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Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: L. Graf

2010

Argentina

Tashigar Sur

March 22–30

Mandarava Chüdlen Retreat

Argentina

Tashigar Sur

April 8–10

SMS Base Level Exam

April 12–21

SMS 1st Level training

Canaries

May 21–23

Canaries retreat

UK

May 28–June 1

London Retreat

June 2

Light of Kailash presentation

Russia

June 2–8

Clinic treatment

June 11–16

Moscow retreat

June 18–20

Saint Petersburg retreat

June 28–July 4

Crimea retreat

Romania

July 9–16

Merigar East retreat

July 19–22

SMS Level I exam

July 23–August 1

SMS Level II Training

Italy

August 13–20

Merigar West retreat

August 23–29

Teachers' Training

September 3–10

Personal retreat

September 17–19

Zhitro purification for all those
who have died



Rinpoche teaching in the new Tashigar South Gonpa.

Photo: S. Mariani

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

From the terma of Changchub Dorje, Lamed Nyingthig Yangtig, Supreme Essential Teachings on Dzogchen; Zhi Lam Dras, the Base, Path and Fruit in Dzogchen with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Tashigar South, Argentina, February 12-24, 2010

Naomi Zeitz

The ten-day retreat of Dzogchen Teachings, a Teaching Terma of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje, began on the day of new moon in February at Tashigar South. The freshly inaugurated Gonpa was filled to the brim with approximately two hundred and twenty people, including many new participants, and also the fortunate one thousand plus of web cast viewers and listeners from everywhere on the globe.

Rinpoche strode into the Gonpa in robust form accompanied by his ever-present bodyguard, said good morning to everyone, and walked to his chair. “Sit down

please”, were the first words Rinpoche spoke as he settled down in his seat and attentively awaited the countdown and signal from the webcast ‘dream team’, letting him know everything was ready to go.

“Good day to everybody and everywhere.” And then the powerful, essential and illuminating teachings began. Rinpoche’s tremendous energy and capacity to deliver and make understood the profound level of teachings such as these marvelous Dzogchen terma teachings from his root master Changchub Dorje is no less than awe inspiring. In the moment, from moment to moment, together in the perfect

place, at the perfect time, with the perfect teacher and the perfect sangha, one almost feels able to remain in the non-dual state of Dzogchen without doubt. To communicate in this way is no simple accomplishment and requires a level of mastery rarely found in this world. How lucky we are!

In these ten days, Rinpoche covered the essential Base, Path and Fruit in Dzogchen as explained in the terma of Changchub Dorje. On the first day he began by laying the foundation with Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. Rinpoche encouraged people by saying they should not worry about

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Entering Dzogchen Knowledge

Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat
Margarita Island, Venezuela
December 26, 2009 to January 1, 2010

December 29th, 2009

It is very important to understand Guru Padmasambhava's specific explanation of how we enter in Dzogchen knowledge. There is an explanation called *togpa nampa zhi*; the Four Understandings, the Three Characteristics, *tsennyi nampa sum* and the Four Branches of Approach and Attainment, *nyendrub yenlag namzhi*. Guru Padmasambhava used these three arguments in the writings on the point of view. This is not only the explanation in the Dzogchen teachings, but in all three inner Tantras of the Nyingmapa tradition. If you understand this, you can understand everything more generally and particularly when Guru Padmasambhava explains these arguments. Guru Padmasambhava explained the state of Dzogchen as the final goal or most important final point of the Vajrayana teaching.

The Guhyasamaya Tantra was already translated at the time of Guru Padmasambhava. This Tantra has been very diffused through all traditions. There is also Sangwa Nyingpo or Guhyagarbha, the very essence and considered the root Tantra of Mahayoga. Guru Padmasambhava also explained the final goal of this Tantra in these arguments, which represents the Dzogchen teaching. For that reason we have it in the base of Santi Maha Sangha and we should learn these three main principles.

The first principle is called *togpa nampa zhi*; the Four Understandings. We have a quotation from the text of Guru Padmasambhava where he explains the knowledge of the same cause, the knowledge with the syllable, the knowledge through blessing, and the direct knowledge of the real nature.

Then we go more deeply into the explanation of all four. If you want to prepare Santi Maha Sangha training it is important to learn these by memory. You could be asked what the Four Understandings of Guru Padmasambhava or one of them are. You are missing knowledge if you do not know them. You do not need to go into the smallest detail, but you should try to go into the essence. These arguments are very important. For example, through these Four Understandings you can understand why we transform and why we can get into the Dzogchen state directly through introduction.

Number one is *gyu chigpa*, the same cause. The same cause is explained by saying that everything in our condition, all phenomena, when we go into its real nature is absolute truth. That means emptiness. It also says unborn, birth and death do not really exist, and everything is relative. The real nature, all phenomena, is dharmadhatu. Dharma means all phenomena. Dhatu means its real nature. The real nature is emptiness. If we go into the individual condition, we say our real nature is dharmata, emptiness with its non-dual qualification. The root of that is dharmakaya. If you ask what dharmakaya is, it cannot be shown or described.

There is subject and object in the relative condition. So when we go to the aspect of dharmakaya, we say dharmata and dharmadhatu. The root is dharmakaya. *Gyu chig* means same cause. There are not different causes. Also in Vajrayana, the teaching is represented with the symbol of the vajra. You remember what a vajra looks like; in the center of the vajra is a kind of ball that represents the dharmakaya with its infinite potentiality. How does that potentiality manifest? Dharmakaya has its primordial potentiality of sound, light and rays, and when there are secondary causes they can manifest.

Sambhogakaya and pure manifestation are when sound, light and rays manifest because of secondary causes – without falling into dualistic vision – just being in the real nature. When we are ignorant of that condition we think there are subject and object. That is impure vision or samsara. The vajra also has two sides, five high and lower



Rinpoche at the Mandarava Drubchen in Margarita.

Photo: J. Crisp

points, which are the pure and impure dimension and all is connected with the center, the dharmakaya, the cause. Now you can understand why it says 'the same cause'. We can also say relative and absolute condition, but the real nature of everything is the same cause. Here it explains absolute and relative truth; making the same cause understood. This is very important for having knowledge of our real nature; we all have the nature of the vajra, instant presence or dharmata. You should remember that. This is the first understanding, the understanding of the same cause.

The second is *yig dru tsulgyi togpa*, which means we have knowledge and understand through the letter or syllable. The syllable represents the knowledge of the three vajras. Which syllable is presented? For example, when we use any kind of mantra, at the beginning of most mantras we have the very important syllable OM. In the Dzogchen teaching we use A. A represents the nature of our dharmata and the origin of all sounds. OM is more developed than A; for becoming OM first we need A, then O and then M. In Western language it becomes OM. In the Tibetan or Sanskrit system, first we need to write A, A transforms into O and then there is a thigle and it becomes OM. That means the syllable develops and that development represents the perfection of our real condition.

For that reason the syllable OM represents the perfection of our three kayas. The three kayas of ordinary people means we have the physical body, the energy level or voice, and mind. Its real nature or potentiality is called the three vajras. In general we represent the three vajras with the three syllables OM A HUM. That means we are not only remaining with OM, but developing more. Particularly here, the root Tantras are developed with the seed syllables and the knowledge of the three kayas. How do we understand that? Here Guru Padmasambhava explains that A is the origin of all sounds – unborn. Concrete birth does not exist. A is the origin from emptiness that represents dharmakaya; the state of emptiness or nature of mind with our three existences. So even if there is no birth, we can see everything and have dualistic vision. That is called the relative condition. The example given is just like a reflection of moon in water. The reflection in the mirror is the same thing and we can see, judge, see color and form – everything.

Even if everything is unreal, when we are in dualistic vision it seems concrete. When we are dreaming, a dream is something concrete. We discover that when we wake up. Even if it is unreal, it has its function. So that is just its symbol, A is transformed into O. That represents the energy level or Sambhogakaya manifestation. This is the representation with the syllables. So you see, with the syllables knowledge develops. Also when we explain our three primordial potentialities we can say sound, light and rays.

Like the syllable here we have the symbol of white A and a thigle of five colors. Developing that way we can have more complete knowledge and we transform or manifest that knowledge in a more perfect way. This is the second of the four.

The third is *chingyi labkyi togpa*. It means the understanding with the blessing. Guru Padmasambhava explained this understanding with the example of the white cotton. The condition of the cotton is white, but if we want to transform that white cotton into red, we need a red color that has the capacity to transform the cotton into red. In the same way in the teaching, there is an empowerment in connection with transmission with this potentiality so it does not remain some idea or fantasy, but becomes something real. So this is another of the four understandings. Now you know three. You remember that the first is the same cause, the second is with the example of the letters and syllables, how to get in the perfection with the knowledge of the three kayas, and the third is with the capacity of blessing. For that reason we can get in the transmission and experience something concrete.

Ngönsumpar *togpa*, the last of the four understandings, means having concrete knowledge. Concrete means not only a concept, but we discover something through the experience of body, speech and mind. To discover means, for example, I show you this pen and you see it. So you know that in my hand I am showing a black pen so I don't need to explain it, what black means or what the function of a pen is. You already know that. This is direct introduction. Now I ask you to please forget what I have shown you. How can you forget that? You cannot in any way. There is nothing to change. This means direct knowledge.

To understand direct knowledge I often use the example of when someone gave me a very nice pen. Sometimes I talk about the time I went to Dharamsala and His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave me a golden pen, and then I explain what the pen looks like, its brand and how it works when I write. When I explain everything you are building a kind of pen in your mind. But you are not looking at that pen, you have no direct knowledge, you are only building the pen in your mind. Tomorrow I explain in a different way, not the same pen that I explained yesterday. Something is wrong with the color or size, etc. You can change your idea. That means there is something to change and you have no direct knowledge.

In Dzogchen the teacher introduces you directly to your real nature. You should discover that. This is the example Guru Padmasambhava gives here. When we say Dzogchen – Dzog in Tibetan means perfected. In Sutra it is explained that we need to accumulate the two accumulations: the accumulations of merit and wisdom. If we accomplish these

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Introduction to the State of Ati

An excerpt from the first session of the retreat held at Merigar West, January 16-18, 2010.

“Many unfortunate people Who are conditioned by concepts and analysis Make Understanding an object of the mind And so remain far from the profound meaning”.
‘Longsal Teachings, Volume Two’ by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, page 91.

This is the introductory part of the text. “Many unfortunate people” means that most people are in a condition called *samsara*. First of all we should understand that *samsara* is more or less our condition and its characteristic is to be conditioned by analysis and concepts. At this point, understanding becomes an object of the mind and when we understand what an object of the mind is, probably we can discover what the subject is, the mind itself.

First of all, let’s try to understand what *samsara* is. When we use the word ‘*samsara*’, we mean our ordinary condition, what we see, that which our five senses can perceive. This is *samsara*. This is *karma*. *Karma* is that which we perceive through our five senses; nothing more, nothing less. What we should understand is that when we open our eyes, our ears, our nose, we have perceptions. It is, for example, very difficult to close all our perceptions and sense organs because even if we do, our mind remains active. According to the Buddhist tradition, we can apply many different methods to discover that we cannot turn off or stop our mind. Since we have this condition, we consider that the mind is also a sense organ. It means that through our mind we also have sensations, perceptions, so when we open our eyes, ears, etc., we have sensations and perceptions and all of this we call *karma* or *samsara*. It means that there is a cause for these perceptions. It is in this way and therefore there is a cause for it being this way.

Then we should discover what impermanence is. Through the understanding of the Four Noble Truths, impermanence means change. It means that I open my eyes, I look with my eyes and I see that everything changes; things don’t remain stable and static forever. This is the meaning of *karma*. When, on the other hand, I perceive any object of reality, it remains within me as a thought forever and is always the same.

If we follow in a more traditional way, at some point a symbol is introduced. For example, when we introduce the symbol of our condition, we say it is like a *vajra*, with a pure and an impure aspect, and there is a presence, a being, in this condition that is symbolized by the sphere at the

centre. This is a bit the aspect of method and means the aspect of conceptual understanding of our condition. Then we introduce the symbol of our real condition, which is more like sound. When we hear the sound, we understand this condition.

The first time a symbol like the *vajra* or the bell is introduced, we have an idea of what they are. If the *vajra* has a certain aspect, it will always remain like this within us. Nothing will change this aspect within us, as long as someone else doesn’t introduce us to a different *vajra*, because inside ourselves, the aspect of existence is totally different from outside. If I have an object here that has the colour of gold, the consistency of metal and that represents various symbols of our condition, when it is understood internally, it is not conceptualized as an object but as a series of qualities. So what we understand are the qualities of the *vajra*: the aspect of pure vision, the aspect of impure vision, and the aspect of the indestructibility of the *vajra* itself, our condition.

But when we ring the bell, it is very difficult to do the same. It is difficult to say what symbol it is, but we can be introduced to and we can understand the nature of sound. If we say that the aspect of the *vajra* is more male, more a lunar aspect, we can say that the aspect of the bell is more female, solar, more linked with energy. And so we see how our perception is completely different. We can observe how we understand the qualities of one object through a concept and how we cannot do the same thing with another object. This is the first aspect that we can observe about the way this mind manifests to us.

