later at a Native Spiritual Elders Gathering in Canada, many of the Elders, Guatemalan, Mexican and others, seemed to be saying the same.

The last time I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in Argentina last January,

I had a different, deeper and stronger connection with the teachings than ever before. Something new and wonderful seemed to open up.

It was while in Argentina that Nicko Leonoff, from Russia, decided to come help us in Bolivia. It was perfect timing because Max who was building the Stupa had to go back home, so he left Nicko in charge. It was through Nicko and his Russian connections that a most amazing thing happened. Artiom and other members of the Russian Sangha contributed funds and made the connections for Randrig Rinpoche, an expert in building stupas and a Tantric teacher, to come to Bolivia

for a month. He was accompanied by Vera and Sergei, untiring helpers.

I never realized how complex, elaborate and laborious it was to fill the different chambers of a stupa. To think that we had dared to attempt to build one without help was a mad proposition, but full of faith and love.

Only such a realized tantric practitioner could have integrated so gracefully all the disparate and crazy energies we had to work with, especially my own!

I am eternally grateful to Randrig Rinpoche for his patience, hard work and deep knowledge for making the first stupa in the Andes true to the teachings, immensely powerful, and already bringing great benefit to our lives, and I trust, to all sentient beings. The stupa for me was a culmination of a process of integration of many aspects of my path, and myself although I feel it was also divinely inspired and had logic of its own.

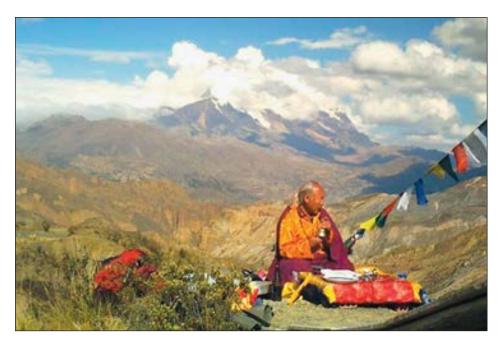
We placed a six pointed star around the center pole of the Stupa, a common element in the Jewish tradition and the Dzogchen teachings. On each point of the star, we placed a stone from six of the Most Sacred Mountains in the Andes, and gathered in a sacred pilgrimage to each one. In the center, we put a stone from Tiwanaku, the most ancient ceremonial place in the Americas. That became clear to me, was the mandala offering we had been slowly preparing for so many years. On the pole, next to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's vase at the bottom of the pole, we placed an eagle and condor feather, and a peacock feather in the center, symbolizing the Integration of those three lineages.

When Randrig Rinpoche Consecrated the Stupa, there were signs that the consecration was successful, that the stupa had indeed become the sacred blessing place it is meant to be for future generations, and us for humans and all sentient beings alike.

For many years Carmen Castañeda, my wife, and I have been the sole Dzogchenpas in Bolivia. We tried at different times to increase our Community and a few others have received transmission. Now, thanks to Nicko Leonoff, we also have a Vajra Dance Mandala, and the stupa is finished. We hope and pray that Vajra Brothers and Sisters from different countries will travel here, share their knowledge and help our friends here learn the Dance of the Vajra, and many of the Dzogchen practices that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has blessed us with.

I want to express my deepest gratitude for all those involved who contributed in small and big ways to make this happen, and I pray that Merit and Benefit ensues, and that the teachings be strengthened and preserved.

My deepest gratitude to Carmen Castañeda, my wife and my children who supported this, and to my Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu!



my master, and I felt a strong connection to him and the Dzogchen teachings. Since then I have traveled to many places around the world so I could receive more teachings from him, and have assumed the Dzogchen teachings as my daily practice.

I was particularly encouraged by the fact that Rinpoche emphasized the fact that one does not have to change religion, name or look in order to be a true Dzogchenpa. Also, he always encourages us to keep our awareness, as the foremost Samaya of Dzogchen. Moreover, he always encourages us to integrate the diversity of our experiences into the state of Instant Presence.

When I started on my Dzogchen path, I didn't know how it would integrate with my shamanic practices, and whether at some point I would have to leave them behind. Nine years later, I have witnessed my experience of the Dzogchen teachings deepen and strengthen, my connection with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu get finer and my devotion increase. So far, applying the Dzogchen principles I mentioned above, I have felt that my shamanic practices do integrate with the teachings, and I have not ever felt my shamanic practices

however, and Max met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to get transmission, some further instruction, and receive from Rinpoche the two main Sacred Vases to be placed within the stupa. Rinpoche was also clear from the beginning though, that this was not his stupa, nor his instruction that it be built, but that he supported our efforts.

In the midst of this first stage of the construction, I went into a very deep crisis where I questioned everything in my life, and even lost at some point the will to live. It was in the worst part of this crisis, when I decided to conduct a Sacred Andean Ceremony at our Ritual Chamber in the Andes. While in the ceremony, I observed a painting my Native North American teacher Beautiful Painted Arrow had gifted our chamber. It was a painting of the Condor and the Eagle coming together. I had always wondered if all these talk about the Condor and the Eagle Prophecies was only marketing and someone's invention, but in that ceremony I decided to find out for myself. I decided to hold a Condor feather in one hand and an Eagle feather in the other, and seek to integrate them in my consciousness. My consciousness in fact took a leap of some kind, I entered anoth-