Firstly we should understand what the mind contains. We have already said that when we open our eyes and look, listen with our ears etc., we have perception. This perception exists in time and space, whereas if we observe the qualities of this object, they are not linked to time and space. So our understanding of the object of the *vajra* is not conditioned by space and time; there is a difference between the physical object of the *vajra* in front of me and my understanding of it.

So I understand that there is something within the mind, something that is the opposite of nothing. It is not something that exists or doesn’t exist. Within the mind there is something and nothing, not that there is something that exists and doesn’t exist, because something that exists and doesn’t exist is impermanent. It means that an object in front of me at some point is there, and then at another point it is not: it is broken, or if I leave that object here, somebody likes it and steals it, then it is no longer here. But nobody can steal my thoughts. Therefore we can say that what is in front of me exists, but what is inside me doesn’t exist and doesn’t even fall into the field of existence.



Photo: L. Carniel

It makes no sense to talk about existence inside myself. In my thoughts, in this place that is the mind, existence has no meaning because outside me – for example, my body, the people I communicate with, the things that I see – have a birth, growth and death. But inside me, in my thoughts, none of this has any meaning. I should understand that when I am introduced to the *vajra* the first time, it remains that way. It doesn’t develop and grow on its own. It doesn’t have to change. It isn’t subject to existence, which means getting old, dying and being reborn. This means that if something exists in front of me, inside me there is only my ego, my being, my idea. There is only one thing – the idea of myself and the whole universe, and that’s all. But it is mostly myself.

How can I perceive this object inside myself? It is like a reflection, as if I were a mirror, the object reflects in me all the time. If I focus my attention and find a reason to change my idea, then I change it. But it is very difficult that if this object changes that my idea also changes at the same time, because we don’t have the presence to constantly observe everything in front of us. If we had this presence then every time we were in front of a mirror we would notice that we were getting older, that we had another white hair. It is only when we have hurt ourselves, when we can no longer climb the stairs that we understand that we have got older. Or when our children ask for the keys to the car. This means we don’t have this presence of our condition and are subject to *karma*. It means that this famous *samsara* is something real and in the field of existence, and if it is in the field of existence, there must also be *nirvana*, something real that we consider opposite to

or the cessation of *samsara*. It’s like saying heaven and hell.

This means that basically I can understand the qualities of *nirvana* because, as I said, when we introduce this object called *vajra*, I have this symbol within myself and through my understanding of its qualities, I understand myself, my condition. But through this action of introducing, I also understand the continuity of this symbol. It is not something that changes inside me. It changes outside myself and this is why we speak about karmic vision or *samsara*. Inside myself there is nothing to change and this is why the qualities of this symbol are explained and introduced to me so that I can understand that nothing will ever change in myself.

Actually there is nothing to change because the action of changing is an expression of impermanence and impermanence is a characteristic of what is outside me, not inside me. But since I open my eyes and have a perception of this world, this means that my characteristic is to perceive this world and so my condition cannot have a mind that does not have this characteristic. If I perceive it means that mind is also capable of doing this. So within mind there will be *samsara* and *nirvana* with all the characteristics of existence.

But we have to discover that there is a continuity in all this which is indestructible. It is not something that has a life within the mind. No object of the mind has life, only outside ourselves is there life – birth, growth, getting old and death. Inside us there are thoughts that have the characteristic of being beyond existence. Perceiving these thoughts as something real and concrete doesn’t change the nature of thought itself and doesn’t change the nature of mind either. The main function of mind is to

present everything as real and concrete with emotion and sensation: to contain *samsara* and *nirvana*. But this doesn’t mean that *samsara* and *nirvana* exist in the mind because something can only exist outside us.

So what does this sentence mean, “Many unfortunate people are conditioned...”? By what? They are conditioned by actions, by the main function of the mind which is to discriminate because perception comes from the five sense organs. I look through my eyes and I see something and my mind decides what it is. It gives existence to it. Since for us all our perceptions are connected to existence, mind needs to connect them with the concept of impermanence, with the understanding of what existence is, hence any object that is perceived by the eyes, ears, etc., is, in some way.

First of all it has to have an existence. It should answer the question – where does it come from? When was it born? How does it develop, grow, what type of future does it have, what type of destiny? What kind of end will it have? Every perception in our mind should automatically create this kind of connection. For example, I see a beautiful flower. Why do I see it? Because it is a beautiful day, it’s sunny. If it’s raining, I won’t see it. At this moment, I am perceiving the flower. The flower itself, as something separate from me, doesn’t have any meaning. When I understand the connection between me, the flower and the beautiful day, then there is some meaning, there is perception. At this point, the concept of flower as an existence is created. Inside me a flower exists. What is this flower like? It is a beautiful day so it should be a beautiful feeling. If I am observing and perceiving this sensation, it will remain forever inside me.

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Teachings

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But I won't remain forever so I always want it to be a beautiful day. I always want to be here at the right moment and have the flower in front of me. In spite of my understanding that the flower is beyond existence, the understanding of myself is within existence. And since the perception of this flower is the relationship between subject and object, what is always more important for me is the subject.

This is what Buddha Shakyamuni explained with the Four Noble Truths. Since there is a cause and the primary cause is myself, since I cannot govern the secondary causes, like the sun, and since I am not aware of the characteristics of my primary cause, I believe in the illusion of

samsara. At this point, I have infinite suffering. This is karma. But we should understand that this text does not introduce according to traditional sutra teaching. On the contrary, it talks about understanding and about objects of the mind. We have understood that objects of the mind can be any thing; the mind has the capacity to contain samsara and nirvana which means that any object has its existence. Anything that is born, grows and dies, can also exist in the mind. Obviously, it is not material because what is outside us has the characteristic of solidity, of being material. What is inside us is totally immaterial. The objects of mind are immaterial. This is what we should observe, first of all.

For example, we say that one of the important things in life is to be happy and all religions, philosophies, teachings, in the end go in the direction of happiness. Happiness is something immaterial, not a material object that is born, develops and dies. It is not an object that I can show everybody and say that this is happiness. It means that it is something immaterial, with the characteristic of being inside us, not outside. And since we have this understanding – like in the example of the flower, because Buddha Shakyamuni introduced this understanding, and above all because I have a teacher who has explained this to me – I can understand that a material object is not enough to create an immaterial object. Even though I can

reflect a material object inside myself, I don't have happiness in front of me, like an object, so I cannot reflect it inside myself like a mirror does. It cannot have an existence, it is not in front of me, unfortunately. If it were a simple object that would reflect inside me and develop through the potentiality of the mind, it would be easier because at least I would be able to see something, to have an idea about it and to create its life, its existence within the space that is mind. If this were possible, the teachings would be of no use because it would be sufficient to find the right object of reality and everything would be resolved. But, unfortunately, happiness is immaterial.

And most of all we can discover that happiness can be linked

with something that is material but totally indirectly. For example, I can be happy to perceive this flower on such a beautiful day. But the day has to be beautiful, or there has to be sun, or a beautiful meadow, a million things. One day it's a flower, the day after a film, the day after that a person. The only thing that remains constant is the person who perceives, the primary cause of this perception, which is my mind. This is what I have to discover because beyond the mind there is no perception. There is only presence. Perception is within the mind because the mind has this characteristic. ✽

Transcription and editing by
L. Granger

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two accumulations then we can have total realization and total perfection. This means Dzog. For example it says Dzog Sangye and that means Buddha perfected all. If we have not accumulated everything, it is not perfected. This is the teaching of the Sutra view.

In the Dzogchen teaching it is not this way. Even in Anuyoga, in Vajrayana, there is not the complete knowledge like Dzogchen, but there is the knowledge of the vajra that means we have such potentiality. Potentiality is not explained as the perfected state since the beginning. This is the knowledge of Anuyoga and Dzogchen. Anuttaratantra, high Tantra, does not have that knowledge. For that reason, the development and accomplishing stage must be perfect, and then you can have that perfection finally. In Anuyoga and Dzogchen teaching when we explain point of view or the explanation of the base and our real nature, it is said that since the beginning the real nature of all sentient beings is perfected.

We all have the perfected state but if we all have the perfected state, why are we in samsara? It doesn't mean we have no perfection, but our understanding is missing. Human beings, even many intellectual people, know many things at the mental level

but they do not know we have perfection from the beginning. You receive that teaching and introduction only from the teaching of Anuyoga and Dzogchen, and particularly with the introduction of the Dzogchen teaching. Then we notice and are interested to discover and get that understanding. So when we say Dzog or Dzogpa, perfection, it means a different way of seeing. Ngönsumpar togpa means having knowledge that our condition is perfected since the beginning.

Guru Padmasambhava explained in just a little more detail because this not so easy for many scholars to understand. It says for perfecting our condition, not depending as is done in lower Tantras or Sutras, that the idea is to go slowly, step by step, and develop one by one. In the Sutra teaching it is explained as Sa chu lam nga, ten bhumis and five paths, particularly in the Mahayana tradition, and in the Hinayana there is also the explanation of five levels, like the Shravaka system where there are also some levels. They are developing one by one and at the end they realize what is called an arhat.

But they know very well that arhat does not mean Buddha. For becoming Buddha there is still something to do. In the Mahayana system only Buddha Shakyamuni can be an arhat. Generally there are three Sutra vehicles. First vehicle is called the Shravaka, second is called ranggyal (Pratyekabuddha), someone believing himself to manifest the enlightened state, but that is not the final goal. Then there is also the Mahayana state. So these are called the three vehicles in Sutra.

In Nyingmapa it is a little different, particularly the Dzogchen way. Some Nyingmapas explain in a more general way similar to other traditions. But some go a little more in a Dzogchen way, the first of these three is called the worldly path, which contains all kinds of worldly vehicles; then the path of Shravakas and the path of the Bodhisattvas. They have a little different consideration. Sometimes when we are speaking we say the two vehicles of the Buddhist tradition. They consider that Shravaka and Mahayana are all one vehicle of Sutra. Then they are divided into three, they are saying Shravaka, Bodhisattva and Vajrayana vehicle. That is the way Buddhism is presented in Tibet. In Tibet all Buddhist traditions are Vajrayana. So it doesn't matter which kind of Vajrayana it is, higher or lower.

So it is very important that we do not go step by step like in Sutra, particularly in a Sutra Mahayana tradition. They are saying

Sa chu lamnga. Sa chu means ten different kinds of bhumis and before that there are five paths; in the gradual way one by one, developing and developing. It doesn't mean one can develop in a lifetime. For many lives they develop and develop and then at the end they can have realization. This is the Sutra system.

In the Vajrayana style, they say the lower Tantras are quicker for having realization than Sutra style. For having total realization in Sutra we must accumulate merits and wisdoms for many kalpas. That means many lives. We will not have total realization easily. Lower Tantras like Kriyatantra say we can have total realization in sixteen lives. They consider that we are still transmigrating, but inside sixteen lives we can have total realization. That is an example. In higher Tantra, Anuttaratantra and Anuyoga, and also Dzogchen teaching, if we do practice in the perfect way we can have total realization in a lifetime. In the Dzogchen teaching they even explain the great transference with Guru Padmasambhava. When we are dying we can get into the manifestation of rainbow body. Most practitioners have the possibility of total realization, at least when they are in the state of the Bardo of Dharmata. There is not any guarantee, but it is much more possible.

This is always going one by one, step by step. Here ngönsumpar togpa means with direct knowledge we can be in that knowledge. When you discover your real nature and you receive instructions from the teacher, what should you do to get in that state? You do that practice and become more and more familiar and get in your real nature. In that moment there is no difference between the real state of Samantabhadra or Garab Dorje and you.

So that is the ngönsumpar togpa, understanding our real condition and for that reason in the Dzogchen teachings we have direct introduction. This is also not something we do at the end of doing many practices. When the teacher introduces the Dzogchen teaching, the first thing he/she must do is direct introduction. For that reason in the Three Statements of Garab Dorje, the first statement is direct introduction. When you have this knowledge, you can know directly what the knowledge of the direct introduction is. ☸

Transcribed by Naomi Zeitz
Edited by Naomi Zeitz
and Jakob Winkler

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Buddhist or unfamiliar terminology; that they should try to understand and focus on the essence.

On the second day he began entering the text called the Zhi, Lam, Dras; Base, Path and Fruit in Dzogchen that is from the terma Lamed Nyingthig Yangtig, the Supreme Essential Teachings in Dzogchen of the terma of Changchub Dorje. Also on this day Rinpoche gave direct introduction through the Yeshe Sangthal transmission.

The next days were filled with the with these precious teachings from the terma of Rinpoche's own master, interspersed with anecdotes, including the story of

how Rinpoche met Changchub Dorje together with Rinpoche's father, after having some clear indications in dreams. Rinpoche reiterated how he had no real understanding of Dzogchen until meeting Changchub Dorje. There were also some wonderful tales of Yeshe Namkhai and his childhood, illustrating Rinpoche's understanding of Yeshe's reincarnation and role as lineage holder for this lineage of Dzogchen Teachings.

As at all retreats, everyone had the opportunity to participate in Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance as well as starlit evenings in Tashibar listening to good local musicians, relaxing and enjoying together.

Tashigar South is a place of relaxation and enjoyment. Even though the heroic campers had to withstand many nights of heavy rain, their spirits remained in tact and each day in the Gonpa proved beyond any notion of sacrifice.

After the final Ganapuja there was again music, dance and fun! Rinpoche pulled out his harmonica to squeals of delight and once again we practiced the melodies of the Tibetan songs that beguile us almost as much as the pronunciation of the language itself!

As always, words leave one somehow unfulfilled in the expression of gratitude and love for the Master. But we try! Rinpoche, thank you! ☸

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Schedule 2010

- >> continued from page 1
- 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

Good health, long life and abundance to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and all the Dzogchen Community for the Metal Tiger Year from The Mirror Staff!



Losar celebration with horses.

Photo: L. Ottaviani

Losar, the Tibetan New Year

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

Reprinted from issue 71 of The Mirror

Tibetan New Year is called Losar and is celebrated to welcome in the New Year. New Year is a festival common to the whole world and celebrated at different times, according to the way the beginning of a new year is calculated. There are, however, great differences within Tibet regarding the preparations for the auspicious ceremonies of the New Year determined by the customs of certain regions. Tibetan people who live in high, snowy regions have many traditional festivals, the New Year being the most elaborate.

In Tibet there are several different ways of calculating the beginning of a New Year and various ways of doing the preparations for the auspicious ceremonies. For instance, there is a New Year called ‘New Year of the small sheep’ or ‘new sheep’ (*gsar am beu lug lo gsar*) that begins on the first day of the twelfth lunar month; there is the ‘Kongpo new year’ (*kong poi lo gsar*) that begins on the first day of the tenth lunar month; and the ‘Nyarong Losar’ (*nyag rong gyi lo gsar*) that begins on the thirteenth day of the twelfth lunar month. These different ways of determining the beginning of a new year have reasons that can be traced to a very ancient past. In any case, the various New Years celebrated in specific regions of Tibet are called ‘small year’ (*lo chung*), while the new year calculated as the first day of the first lunar month is called ‘great year’ (*lo chen*) and is celebrated in all

the three regions of Tibet (*dbu gtsang*, *mdo stod*, *mdo smad*) by all the Tibetans who live in or outside Tibet.

Although the different ways to celebrate the New Year in Tibet vary slightly according to different provinces, for the most part they are similar. The preparations, which start on the beginning of the twelfth month, and culminate on the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month, begin with the house being cleaned well, inside and out, smoke coats are removed from the fire wood

gether with the offering of a sacrificial cake (*gtor ma*) to the gods, done by monks in the monastery, for the sake of casting off the bad influences of the previous year, each household carries some old clothes, broken kitchen utensils, some dirt from cleaning the house, a little of the soup of the twenty-ninth day in a broken bowl, and some pieces of dough mixed with some dirt from a body (symbolizing the removal of impurities and with specific diseases the place of the disease is touched) modelled with five fingers in the dough, placed in a



Cham dances at Khumbhum Monastery in Amdo (today Qinghai Province) to celebrate Losar.

Photo: F. Grassi

kitchen and round marks are made on the pillars and beams of the kitchen with white flour.

There is the tradition of preparing a soup called ‘soup of the twenty-ninth day’ (*dgu thug*), for dinner. That same evening, to-

jar with the clothes, fallen hair, etc., to the nearest cross road. The main ingredients used to prepare the soup are meat, tiny sweet potatoes, rice, wheat, various greens, and cheese. Small pellets of dough are prepared and cooked in the soup. Some

ious of the person and a sign of what will happen to the person in the future, i.e., chilli (harsh and scolding speech), coal (black heart), paper (unstable), wool (patient), wood (inflexible), salt (lazy), sugar (empty sweet talk), bone (good and strong charac-



Year of the Iron Tiger

Be prepared for uncharted fields in the wild. Brace yourself to stalk the prey of wandering thoughts before you pounce that old enemy – distraction, all those frivolous wisps of hope and fear hidden among weeds of mind.

Crouch low
Keep your nose to the ground

Smell wind
Hear the rustle of ignorance when hungry to ambush that wildebeest of one’s own rage.

Growl at adversity in the night
By day drink from the spring of Refuge
Flash your tiger’s teeth at enemies
Guard your pride with ease among outcrops.

Then, let your steely gaze ignite the fire of impenetrable essence –
Awake in the blaze.

Jacqueline Gens
Conway, MA

of the pellets are slightly bigger than others; if one of more of the bigger pellets of dough falls into the bowl of someone, what the pellet contains serves as an indication of the character, behav-

ter), stone (stable and kind) are placed. Also placed in the soup are the sun (famous for showing the way for other beings) and moon (good and helpful for other beings), shoes (travelling), a polar star (intelligence) and a religious scripture (teachings and scholarship) all modelled in dough.

The substances put in the pellets vary a little according to the various regions, for instance in the nomadic regions a piece of the leather from the collar of animals is placed in the bigger pellets to predict whether the cattle will be good or not in the next year Before eating the soup, the articles to be thrown away are prepared, a little soup is poured in a broken bowl and all this is carried away to the cross road. That night these articles are taken away by four or more young men, one of who carries a stick with a bundle of dry hay, which is then ignited.

Heading the group, the young men turn around three times in the house saying: Come out! Come out. The group leaves the house and the last of them lights firecrackers as a symbol of chasing away the bad influences. Once they arrive at the crossroad (in Eastern Tibet it is the young men who arrive) they imitate the sound of barking dog and most of the firecrackers are lit. After the young men have thrown away the

>> continued on the following page



Cham dances at Khumbhum Monastery in Amdo (today Qinghai Province) to celebrate Losar.

Photo: F. Grassi

>> continued from previous page
ransom, they return to the house without looking back. During the time of giving away the ransom, it is considered that if a member of the family (except those who went to give away the ransom) does not return to the house but lingers around for business or other purposes, in the following years they will encounter misfortune. When the young men return to the house, everyone eats soup, drinks ale (*chang*) and converses in a relaxed and playful way. As the bigger pellets are found in the bowls of various people, the significance is explained and is cause for merry laughter.

On the thirtieth day, the house is prepared for the festivity arranged with new tables, chairs, carpets, etc. Different foods are prepared: food for the family and guests and food that is offered to the gods. The house is cleaned

again in the late afternoon of that day and the special sweet New Year biscuits called (*kha zas*) are arranged beautifully in an inter-twined pattern on the altar of the house together with dry and fresh fruits, cheese, and butter. In Eastern Tibet there is the tradition of preparing what is called powdered butter that consists of roasted barley flour to which butter, sugar, honey, and milk are added. In Central Tibet this is substituted by an offering placed in a nicely painted box with two compartments; one compartment filled with roasted barley flour and the other with roasted wheat.

These offerings are place on the altar in the following way: at the centre plates with nicely arranged sweet biscuits, next to it, a head of a sheep made with butter (in ancient time it was probably a real sheep head that was placed) and

the head of the sheep is adorned with jewels and scarves and the mouth smeared with butter. The sheep symbolizes an offering for the cattle herding of the past year and an auspicious factor for the success in cattle herding in the New Year. Next to the sheep's head is a nice jar containing fresh sprouts of barley or wheat planted a couple of weeks before, as an offering for the past year's crops and an auspicious growing season for the New Year.

Early on the first day of Losar, the main person responsible for the house, usually the mother, gets up early in the morning to prepare the *chang skol*, a Tibetan ale made with barley to which tiny sweet potatoes, molasses, butter are added and then boiled. This ale and some sweet New Year biscuits are distributed to the members of the family while they are still in bed. Then a little later,

from 5:30 to 6 am, the members of the family wake up. Another tradition is to leave a bucket of water outside the house exposed to the stars. This water is called water of the stars, *dkar chu*. In the morning, before the stars have disappeared from the sky, this water is brought into the house and hot water is added or the *dkar chu* is heated, and when it is luke-warm, the members of the family wash the five limbs: the face, mouth, hands and feet, with the water. In the very cold regions of Tibet, the water is not left overnight as it may turn to ice, but is only exposed to the stars for a while in the early morning before dawn. It is believed that the power of the stars reflected in the water can contribute to elimination of diseases and other impediments that the person may have.

When the family members meet, as soon as they have woken up, they greet each other with the phrase *bkra shis bde legs*, which means 'Good luck and happiness to you!' Then the members of the family wear their best clothes and ornaments and sit in their respective seats in order of seniority. Two youths, a female and male or two of the same sex, distribute *chang* or ale from a new stock, to members of the family in order of seniority reciting auspicious verses for their fortune, long life and religious activities. In turn, the older members recite auspicious verses for the younger members. The powdered butter is presented to each member of the family who in turn takes the powder three times, scattering it in the air reciting, for example in the Eastern regions: 'A mouthful of powdered butter, the glory of merit, and everlasting happiness and joy. Oh what a joy!' (*phyé mar gyi kha gang/bsod nam gyi dpal gang/skyid dga la yun ring/ a la la ho*). In Central Tibet the auspicious words are: 'Good luck, happiness and abundance; may the beautiful mother be healthy and gain everlasting happiness; may this day of the New Year bring us together again in happiness'. After this, tea is distributed in porce-

lain cups adorned with the eight auspicious symbols or in wooden cups adorned and covered with silver. Then the members of the family take breakfast of roasted wheat and rice with sweet potatoes, butter and resin called *bras bsil*. Then offerings are made to the front altar in the home and then in the temples. Another important activity of that morning is to go to meet one's teacher and offer the traditional white silk scarf and other offerings and express one's wishes for his or her long life and happiness.

On the second day of the New Year, people visit the houses of close relatives and receive visits of close relatives. On the third day, all the members of the family go to the top of the house to change the prayer flags on the prayer flag pole on the roof of one's house and remain for a while on the roof offering to each other the powdered butter and drinking tea. Then, after breakfast, together with the other inhabitants of the area, they go to a sacred place nearby and authenticate prayer flags and perform the ritual of the *bsang* offering of the smoke of the juniper and other fragrant substances to the gods. From the fourth day onward the people visit the houses of the neighbours and invite guests for meals. They start to enjoy the festivity, merrily engaging in various games and sports: playing dice, *bagchen*, singing, dancing, riding horses, pulling rope to measure strength, archery competitions, and running competitions. The festivity usually lasts for fifteen days, but for another fifteen days the people are still infected with the atmosphere of the New Year and unofficially continue to celebrate.

©

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Schedule 2010

March 1–13
Hungary, Budapest, restricted retreat

March 20–22
Italy, Kunsalling (Brescia)

March 24–31
Puerto Rico holidays

April 1–6
Italy, Merigar West

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, Tel Aviv

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

May 14–17
UK, London Public talk and preparations for retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

May 26–31
Crimea, weekend teaching at Kunsangar South and preparation for retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

June 1–8
Russia, Moscow, Clinic

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

June 16–22
Russia, St. Petersburg, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Retreat

June 24–July 4
Crimea, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Retreat

July 6–10:
USA, New York, Kundrolling

July 11–20
USA, Conway, Mass, Tsegyalgar East and Khandroling

July 22–August 5
Romania, SMS Level 2 with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

August 23–29
Italy, Merigar West Teachers' Training with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

September 7–12
Russia, Izhevsk, restricted retreat at Kungaling

September 13–16
Mexico, Mexico City, Pelzomling

September 17–20
Costa Rica, Public talk

September 21–24
Peru, Norbuling

September 25–28
Bolivia, Dekytling

October 2–8
UK, London Retreat and Kunselling

October 9–11
Italy, Zhenphenling

October 12
Italy, Public Talk University of Rome La Sapienza

October 20–24
Canada, Toronto

October 25–29
USA, Portland

Oct. 30–Nov. 6
USA, Berkeley California

November 7–26
Mexico, Baja California, Tsegyalgar West

December 4–6
Italy, Bologna, Desalling

December 11–13
Italy, Naples, Namdeling

December 18–20
Italy, Molise

2011
January 14–29
Russia, Moscow, Kunphenling



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ASIA in Nepal

Silvia Beccacece

ASIA Onlus Project Manager in Nepal

In December 2009 ASIA Onlus officially established its Nepalese Headquarters in Boudhanath, the lively Tibetan quarter of Kathmandu. In addition to following more closely the long distance support projects that started up years ago in Nepal (sponsorship of 173 children at the Manasarovar Academy elementary school in Boudhanath and support for 53 monks of Triten Norbutse Bonpo Monastery in Swayambhunath), the ASIA staff are starting up a water and sanitation project in the Kavrepalanchok District, in accordance with the Project Agreement signed with the Social Welfare Council, the local government body in charge of the institutional management of cooperation projects.

The project will last three years and be carried out thanks to the economic support of Intervita

VDC in Deubhumi Baluwa, situated about km from Kathmandu, was singled out as the recipient of the interventions.

During the preparatory phase a number of meetings were organized with the population benefiting from the project, most of whom belong to the Danuar ethnic group who are greatly discriminated against by Nepalese society, and the main stakeholders who had a fundamental role during the realization of the project. In particular, in the VDC there is an interesting Women's Group, led by a very active leader, which meets from time to time to consider important topics such as Saving Credit and Loans. In order to measure the level of poverty of the inhabitants of Baluwa just think that the monthly savings of a family belonging to the microcredit group is 25 Nepalese rupies, or about 25 euro cents.

The project that was undertaken by ASIA plans to develop two components: one strictly linked to the theme of water and sanitation and the other aimed at hy-

ticeably below the WHO (World Health Organization) standard and appearing to have negative effects on the health of the inhabitants. Family toilets with double septic tanks will also be built that

tance of water and personal and environmental hygiene.

The education component of the project, on the other hand, plans to have interventions geared towards guaranteeing the regularity of lessons by distributing scholastic material such as notebooks, pencils, colours, and other equipment which is severely lacking at the state elementary schools in the villages. It also plans to set up structural interventions to supply potable water through the creation of a Rainwater Harvesting Unit, to improve or build new school toilets and in general activities aimed at raising the hygiene-health level at the schools (paving the school yards, work on the school buildings, maintenance of the existing water systems).

The project activities will be supported by means of a series of training sessions and workshops for the teachers in order to perfect educational methods, and for the parents of the students in order to raise the level of awareness of the importance of school attendance. The students will be involved in the campaign for Hygiene Promotion and given Hygiene kits.

At the moment the project is in the start-up phase: the first interventions in the area regarding topological surveys, drawing up a report on the local population by means of a baseline survey and forming work groups, as well as the distribution of school material will be put into effect in the next three months.

In order to follow the project in the field on a daily basis, ASIA has recently opened a Field Office at Dhulikhel, the capital town of Kavrepalanchok district and is working together with a local NGO, Enpho, which is expert in the management of environmental and water and sanitation projects.

There were many reasons that impelled us to go into Nepal. This country – just like India – borders on China and is home to an important part of the Tibetan diaspora which ASIA has been supporting for years thanks to long distance support for children and monks. In addition Nepal has been devastated by a civil war that has brought the population, today one of the poorest in the world, to its knees. For this reason we decided to get involved with medium and long term projects and also to extend our contribution to Bhutan and Outer Mongolia where, in 2010, we are planning to carry out feasibility missions, in view of their strong ethnic, cultural and spiritual affinity with Tibet. ©



Onlus. Its general objective is the improvement of the health conditions of the target population (3500 people) and of the educational opportunities for about 1000 children who live in the selected communities.

The selection of the project area was made following the indications set down by the Nepalese government which strongly encourages the International NGOs to decentralize their interventions in rural areas, and on the basis of the infrastructural needs that the Village Development Committee expresses to the district offices. After an in-depth phase of assessment in the field which started in August 2008, the

giene-health improvements and supporting the day schools of at least 15 elementary schools situated in Baluwa and in two bordering VDCs.

The first part of the project will provide Baluwa village (3500 inhabitants) with a gravitational water system which will supply about 75 public water fountains (on average eight families), guaranteeing the daily minimum standard of 25 litres of potable water per person. At the moment the fountains supplying the area are part of an old water system that has become completely inefficient, with little streams and wells that are not very deep, with the quality of the water being no-

will be able to generate compost that can be used as organic fertilizer in the vegetable gardens and in order to considerably reduce the widespread habit of open defecation.

In the construction phase the local population will be largely involved in order to develop a sense of community ownership that is fundamental for the long term duration of the infrastructures created. Consequently there will be training for the construction methods and the management and maintenance of the water systems and the toilets, as well as a serious campaign to make people aware of the impor-

Shang Shung Institute Italy

The Museum of Tibetan Art and Culture

A project draft for the creation of a Museum of Tibetan Art and Culture in Arcidosso, Tuscany has just been presented to the local Municipality by the Shang Shung Institute. The Institute's aim in establishing the Museum is to contribute in a concrete way to the safeguarding of Tibetan culture and society. The Museum would be the first of its kind in Italy.

In order to facilitate the organization of the Museum the SSI has entered into partnership with the Harrer Museum in Huettenberg, Austria – named after the well-known Austrian climber who spent 7 years in Tibet and was a friend to the Dalai Lama – and hopes to be able to make use of the Harrer Museum's know how in order to develop the project. The Institute also has close ties with many prestigious universities both in Italy and abroad and will be able to count on the support of experts in the field during various phases of the project.

Over the last 25 years, the SSI, its President, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and various partners of the Institute have collected a great number of works of art, handcrafted objects and items of considerable cultural and ethnographic value. Most of the objects have come prevalently from Tibet and the surrounding areas, which were, in the Middle Ages and even earlier, under the influence of Tibetan culture. The pieces that have been collected over the years are really representative of the autochthonous culture of Tibet and for this reason the SSI has created the Museum project that will be able to present this cultural patrimony to a wider public.

The project plans to develop a small museum that will be as complete and as accessible as possible to the general public and will become a reference point for Tibetan culture at both the Italian as well as the European

level. In addition, the museum's role will also be to preserve, acquire and research traditional Tibetan items and to set up exhibitions for study, education and entertainment. The museum will catalogue, preserve and put on display objects that represent Tibetan culture, integrating private collections within the displays. It also intends to promote and strengthen cultural events in the Amiata area and encourage constructive dialogue between cultures.

The project intends to create a fund for buying Tibetan works of art that have a particular historical or cultural value and to produce catalogues of their expositions as well as scientific/cultural publications as a source of finance. Activities such as workshops in which visitors can participate will be organized and online information and resources will be made available to the public through the Museum's own website.

The Museum will be structured around nine basic themes which are the most important for understanding Tibetan culture: origins, traditions, Buddhism, Life, Art, Medicine and Astrology, Today, Message of Peace, Defending Culture.

The area that has been chosen for the Museum in collaboration with the Arcidosso Municipality is on the ground floor of a building opposite the Aldobrandescan castle in the historical centre of Arcidosso. If, in the future, there is a great increase in the number of visitors, the lower floor could also be used as premises for the Museum. This space is very close to the area used for expositions inside the castle and means that resources such as management, security, etc. can be shared.



The Castle in Arcidosso next to the building proposed for the Museum.

Photo: A. R. Santori

The project will be developed over a period of 1–2 years in order to become operative and will require parallel activities to prepare the premises. There will need to be a Project Manager to follow the development of the project, fund-raising and carrying out administrative tasks. A business plan will have to drawn up and fund raising started. The project will work closely with experts in the field to prepare the material

for display, catalogue it and prepare the exhibition area.

At the moment, the project is still in its initial stages but the SSI hope that after a meeting with the Mayor of Arcidosso that the Municipality will agree to allot the space in order to start planning the complete project which will mean starting up the project planning, research funding, partnerships and many other activities. ©



A Tibetan 'lighter' pouch containing a flint for firelighting.



A detail from an antique Tibetan leather trunk.

International Shang Shung Institute News

Shang Shung UK: The Launch of an Exciting New Institute for Tibetan Studies in London

Oliver Leick

We are very pleased to announce that a new branch of the International Shang Shung Institute is in the process of being set up in London. Following the directive of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the new ‘Institute for Tibetan Studies’ will focus on the study of Tibetan culture within a traditional, academic context and will be based on the authentic study programme of a traditional Tibetan ‘Shedra’ or ‘College’ – the first of its kind in the West. By offering students the opportunity to train in the ‘Five Great Field of Knowledge’ (rig gnas che ba lnga) or ‘Five Sciences’, the new Institute

aims to provide precise access to the unique heritage of Tibetan culture in all aspects, whilst at the same time preserving traditional Tibetan culture for future generations.

The ‘Institute for Tibetan Studies’ will be divided into five individual ‘Departments’ or ‘Faculties’ based on the ‘Five Great Fields of Knowledge’. These five Departments are to be understood as five containers or baskets that accommodate all the different fields of knowledge, which together can provide a complete, comprehensive education. They are:

- 1. The Department of Art (bzo rig pa)
- 2. The Department of Medicine (gso ba rig pa)
- 3. The Department of Language and Grammar (sgra rig pa)
- 4. The Department of Logic (gtan tshig rig pa)
- 5. The Department of Inner Meaning (nang don rig pa)

Each Department will offer a variety of courses: for example, the ‘Department of Art’ will offer courses in Tibetan Dance and Painting as well as in lesser known subjects such as traditional Tibetan games. The esoteric courses offered within the ‘Department of Inner Meaning’, by contrast, will provide more in-depth spiritual knowledge, which may be of value to those already studying the Santi Maha Sangha Training. The Departments will in turn be divided into three levels, offering foundation courses, diploma courses and higher di-

ploma courses, the latter requiring a minimum of three years of study. Extra curriculum courses and a series of annual lectures by leading experts in traditional Tibetan culture will also be offered: the first of these will be given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, on his book ‘The Light of Kailash’ at the School of Oriental Studies, London on the 2nd June.

The project began in August 2009 with Oliver Leick’s suggestion that the SSI set up an academic college for traditional Tibetan studies and when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu decided that the location for this new branch of the Shang Shung Institute should be in London. Since then, several meetings have taken place in London and a ‘Project Team’ was established. At the moment, the London team is engaged in setting up the legal basis for the Institute and preparing the framework for the study program. Their aim is to launch the new In-

stitute during Rinpoche’s retreat in London at the end of May 2010. Further information and more details on the courses offered, as well as a presentation of the new ‘Institute of Tibetan Studies’ will be incorporated into the retreat programme.

On behalf of the international Shang Shung Institute I would like to thank the following people for their fantastic work, dedication to this project and their motivation: (in alphabetic order) Colin Ellar, Dominic Kennedy, Fabian Sanders, John Renshaw, Judy Allan, Julia Lawless, Julian Chase, Kathy Cullen, and Mike Farmer.

May this new and long-lasting programme manifest in a perfect way for the benefit of all beings! ©

Purification Medicine

The Shang Shung Institute currently has a supply of purification medicine available which can be ordered thorough the SSI website.

The prescription for the medicine is based on the instructions of Guru Padmasambhava and has been adapted for modern use by Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

by the addition of other ingredients.

The Dug-sel Man-zang purification medicine consists of 11 ingredients: 6 of them are called Zang-drug, the Six Goods, according to the instruction of Guru Padmasambhava and then there are 5 additional ingredients.

The purification medicine is useful for eliminating the build-up of toxins caused by use of tobacco, alcohol and other intoxicating substances and helps to stop dependence on them. It also

removes environmental and food toxins from the body. It has a purifying effect on the blood and balances the function of the organs and the elements that make up the body.

The Purification kit consists of 7 pills and the Dug-sel De-gu massage oil, which should be applied during the purification treatment. The kit is sufficient for one week of treatment. One pill should be taken per day, an hour before breakfast with a cup of lukewarm water. The massage oil should be massaged into the

entire body in the evening before dinner and left on the skin until the morning.

During purification treatment, it is best to follow a very light diet, without garlic, onions or spicy food and avoiding coffee, black tea and alcoholic drinks. The period of purification may be combined with purification practices.

Cost of a one-week treatment: 18 euro
Mailing in European Union: 2 euro.
Outside E.U. countries 3.50 euro.
Online shops: www.shangshunginstitute.org



HAPPY LOSAR

from the Shang Shung Institute



།ཕེད་ཀྱའ་ལོ་།༢༠༡༠
རབ་བྱུང་།༧༥༥ལ་སྟག་ལོ་ལོ་
2137 TIBETAN METAL TIGER YEAR
གནས་ལོ་གསར་ཆོས་ལ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས།
Tashi Delek greetings for the New Year
ཆེ་འོང་ནད་མེད་ཉིན་མཚན་རྒྱ་ཁུ་བདེ་ལེགས་ཤོགས།
Best wishes for long life, good health and continuous prosperity day and night



3 Book gift pack (Light of Kailash, Shakya Shri, and Advice from the Heart) only €45



2 Book gift pack (Light of Kailash and Birth, Life and Death,) only €30.



New pocket calendar for the Tibetan Metal Tiger year €12
Buy the new pocket calendar now and have a special discount on any of our Tibetan Games
Kit 1 Migmag, Yakra only €7.50
Kit 2 Migmag, Yakra, Sho only €15
Kit 3 Migmag, Yakra with olive wood playing board only €24



We would like to remind you that the SSI provides purification treatments with massage oil and purification pills for one week for €18

You can order these items and many others at our online shop: <http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org>
or contact: orders@shangshunginstitute.org or phone: +39-0564-966-940 Offer valid until March 15, 2010.

The Italian Branch of the International Shang Shung Institute of Tibetan Studies is happy to announce

The Return of Doctor Namdol Lhamo

After getting a Bachelor of Science degree at Delhi University, Doctor Namdol Lhamo sat for an entrance examination and was selected to attend a five year course of Traditional Tibetan Medicine at the Tibetan Medical and Astrological College of Dharamsala from 1998 to 2003. After a year of internship at Men-tsee-khang branch clinics in Delhi and Bylakuppe, she attained a Bachelor's Degree in Tibetan Medicine (Menpa Kachupa) in 2004. Then she worked as consultant Doctor in Bangalore and neighbouring places for about 4 years until she was recruited by the “Medical Text (Gyud shi) Translation Department” of Dharamsala in May 2008, where she is currently



Photo: L. Graf

working together with other five doctors.

Doctor Namdol Lhamo will be available for consultations and seminars according to the following calendar:

Consultations:
Merigar, Arcidosso
1–2 September, 7–12 September

Venice
14–18 September

Zhenphenling, Rome
21–23 September

A Progress Report of the Shang Shung Institute Worldwide

The Shang Shung Institute is a non-profit making organization focused on the active multi-media documentation of Tibetan culture, and having no political aims. Twenty-one years after the foundation of the Institute, and twenty years after the inauguration of the main seat of the International Shang Shung Institute in Italy, we are now founding a new branch in London. This new foundation is the next important step in the development of the Shang Shung Institute.

The mission of the International Shang Shung Institute is to deepen the knowledge and the understanding of the Tibetan cultural traditions in their religious, historical, philosophical, artistic, medical, and social aspects in order to contribute to the survival and preservation of this culture. Its aim is to promote all initiatives to spread and deepen knowledge of Tibetan culture, in order to ensure its survival, and to encourage co-operation among interested groups and individuals, thus keeping alive the essential values of these traditions.

Since 1989 the International Shang Shung Institute has: Organized courses, study seminars, lectures, exhibitions and trainings in various study-fields,

Enlarged its huge audio, visual and textual archive at the Institute in Italy,
Established the first School of Tibetan Medicine in the American branch and already finished its first 4-years training of western students,
Published the first three public books of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu within the Kater Translation Project; new books will also be regularly published from now on,
Published more than 200 teachings of Rinpoche within the Shang Shung Edition imprint, the Institute's own publishing house,
Produced DVDs, MP3s and CDs of various teachings and practices as a support of all practitioners,

Seminars:
Merigar, Arcidosso
3–6 September
It is a Seminar open to all the graduates and instructors of Kunye in order to deepen their knowledge and improve and revise their practice.

In particular it will deal with the following subjects:
Pulse Reading, Urine Analysis, Horme Technique, Revision and In-Depth Study of Techniques and Points.

Timetable:
10 am–13 pm
with tea break from 11.15–11.45
3 pm–6 pm
with tea break from 16.15–16.45

Registration fee: 200 euro
Please register by August 15th

Translation will be provided into Italian and possibly Spanish in case of need

Zhenphenling, Rome
24–26 September
A seminar on the basic principles of Tibetan medicine and on diet and behaviour according to the seven types of personalities.

The course will deal with the theory of three humours and five elements and it will teach how to discover one's own individual personality and how to balance the three humours with proper diet and behavior.

Timetable:
10 am–1 pm
with tea break from 11.15–11.45
3 pm–6 pm
with tea break from 16.15–16.45

Registration fee: 150 euro
Please register by September 1st

Translation will be provided into Italian

Registration and information
Shang Shung Institute Secretary
office: 0039 0564 96 69 40
s.celeri@shangshunginstitute.org

Handled all webcasts of the retreats of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Yeshe Namkhai,
Has offered scholarships to young Tibetans, promoting research and exchanges between Tibet and Western countries.

The activities and programs held in the three main centres of the SSI are considered to be the base of the International Shang Shung Institute activities. These three main seats are located in Italy, in the United States of America and in Austria. Further branches have since been founded in Argentina and in Russia. Having established a solid base for the International Shang Shung Institute over the years, we are always looking for ways to further our activities. To best way to support

all activities of the Institute is to become a member of the Shang Shung Institute. On <http://www.ssi-austria.at/shop/shope54.php> you can subscribe or renew your membership. On our websites you will also find more information about our specific programmes.

Very best wishes and thank you for your support,
Oliver Leick Director of the Shang Shung Institute Austria
Gschmaier 139 8265
Gr. Steinbach Austria
Cell phone: 0043 676 3221365
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www.shangshunginstitute.org
www.ssi-austria.at ©

SSI School of Tibetan Medicine Now Accepting Applications for Fall 2010

The American branch of the International Shang Shung Institute is now accepting applicants for the Fall, 2010 class of our four-year School of Tibetan Medicine.

With a history going back over 2,500 years, traditional Tibetan medicine is one of the oldest continuously practiced healing systems on Earth. Regarded as science, art and philosophy, it is an ancient form of holistic health care indigenous to the Tibetan people that integrates the core Buddhist principles of altruism, karma and ethics. Over thousands of years, Traditional Tibetan medicine evolved from accumulated empirical knowledge from China, Persia, India, and Greece. It has been practiced continuously in Tibet and is still

practiced today wherever Tibetans live in exile.

In the Fall of 2005, the American branch of the Shang Shung Institute initiated the four-year program in Tibetan Medicine under the direction of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo. This program closely parallels the training of a traditional Tibetan physician culminating in a supervised internship and final exams.

Each semester of the four-year curriculum combines a tripartite approach to the study of the Tibetan medical tradition that includes foundation core studies based on the topics of the Four Tantras, complimentary studies in Tibetan language and culture, and clinical practicum. Students in the Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan medi-



cine can expect to receive training that thoroughly covers all the traditional topics, presented in English. For those students who complete the first eight semesters onsite, an optional internship at the Northeast Traditional Tibetan Hospital in Qinghai, China will be available at the conclusion of their studies.

The Shang Shung program offers eight consecutive semesters, each consisting of 300 total hours. Each week, students will

participate in 20 hours of classes. Among these 20 hours per week; 16 hours are used for lecture, 2 hours for Tibetan language and culture studies, and 2 hours for a clinical practicum. There are no electives or part/time study options in the Tibetan Medicine four-year program and students are expected to participate in all aspects covering each semester's topics. Classes meet for 2.5 consecutive days a week. This way, students have time during the

week for study, work, and time for other obligations.

More details, and an online application are available on our website at www.shangshung.org. The secretary of the American branch of the Shang Shung Institute can also be contacted at secretary@shangshung.org or by phone at +1 (413) 369-49 28.

Shang Shung Institute – USA

Summer Intensive Program

Dear all,
The Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine is pleased to announce our new Summer Intensive schedule for 2010! Please note that registration can be completed online for each of these courses at www.shangshung.org/store.

For more information regarding any of these courses, please contact the Shang Shung Institute secretary at (413) 369-49 28 or secretary@shangshung.org

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

History of Tibetan Medicine

Instructor: Menpa (Dr.) Yang Ga
May 7–9, 2010
9 am–12 pm, 2 pm–6 pm
Price: \$225 for the General Public
\$ 75 for Students and Seniors
\$ 125 to attend by webcast
(Special introductory Offer!!)



This course will be *webcasted*! You can register for the password-protected live internet webcast on our online store!
10% discount for Meritorious Members of the Shang Shung Institute.

The Tibetan science of healing contains knowledge compiled and disseminated since antiquity by the Tibetan people. One of the oldest continuously applied healing systems on the planet; Tibetan Medicine remains a vital and living tradition.

Evolving over many centuries, Tibetan healers gradually created new techniques for protecting life, which increased the productive work and happiness of individuals, and treated illness. Students will be introduced to the historical origin and developments of the Tibetan medical tradition, with an emphasis on how the key topics evolved to their present stage.

Menpa (Dr.) Yang Ga

At the age of 20 Menpa Yang Ga enrolled in the Department of Tibetan Medicine at the Tibet University in Lhasa, where he studied Buddhist philosophy, Tibetan Medicine, Astrology, Grammar, Poetry, and History, as well as Sanskrit. He studied with the late Khenpo Tsenam, the late Khenpo Tsultrim Gyaltzen, Professor Champa Triles, Professor Gojo Wangdu, and the late professor Samten. In 1991 he graduated from Tibet University. Upon graduation, Khenpo Tsenam, the vice president, appointed him as a teacher of Tibetan medicine at the college. In September 1999 he became one of the first students to begin a Masters Degree in Tibetan medicine. Under Khenpo Tsenam's supervision in 2002 he finished his thesis and received his Masters. In September 2003, he enrolled in Harvard University, and presently he is completing the final stages of a PhD program in the department of Inner Asian and Altaic Studies under Professor Janet Gyatso's supervision.

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Ka-Ter Beginning Tibetan Language Intensive

Instructor: Fabian Sanders, professor, University of Venice
August 6–12, 2010
10 am–12:30 pm, 3 pm–5:30 pm
Price: \$375 for the General Public
\$ 280 for Students and Seniors
10% discount for Meritorious Members of the Shang Shung Institute.

Prerequisites: This course is open to the Public. It is advisable, although not necessary, for students to know the Tibetan alphabet before attending the course.
This exciting new initiative is aimed to give an intensive introduction to the Tibetan language

as part of the Ka-ter Translation Program.

For a number of years, similar courses have been held at the Shang Shung Institute – Italy. As it is not always easy to travel to Italy, this program was devised so that interested students can study Tibetan Language in their own country under the guidance of a qualified visiting teacher.



Curriculum:

- A. The first three days of this course are designed to enable reading and correct pronunciation and also to give an overview of the language. The following material will be covered:
1. The importance and beauty of the Tibetan language.
 2. The structure of the language; grammar as a sacred science; Dharma Language (chos skad).
 3. Sanskrit and Tibetan.
 4. The alphabet; the relationship between signs and sounds; basic reading skills with reference to texts of practice if the course is restricted to practitioners, otherwise reference is to more general texts; notes on Sanskrit letters and pronunciation.
 5. Presentation of available materials for the study of Tibetan language.

B. The second four days of the course help the student establish a firm basis for further study of the language and perform actual translation. After completing this course, students are now qualified take part in future Shang Shung Institute Tibetan Translation Trainings. The following material will be covered:

1. Translation: history, principles, techniques and problems.

2. The question of technical Dharma language.
3. Syllables, words, sentences and discourse.
4. Names (ming tshig) and Connectors or Particles (tshig phrad).
5. The eight cases of Tibetan grammar.
6. Connectors or Particles not related with case.
7. Examples and exercises.

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Tibetan Astrology I

Instructor:
Menpa (Dr.) Lobsang Namkha

August 27–31, 2010
8:30 am–12:30 pm, 2 pm–4 pm
Price: \$375 for the General Public
\$ 125 for Students and Seniors
10% discount for Meritorious Members of the Shang Shung Institute.

Prerequisites: This course is open to the Public

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Tibetan Astrology II

Instructor:
Menpa (Dr.) Lobsang Namkha

September 1–3, 2010
8:30 am–12:30 pm, 2 pm–4 pm
Price: \$225 for the General Public



\$75 for Students and Seniors
10% discount for Meritorious Members of the Shang Shung Institute.

Prerequisites: Tibetan Astrology I
Offered for SSI Medicine Program Students and previous Astrology course attendees.

Tibetan Astrology is a traditional practice used by Tibetan doctors and Lamas. The study of the Five Elements, combined with trigrams, numbers, and animal signs, form the basis for astrological calculations. Participants will learn how to accurately read and create Tibetan astrological calendars for their personal use.

Menpa (Dr.) Lobsang Namkha was born in Amdo to a nomadic yak-herding family. At a young age he entered Tharchul Monastery where he studied Tibetan Buddhism, Buddhist Philosophy, and Tibetan Astrology. Later, at Labrang Monastery, Lobsang continued his studies in Astrology and Astronomy as well as in Tibetan Medicine, Tibetan Grammar, Sanskrit Grammar, and Poetry. In 1994, he went to India where he taught Tibetan Astronomy, Astrology, and Sanskrit Grammar to instructors at Kirti Monastic College for one year. He also served as a teacher at Tsechokling Monastery in Dharamsala. He has published a history of his home village, and also writes poetry in Tibetan and English. Lobsang currently resides in New York City.

For more information on any of these summer intensive courses, please contact the Shang Shung Institute secretary at secretary@shangshung.org or (413) 369-4928. ©

Tibetan Medicine Video Webcasts

The American Branch of the Shang Shung Institute would like to announce the remaining monthly Tibetan Medicine video webcasts to be taught by Menpa (Dr.) Phuntsog Wangmo this spring. We have received many requests for this service, and we are happy to finally be able to provide this wonderful opportunity to learn about Tibetan Medicine from anywhere in the world.
Anyone with an ample internet connection and a web browser should be able to connect to

this *free* service. Each month's topic, dates, and times are below.

How does this work? Simply click on the following link, or type the following web address into your browser on Friday, October 2nd between the hours of 7pm and 9pm EST (Time zone of Boston or New York City):
<http://213.203.141.7/ssi-usa/>
If you live far from Northampton, MA, don't forget to check your local time for this event before attending. You can do this on the following page:
<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

If you would like to donate to the costs needed in order to help the Tibetan Medicine live webcast project continue, please click here to donate directly through the SSI-USA online store, or contact us directly at: secretary@shangshung.org or 413-369-4928.

Want to hear on-demand audio replay of past public talks? They are available at the following address: <http://www.shangshunginstitute.net/ssi-usa/replay/>

Please feel free to write us with any questions or comments about this service at: secretary@shangshung.org.

Thanks very much, and we look forward to continuing this wonderful project!

Anna Bartenstein
Administrative Director
Shang Shung Institute – USA
www.shangshung.org
www.shangshung.org/medicineprogram/publictalks/publictalks.php

Upcoming Sacred Conduct of the Tibetan Physician

Friday, April 2, 2010 7–9 pm
A physician holds one of the highest and most respected roles in traditional Tibetan society. In this workshop Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo will share her understanding of what kind of conduct

is necessary in order to carry the title of a Tibetan doctor.

Properly Harvesting and Processing Herbs in Tibetan Medicine

Friday, May 7, 2010 7–9 pm
In the Tibetan tradition all herbs are considered medicine, but there are a number of guidelines on how to properly harvest and process them. These include the location where they are picked, the correct time to pick, and how to detoxify, dry, store, and prepare the herbs as medicine. ©



In this issue of *The Mirror*, our Focus is on the ‘Longsal Cycle of Teachings’ or ‘The Innermost Essence of the Dakinis of the Luminous Clarity of the Universe’, the collection of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s rediscovered teachings. Most of these teachings were received through his dreams of clarity and daytime visions over a period of many years. His fortunate students have been able to receive these teachings and benefit from his great wisdom and clarity.

These Longsal Teachings have been translated from the Tibetan and edited by Adriano Clemente and, to date, gathered and published in eight volumes by Shang Shung Edizioni.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu kindly gave an interview to *The Mirror* at Tashigar South about various aspects of these precious teachings that we are very happy to publish here.

The Meaning of Longsal

Tashigar South March 5, 2010

The Mirror: Rinpoche, your series of Longsal Teachings is called “Longchen Osel Khandro Nyingthig”, which means the “Longsal Cycle” or “The Innermost Essence of the Dakinis of Luminous Clarity of the Universe”. What does ‘Longsal’ literally mean and why have you chosen this title for your Longsal series of Terma Teachings?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: ‘Long’ means *longchen*, universe, and refers not only to our consideration of the universe, but also the total universe in all its dimensions. In the teaching we have the dimensions of Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya, pure and impure dimensions, so the universe includes all these kinds of dimensions. That is called *long*. Then *longchen*: *chen* means total. *Ösel* stands for light, which means that all sentient beings have that original potentiality represented by light, and so the light represents all the dimensions of the universe.

‘Khandro Nyingthig’ means knowledge is related to energy and energy is the principle of functioning. The teaching needs to function for one to have realization, to get into one’s real nature, and that kind of functioning is connected to the *dakini*. The *dakini* are the sign of the energy of the entire universe. For example, ‘Nangwa yabla tongpa yum’ means that visions are like *yab*, while the *yum* represents their potentiality or real function. We can then understand what *dakini* really means, not just some beings flying and walking in space. Many people consider *dakini* to be like that, but you should go into the real sense. Then *nyingthig* means the essence of knowledge: *nying* means center, the center of all knowledge, *thig* means something like *thigle*, potentiality, and is really the potentiality of all the existence of the teachings. So when we make this title shorter, we say *longsal*. This is the short version of the title.

M: Many terma cycles are rediscovered teachings, in the sense that the master who first taught them, for example Guru Padmasambhava, felt the time for them to be taught and practiced had

not come yet, so he intentionally concealed them for the future *tertön* to discover. Is this Longsal Cycle like this or not? What in general are the different kinds of *termas* and which of these types are *longsal*?

ChNN: Most *terma* traditions come from Guru Padmasambhava, and then later also from his disciples who discovered different kinds of *terma* teachings. But we cannot say this tradition is only related to Guru Padmasambhava and did not exist before. Of course, a physical teacher did not give all teachings, particularly Dzogchen teachings and Sambhogakaya to Nirmanakaya teachings, to physical students. Many of these teachings are discovered and received in a different way and this is called *terma* – *terma* through mind, through visions, etc.

Guru Padmasambhava hid many teachings knowing how the *kaliyuga* would be, how the condition of human beings would get worse and worse and how there would be more problems and less time. He knew how the teachings would be able to help beings and which kind of teachings would be needed, so connected with time, many of his disciples would be reborn in certain periods and would discover and spread those teachings. This is called *tertön* and *terma*.

Sometimes a *terma* is discovered that has been put in someone’s mind, and also a *terma* on the material level that has been put in a statue, in a rock, or in different objects. Some teachings come from different kinds of *drönbu*: materials inside something, the seeds of the teaching, some seed syllables or signs of this teaching, and when the *tertön* has a connection with this *drönbu*, all these teachings can appear through this *drönbu* in a particular place, at a particular time and are written down and spread. It can also be like this.

In the Longsal Series there are all these aspects. Most of my *longsal* teachings, however, have come through dreams of clarity, sometimes meeting teachers and the teachings appear or are received. Sometimes I receive the teaching, but I am not able to write it

down. If it is a mind *terma* there is no problem to write it down; I have also had this kind of experience. Most of these teachings are received in dreams and I write down just a little. If the dream is not finished, later I may see some sacred places with writings on rocks and have the opportunity to read them, or sometimes there are some books connected with this teaching and I am able to read the books. Other times when the *terma* is not finished, my teacher Changchub Dorje or my uncle Khyentse Rinpoche help me to finish it. There are also specific guardians related to the *termas* called *mentsün*, which is a class of *dakini* who protect and work around this teaching and also help to finish it. There are different aspects of these *termas* and we cannot say they manifest in only one way.

M: Rinpoche, has your series of Longsal Terma been transmitted by one particular *dakini* through dreams?

ChNN: Most of these *longsal* teachings are connected with that *dakini* from whom I later also received the Vajra Dance. I discovered that her name is Sukha Siddhi and she is something like an emanation of Goma Devi. There is also a *yogini* called Sukha Siddhi from the Shangpa Kagyu tradition, who lived in India. The Sukha Siddhis share the name but not the principle. They are different. The source of the Dzogchen teaching is Goma Devi who was originally a student of Garab Dorje – only two generations from Garab Dorje.

M: Are all Longsal teachings primarily related to Dzogchen and Anuyoga, or have you chosen to focus on those teachings in the Longsal cycle that are related to these more than other aspects?

ChNN: Yes. This teaching of Goma Devi that we have is related mainly to Dzogchen and Anuyoga. In general, we find Goma Devi in the teaching lineage of the Nyingmapa tradition, in all the three series of Tantras, Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga, called *nang gyü de sum*. Goma Devi is very important.

M: Do these *longsal* teachings need to be kept secret and in what way are they more secret than other teachings, for example?

ChNN: The nature of Dzogchen knowledge is secret. Ordinary people who have no capacity or fortunate circumstances cannot meet or receive this teaching and even if they receive it they cannot understand it or sometimes they understand it in the wrong way. For that reason in this teaching it is very important that teachers know if their students have that kind of fortune or condition, if it exists or not. We cannot diffuse this teaching everywhere to people who do not have at least a connection with this teaching.

M: Can *longsal* be called *gongter* (mind treasure) or *tag nang* (pure vision), or is it both?

ChNN: It is both. There is also a way through the mind. I am able to write things because the *dakini* and teachers sometimes empower something in my dreams and I can later write it down. I am not saying I am like a *tertön* in the Nyingmapa tradition, who has the capacity to write everything down. All the *longsal* writing has been a bit of a sacrifice. Many writings have to be continued as sometimes there is an aspect of *tag nang*; there are many visions through dreams, and also some things that are not a dream. Sometimes there is a vision in the daytime during my practice showing a precise connection so in that way it can also be a kind of *tag nang*.

M: So is there a difference between mind and dream *terma*?

ChNN: There is not very much difference between mind *terma* and dream because mind *terma* always has its origin through our mind. A dream is also connected with that so there is not much difference.

M: What is the origin of this Longsal Series and the lineage?

ChNN: In the Longsal Series lineage there are teachings related more to Anuyoga and sometimes more to Dzogchen. The origin of the teachings of *longsal* is always at the level of the Dharmakaya. Then, of course, the teachings of

the Sambhogakaya manifest in a different way. For example, our most important Nirmanakaya teacher, Garab Dorje, received many transmissions of the Sambhogakaya aspect from Vajrasattva, and sometimes many of these transmissions were also received from an aspect of Vajrapani. They can also be received from five different Dhyani Buddhas, so we cannot not say there is only one way. It depends on which kind of practice is related to Sambhogakaya and which to Dharmakaya.

M: How many of your cycles of Longsal Teachings have been revealed already and how do you receive permission to reveal them to your students?

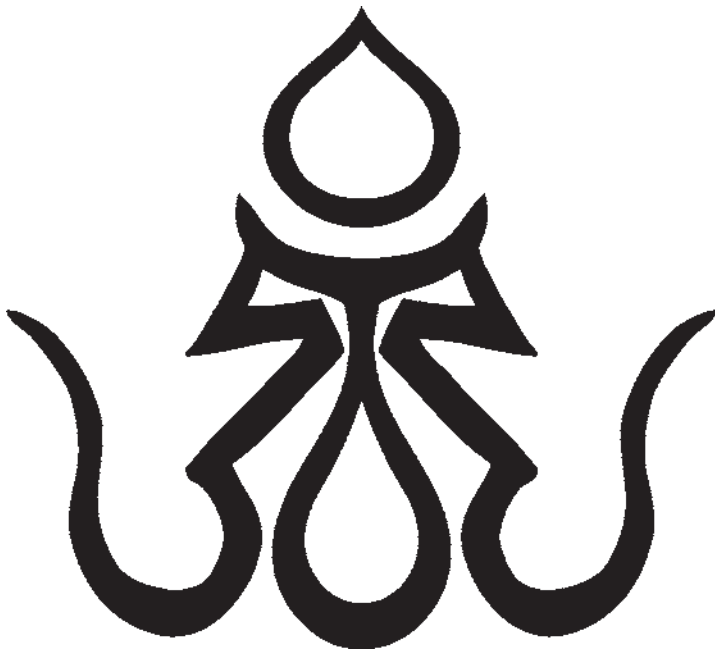
ChNN: I have already communicated and taught many of these Longsal Teachings to my students. But this does not mean I have taught everything, because there are some teachings that must be given in a different way to people who really have capacity and show their capacity, otherwise the teachings create problems for people who have no capacity.

M: Who are the main guardians of these Longsal Teachings?

ChNN: The main guardian of these teachings is, of course, Ekajati. The second most important guardian related to this teaching is Dorje Yudrönma who is also related in some sense to the manifestation of Ekajati. So then Dorje Yudrönma and Tseringma are called *mentsün*, which means something like a *dakini* but also refers to something dominating more the Nirmanakaya dimension. For example, there is a very famous mountain that is sacred to Dorje Yudrönma in Bhutan and the mountain sacred to Tseringma is also in the region of the Himalayas. They are sacred places and that means there is some connection at the level of Nirmanakaya. But of course this is relative, and in the real sense they always protect the teachings and have their dimension not only on this earth but also in different dimensions.

M: Can you tell us a little about the first time you received indications of this Longsal Terma?

ChNN: The first time I received the Longsal Terma I was seven years old and I received a kind of *drönbu* in my hand. At that time I had no knowledge of these things. I discovered the right side of the Longsal teaching sign later when I was thirteen years old, and these signs appeared very often in my dreams. I had some interesting dreams, but I still did not have much idea or knowledge about them. I had these kinds of dreams at the time I was traveling from East to Central Tibet and also a dream of the Dorje Yudrönma guardian, and in that period the *longsal* sign became something concrete. I also received some information about a practice called *tra*, which means doing a rite in a mirror where letters, forms or colors that indicate something appear in the mirror.





Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Sikkim in 1959.

I did that practice later when I arrived in Sikkim in 1959 and in that period some indications appeared in the mirror of this kind of teaching. Since that time the *longsal* sign has developed. But the total *longsal* sign, this main one, appeared later and I received it at almost the same time as I received the teaching of the Dance of Vajra.

M: Does the appearance of one part of the *longsal* sign and then another have anything to do with how the *terma* develops?

ChNN: I have received many signs and teachings, and one of them that appeared is related to the sign of the *longsal*. The right side looks like the number three and the left side looks like number three reversed. I saw this central sign and later in my dream it developed totally and I understood and discovered that these partial signs are related to the complete one. Once I had experienced the total sign, then many Longsal teachings developed completely.

M: Often in *terma* teachings there is a person called a *chödag* or *terdag* – the owner or one responsible, for example, for the Vajrapani *terma*, you, Rinpoche, are the *terdag*. Do we know who is the *terdak* for this cycle of Longsal Terma Teachings?

ChNN: *Chödag* and *terdag* mean that there is a student closely related to the person who has received the *terma* and the teaching, and that student becomes the *terdag* or *chödag*, which means they spread or become the upholder of that teaching and transmission. This is related to lineage.

You know, for example, that in the teachings, not only in Dzogchen, but also in any kind of Vajrayana teaching, first of all there is a teacher and then the teacher teaches the students. Sometimes there are very good students who have some knowledge of the teachings, like an imprint – all the teaching is very precise and they do not invent, add, change or modify anything. These kinds of students are like *chödag* or *terdag* and the teachings continue. Many of these are *terma* teachings from famous *tertöns*, famous teachers. For example, the Chöd practice is the family lineage of Machig Lapdron. The Drukpa Kagyu and the Sakyapa traditions are also continued through their children. In these

lineages they received complete transmission and the lineage from their fathers. Then they became good practitioners and became *chödag* and *terdag* and teachers.

In Tibet we have many lineages through reincarnations. The Karmapa was the first official reincarnation lineage. There was the first Karmapa then there was his reincarnation, who received the first Karmapa's teaching and transmission and continued it. That is just like a family lineage, the same thing. For example, some good students become *chödag* or teachers and later their sons or reincarnations receive the teachings and then they become the holders of that lineage and give that teaching. Reincarnations of serious teachers are reborn in order to benefit and continue transmitting to their students.

For that reason sometimes the reincarnations alternate. You can understand this through the situation of the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama. One Panchen Lama dies and then later a reincarnation comes; that reincarnation receives the transmission from the Dalai Lama. When that Dalai Lama dies, his reincarnation receives that transmission from the Panchen Lama and they continue by alternating the reincarnation of this transmission. That is the reason why teachers reincarnate – to maintain the transmission seriously and perfectly. It is important to understand how the teaching is continued for the lineage.

M: Can there be different *terdag* for different phases of the *longsal* cycles?

ChNN: We do not name a *longsal terdag* publicly like in some kind of bureaucracy. Sometimes there are indications in a *terma*. For example, when I was three years old Peyu Karma Yangtse recognized me as the reincarnation of Adzom Drukpa and gave me the name Jamyang Rolbe Dorje. Then I saw the *chödag* and *terdag* in a series of *trag nag* teachings of Changchub Dorje and received the transmission of the series of *trag nag* mainly from the son of Changchub Dorje. In this teaching there are also indications of *chödag* and *terdag* and my name, Jamyang Rolbe Dorje, also appears. This means there is some connection and firstly it means the connection is to my knowledge because my knowledge of Dzogchen teachings woke up through my connection with my teacher Changchub Dorje. Before I met Changchub Dorje I had received many important teachings from many important teachers, also of Dzogchen, but I did not have that precise knowledge. After I had this knowledge I spread it. For example, when I started to teach Dzogchen teachings there were not many students, and now in this world, in this globe, there are a great number of my students of Dzogchen and many have knowledge of Dzogchen teaching.

M: What exactly is a cycle of *longsal* teachings and how does one know when the cycle is complete, for example?

ChNN: A cycle of *longsal* means there is a relationship between all these different teachings - they are of the same family, the same transmission, most are related to the transmission of Goma Devi and they are connected. This is a cycle.

M: What does the future hold for the Longsal teachings?

ChNN: The future of the Longsal teachings is that we work with circumstance. Something that I noticed very concretely is my son Yeshe who was recognized by Sakya Trizin and is a reincarnation of my uncle, Khyentse Rinpoche. When Yeshe was recognized I was not one hundred percent sure of that, but I also had some dreams and then I thought maybe there are some things connected with my uncle. My uncle had very precise knowledge of Dzogchen teachings and a very high-level capacity and knowledge. That I know very well.

My son Yeshe is manifesting himself. That is what I was waiting for. When I discovered that my son had been recognized as my uncle's reincarnation, some Sakyapa monasteries in India wanted to invite Yeshe to educate him. They sent me letters and requests several times. I told them that my uncle had made sacrifices during his life and had had many difficulties, also with the monasteries, and he did not like to be in the monasteries or at the service of them. He had wanted to do personal retreat and practice and so he had had many difficulties until the end of his life. I remembered that and did not want to create any problems for Yeshe as the reincarnation of my uncle. I wanted to wait. One day if Yeshe is really a reincarnation, he will manifest, and that is what I need. I never forced him to follow the teachings. Many Dzogchen Community people remember Yeshe as a child playing nearby when I gave teachings. Later I discovered that he listened and discovered and showed indications of that. I did not do anything in a particular way. Yeshe grew up receiving many teachings and transmissions.

Later when I went to Galenting, in Tibet, the people of Galenting, especially the old people whose root teacher had been Khyentse Rinpoche, asked to see Yeshe before they died. They asked me to inform my son of their wishes. Of course I told Yeshe that they had invited him and wanted him to come to see Galenting. For example, I help them and do many things for them, but they do not insist on inviting me, they always insist on inviting Yeshe. So I communicated that to him. I never had much idea that he was interested in going; he never communicated that and I never conditioned him.

Later Yeshe went to work in an ordinary way and lived an ordinary life. He was very skillful at his job so he made a lot of money and for some years he worked that way. Later he said he wanted to visit Galenting and I was surprised, because I had never insisted that he go there. So he went and visited and had many dreams and remembered many things, and he was very surprised to find himself going ahead with the teaching.

Since that time Yeshe has given up his job and now he has dedicated himself to the teaching. He is learning Santi Maha Sangha and has done the training of the First Level. He is continuing all the teachings I have taught and given until today, everything. He has received most teachings many times. He is dedicated to doing practice and to learning, and he is also helping people and giving teachings. This is much more important than the Santi Maha Sangha Teacher Training of my students; although what they are doing is also very important, I think Yeshe has some deeper knowledge. This is also my hope for the future and Dzogchen Community people must understand this. This is something important.

M: So Yeshe could be the one to carry the Longsal Terma Cycle on for the future?

ChNN: Yes I think so.

M: Thank you very much Rinpoche for this beautiful interview and for your precious time.

Many thanks to Jacob Braverman and Enrico dell'Angelo for their collaboration in this interview. ©

Transcribed by Naomi Zeitz
Edited by Liz Granger and Naomi Zeitz
Tibetan consultant: Adriano Clemente



The Opening of the Gate to the State of Ati

The following is an extract from “The Opening of the Gate to the State of Ati (Ati’i dgongs pa sgo ‘byed)” from “Longsal Teachings, Volume Two” by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The first part describes one of Rinpoche’s dreams while the second is part of the root text.

This teaching, which was written down in 1977, is a special teaching of Padmasambhava that explains the conditions of the Teaching in this degenerated age and presents a practice of Purification of the Six Lokas based on the principle of ‘reversal’ (ru log) of samsara. The dreams through which the upadesha was discovered are connected to Padmasambhava himself and to the author’s root-guru Rigdzin Changchub Dorje (1826–1961).

On the tenth day of the first Tibetan month of the Wood-Tiger year [February, 1974], while I was living in Pozzuoli near Naples, Italy, in the early morning I had the following dream.

I was at Khamdogar, in the bedroom of my precious Guru, the Vidyadhara Changchub Dorje, asking him many questions of all kinds. And I asked:

“In this present time of turmoil, being able to practice for oneself is extremely difficult, not to mention helping others through the Teaching. In this situation, what is the best thing to do?”

My precious Guru, with a slightly sad expression, said:

“Oh, noble son! This is the extraordinary upadesha, easy to practice for oneself, for opening the gate to the profound meaning of Ati, the quintessential oral instruction that Padmasambhava, the Mahaguru of Oddiyana, has transmitted to us:

A

Alas! Human beings, always busy with activities,
Conceive the state of knowledge of Ati as mere words,
Modify the essence of the teaching with the law of the eight worldly concerns

And are all carried away by the distraction of emotions.
Externally, when the condition of the elements becomes disturbed,
there are the afflictions of earthquakes, landslides and drought.
Internally, for beings, (when) illnesses, famine and conflicts arise,
Activities and production are centered on wars and weapons.
In secret, because of the contamination of poisonous substances,
The Mamos and the Dakinis become irritated,
The Eight Classes of the Universe arise in conflict against one another
And all kinds of undesirable calamities happen.

In order to heal such a degenerated age
And establish all beings into happiness,
It is of crucial importance to practice
Such a timely method of the profound essence of Ati.
When beings have become miserable because their longevity,
Merits, activities and capacities etc. have greatly degenerated,
They must enter the unelaborated teaching of Ati,
The quintessence of (all) secret and profound (teachings).
Since all the essential aspects of the state of knowledge
Of the ocean of Vidyadharas of the universe are here included,
The empowering blessings of this teaching
Are immeasurable like boundless space.

Since this king of kings of Yoga
Is the total path that directly reveals self-liberation,
Any fortunate male or female person
That will enter into contact with it will certainly realize its purpose...
until:

SAMAYA GYA GYA GYA

So he recited many verses in a clear, elegant and pure manner. Then my precious Guru placed his hands in the resting mudra and, turning his eyes directly into space, said: “Now, then, let’s remain for a while in the state of the Three Vajras!”

and with a very melodious and majestic voice he pronounced:

OM

and remained relaxed for some time.

Then he pronounced:

AH

and did the same as before.

At the end he pronounced:

HUM

and remained like that for some time. At last he pronounced

OM AH HUM



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1972 when he was living at Discesa Gaiola, Naples.

Photo: R. Ventrella

all together and remained relaxed for some time, while I sustained the condition of total equality, in which mind and vision are not dual, in the state of the sound of the Three Vajras.

After some time my precious Guru said:

“Oh! These are the oral instructions of the Mahaguru Padmasambhava. If one concentrates the essential practice in the Three Vajras and the Six Syllables of the Universe, there is nothing missing. If one concentrates them in the Guru Yoga of the White A, which is their root, all the main points of practice will be included in it.”

I asked my precious Guru:

“Why are these Six Syllables of the Universe shown in reverse order?”

“This indicates the principle of reversal (of samsara)”, he replied.

Then, when I was about to ask another question, I woke up. As soon as I woke up I remembered clearly what I had dreamed, and so I immediately began to write down some notes. But even though I remembered all of the meanings, I was not able to write down all the verses without additions or omissions. Nevertheless, since that time I held all these meanings as the main point of my practice.

Root Text

A

Alas! Human beings, always busy with activities, conceive the state of knowledge of Ati as mere words, modify the essence of the teaching with the law of the eight worldly concerns and are all carried away by the distraction of emotions.

Externally, when the condition of the elements becomes disturbed, there are the afflictions of earthquakes, landslides and drought. Internally, for beings, (when) illnesses, famine and conflicts arise, activities and production are centered on wars and weapons.

In secret, because of the contamination of poisonous substances, the Mamos and the Dakinis become irritated, the Eight Classes of the Universe arise in conflict against one another and all kinds of undesirable calamities happen.

In order to heal such a degenerated age and establish all beings into happiness, it is of crucial importance to practice such a timely method of the profound essence of Ati.

When beings have become miserable because their longevity, merits, activities and capacities etc. have greatly degenerated, they must enter the unelaborated teaching of Ati, the quintessence of (all) secret and profound (teachings).

Since all the essential aspects of the state of knowledge of the ocean of Vidyadharas of the universe are here included, the empowering blessings of this teaching are immeasurable like boundless space.

Since this king of kings of Yoga is the total path that directly reveals self-liberation, any fortunate male or female person that will enter into contact with it will certainly realize its purpose.

Directly meeting the Ati teaching endowed with the six liberations, the great yoga so rare to find in the world, the quintessence of the Mind of the ocean of Vidyadharas, is a great fortune.

The pith of all the upadeshas of the profound meaning, the quintessence of the innermost essence of the Dakinis of the Clarity of the Universe, the ultimate essence that is the depth of the state of knowledge of Garab Dorje is this thigle that contains all scriptures.

On the basis of the five perfect conditions of external and internal interdependence and favorable circumstances of teacher, students, place, time and profound method, one must make all those with whom one establishes a relation realize the purpose.

The supreme teacher, a great transference vajra body like Garab Dorje or like me, Padmasambhava, through various spiritual activities appropriate to the beings to be taught, turns the wheel (of Dharma) for Vidyadharas and Dakinis.

The medium-quality teacher, any Vidyadhara who has realized the state of knowledge of Ati and is expert in the methods of tantras, lungs and upadeshas, knows the minds of the students and (the conditions) of place and time.

The inferior-quality teacher, who has absorbed the empowering energy of this path, has experienced all the main points of the upadeshas and has mastered the state of knowledge of Samantabhadra, teaches on the basis of the supreme bodhichitta.

The student (must be) one who has devotion and perseverance, who is interested in practicing contemplation, has awareness, a stable mind and very few doubts, abides by the command (of the guru), has no wrong view and is skilled in obtaining the necessary favorable conditions.

If the condition of the students is excellent, be they one hundred, one thousand, ten thousands or one hundred thousands in number, be they human beings or non-humans, they must be taught through the energy of loving kindness.

If the (perfect) condition of the students (is missing) and (there are only) unsuitable recipients, even with respect to one (student) total secrecy must be kept. In case the necessity arises, it is appropriate to remove the cataract of their ignorance by means of Mind Trainings.

The place of the Teaching must be in accordance with the conditions, capacities and necessities of those to be taught: a city, a town, a village, a street, a cemetery, a forest, a snowy area, an island, a rocky shelter, a hermitage.

(Concerning) the time of the Teaching, when favorable conditions of teacher and students are present, one must teach on the tenth day of the waxing and waning moon, on the full moon and on the new moon days, (that is) when



Pawos and Dakinis gather etc. and external and internal interdependent factors are present.

(Concerning) the Teaching, the quintessence of the state of knowledge of Samantabhadra must be directly introduced (in the student) through any (of these): the empowering energy, the symbolic methods, the Song of the Vajra, the oral transmission instructions.

If the direct introduction is not effective in oneself, although one may be rich in the learning of scriptures and logic, just like an island cut off by the ocean, one always remains very far from the meaning of Ati.

If one obtains concrete experience through the crucial points of Vision and Emptiness (related to) symbols, Clarity and Emptiness (related to) prana, Upadesha for Total Bliss (related to) thigle, one certainly gains definite Understanding.

The nature that has been precisely recognized is the unique dimension of the state of knowledge of Samantabhadra. This experience removes all doubts: this is the main point of the path of Ati.

(While) precise (knowledge of) Rigpa is the perfect Buddhahood, because of ignorance, which is the cause of the illusion of the three gates, the wheel of existence of the Six Lokas in the karmic vision of samsara revolves without end.

If one understands in one’s condition the entire basis of illusion, the way of being deluded and the illusory vision, the three gates reverse into the Three Vajras and all is perfected in the triple primordial (Ati) existence.

The ultimate essence of the Yoga of Ati, the definitive meaning of all the profound instructions, is just this state of knowledge of Samantabhadra, the supreme teaching endowed with the Six Liberations.

One may be very learned in the scriptures, logic and evidence, and have supreme intelligence for analyzing, but if this main point of the path is lacking, one will always remain very far from the definitive meaning. ☸



Photo: P. Makhaeva

Tregchöd in the Longsal Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Jim Valby

Rinpoche’s older sister, Jamyang Drönma, died in Lhasa on the 28th day of the 4th month of the female wood ox year, Western year 1985. On the final day of his weekly practices for her, Rinpoche completed writing a book of Tregchöd teachings, principally as a commemoration for his sister. The book is based upon Dzogchen Tantras and Lungs, the basic texts of learned masters, and his own personal experience. Rinpoche carefully edited and typed his book into his computer at Tashigar Sur in 1999.

On pages 125-181 in volume 5 of Rinpoche’s Longsal Teachings (SSE 2005, IPC-372EN05), we read that Rinpoche received his terma named The Upadesha on the Tregchöd of Primordial Purity in dreams in 1972, 1978, 1979, 1995, and 1998. While Rinpoche was teaching this wonderful terma at Tashigar Norte on Margarita Island in November 2005, he noticed the clear relationship between his Tregchöd terma and the Tregchöd book he had previously written as a memorial to Jamyang Drönma. So Rinpoche typed the root verses of his 1998 Tregchöd terma into his 1985 Tregchöd book, adding precise explanations of each verse and editing as neces-

sary. This new book truly unifies Rinpoche’s kama and terma teachings about Tregchöd. We are so fortunate! One of the many important Ka-Ter (kama-terma) projects of our Shang Shung Institute is the translation of this special book into English. Let us investigate the contents of this marvelous book.

After three invocations, Rinpoche explains that the prerequisite preliminary practices for this secret Dzogchen path are the mind trainings and rushen.

Next he explains the heart of the teaching with three sets of symbols: the unceasing energy-potentiality of OM A HUM, the self-perfected clarity of the Song of the Vajra, and the primordially pure essence of A.

Rinpoche then explains many details of this profound path in four subdivisions: how to become certain through the view, how to transcend concepts through meditation, how to overcome difficulties through behavior, and how to realize the goal beyond hope and fear.

Our view must transcend intellectual understanding. Individual practitioners have different capacities and must work correctly with the Master’s transmission. We must become certain that all

manifestations are the rolpa energy of the nature of mind, and we must become certain that the nature of mind is empty. Then we can develop our capacity and get more and more familiar with instant presence.

The transcendence of concepts through meditation is explained with three voluminous subdivisions: the twenty-one semdzins of gods and humans, the meditations of the great vehicles, and Buddha’s state of knowledge.

Through the practices of the twenty-one semdzins we learn how to relax, transcend fixations, and directly experience our real condition.

The meditations of the great vehicles are explained with three subdivisions: natural meditations, meditations which use supports to stabilize mind, and meditations to abide on spiritual levels.

Natural meditations include eight types of relaxation, as explained in the Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra: non-distraction beyond conceptual limits, clarity and limpidity beyond impurity, impartiality like space, effortlessness beyond structure, unceasing manifestations, clear primordial liberation, one-pointedness like an expert archer, and self-perfection beyond struggle.

The meditations which use supports to stabilize mind include chülen, tummo, and dream yoga. We can practice the five types of chülen with substances and the two types of chülen with

prana essence. We can produce the pleasurable heat sensation of tummo using prana energy or interdependent origination. Dream yoga is explained with six subdivisions: practice of the essence of channels and prana, detailed dream practices, illusory body practice, clear light practice, phowa practice, and bardo instructions. Because many of these methods to stabilize mind require kumbhaka, it is very important that serious Dzogchen practitioners learn and practice yantra yoga.

We can practice meditations to abide on spiritual levels in two ways: gradually or directly. The gradual way is to practice the 4 yoga contemplations of Dzogchen Semde, which are related to the meditations of Sutra and Mahamudra. Sutra has 4 yogas: yoga of the world, the path of seeing, the path of meditation, and the path of no more learning. Mahamudra has 4 yogas: one-pointedness, beyond concepts, one flavor and non-meditation. These 4 profound sections are each subdivided into low, medium and high capacities, with many details about meditation experiences. It is very easy to discover how our meditation practice is going. We can easily understand how to make progress in our practice by transcending our fixations upon specific meditation experiences.

The direct way to abide in the Buddha’s state of knowledge is

to totally relax in Tregchöd knowledge. First we must understand the 3 statements of Guru Garab Dorje. Second, we must integrate everything so that we can continue in the natural state.

We receive direct introduction from our Vajra Master, who uses any of 15 different methods to transmit primordial knowledge. We transcend all doubt with definitive concrete experience when we totally relax in the uncorrected natural condition of naked rigpa. We confidently continue in the 5 modes of the natural condition: primordial liberation, self-liberation, direct liberation, liberation from limitations, and liberation in the unique state.

The special instruction to continue in the natural state is the 4 chogzhag: mountain, ocean, rigpa, and manifestation. Rinpoche’s terma and commentary provide detailed explanations.

The section about the elimination of difficulties through behavior explains the self-liberation of emotions, the domination of manifestations, and the integration of disciplined conduct. The section about the goal beyond hope and fear explains recognition of the goal, using the goal as the path, and realization of the goal.

May many practitioners have the good fortune to meet, study and apply the profound Tregchöd teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu! ☸

Strong and Sweet: Longsal Retreat of Mandarava and Lhalung Sangdak

Karin Koppensteiner-Eisenegger

From January 16th to the 30th 2010 a Drupchen was held at Tashigar Norte, Isla Margarita, Venezuela. One week was completely dedicated to the practice of Mandarava and an Initiation of Mandarava. In the second week Chögyal Namkhai Norbu bestowed Trilungs of Lhalung Sangdak, Vajrapani in his pacific, joyous and ferocious forms. Rinpoche also gave explanation for this practice and a lot of advice for the practice.

About 700 practitioners from all over the world gathered at Tashigar Norte for another of the already traditional winter Retreats on the warm Caribbean island of Margarita. More than half

er. On it, visible from all sides, there was a huge silver vase on a base. It was wrapped in coloured silk and filled with Chüdlén pills, to be authenticated by our collective practice. Inside the vase there were also the Nöndrols of the Vajrapani practice. The first week of the Retreat was completely dedicated to Mandarava practice and especially the authentication of the Chüdlén pills. It was only in the second week, that we started to use the Chüdlén pills accompanied by the practice of Sogthik breathing.

In this second week we received the Trilung and clarification of another Terma of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, which is closely

melodious songs of the practice of Lhalung Sangdak.

It was in this second week, when we also started the Chüdlén practice, that my attention shifted more to the so-called “Comedor”. “Comedor” could be translated from Spanish as “Dining Hall”, but it was much more than a huge dining hall – without walls but with an enormous roof. A young and highly motivated team, who could recruit an international team of fruit cutters within minutes, ran the small kitchen in the adjacent building. It was also in this “Karmayoga kitchen” that a person from Russia made great quantities of pancakes while singing wonderful operatic music with the strong voice of a counter tenor. The pancakes tasted delicious.

The Comedor was also the communication hall for chats among old friends, new acquaintances, it offered W-Lan connections for



Photo: P. Makhaeva

of the practitioners came from Russia or ex-Russian countries and many from Europe.

Even before our arrival we had been warned of severe security problems regarding not only tourists, but also the islanders themselves. For us, who arrived from midwinter Europe, there was both the joy to be at a prosperous Gar, receiving most precious Teachings from our Master, being together with many practitioners in a warm climate in mid-winter, and on the other hand the fear to have our warm skin attacked by bandits during the daytime on the public roads a few kilometers from the Gar.

So from the very beginning, this Retreat – held in the huge painted Gonpa full of dedicated students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu practicing his Longsal practice of Mandarava together – contrasted greatly with our knowledge that we were in an oasis on dangerous ground. What a good image for what a practitioner of Dzogchen goes through anyway while on the path on samasric ground.

In the Gonpa, a big two story square altar had been built in front of the throne of our Teach-

connected to a Terma statue of Vajrapani, found by his paternal uncle Khyentse. We received this Terma Practice of Lhalung Sandak, going back to Guru Padmasambhava and Lhalung Palgyi Dorje.

There was a wonderful and rich Retreat program including Vajra Dance, also outside the Gonpa in the Vajra Dance pavilion. There was Yantra Yoga, and again Vajra Dance until late in the evening. There were groups practicing informally together in one of the intimate park-like places under the open sky in the morning, evening or at night.

To have a better understanding of the practices, there were lessons given mostly in the afternoon by some senior students in the shady Gonpa: Elio Guarisco shared his experience of the Mandarava Tsalung practices with us. Adriano Clemente explained about all three manifestations of joyful, peaceful and wrathful manifestations in the Vajrapani practices during some afternoons in the second week of the Drupchen. He also helped with the pronunciation of the Tibetan words and showed his fellow practitioners once again how easy it can be to find the right tune for the

the internet, so part of it sometimes looked like a sort of outdoor internet cafe. The Comedor also housed the improvised little stores where jewellery but also T-Shirts were sold, along with other “dharma-items” brought to Margarita from all parts of the world.

Only eight years after the purchase of the land of Tashigar Norte, the Gar has become a paradise garden of mango and other fruit trees and flowering bushes and climbing Bougainvillea, tended by a wonderful gardener. The Teacher’s house is only a few steps away from the huge Gonpa. This seems to be a good sign of the flourishing of the Longsal Teaching that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche dedicates part of his time to at Tashigar Norte.

A little village has also emerged at the edge of the Gar, where practitioners from many different nations, like in a small utopia, dwell together, practice together, and keep this Gar alive, after the crowds of sun-seeking practitioners have returned to their homeland into the northern hemisphere winter.

Then there is the gate, which had to be guarded day and night – and outside the dirt road to the



Photo: P. Makhaeva

poor village of Pedro Gonzales, a third world village on the edge of poverty.

Especially after sunset early in the evening this door became a visible division between us and them, the outside South American Island, and us, the visitors. Trusted taxi drivers had signs inside the windshield of the car such as: Tashigar Norte 007. They drove us safely to other secure places, hotels, beach areas, boarding houses.

For years I had been quite critical regarding the political

situation in and around Tashigar Norte. At this Drupchen, collaborating with our most precious Teacher, being in the wonderful Longsal surrounded by so many fellow practitioners, I felt a little ashamed of not having understood the vision of my Precious Master: to have a Gar close to ocean, sky and wind, a Gar that has many aspects: strong, magnetic, bitter and sweet, like Samsara itself, where we can learn to integrate, until there is no more dualism of that, and this. ©

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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Inauguration Speech

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Words at the Opening Ceremony
of the New Gonpa of Tashigar South

“I want to thank everybody very much who came for the inauguration of the new Gonpa and the Anniversary of the Twenty Years of Tashigar South. I also want to say thank you very much to the authorities here – for your presence and your collaboration and also your generosity for offering all these things. Thank you very much!

I am very happy that for many years the authorities and local people here have been collaborating and helping this Community to grow. They have also been helping us to overcome problems in general that we could have. I am very satisfied with the collaboration of all the authorities and local people.

This collaboration is something very important because what we learn, study and apply here in our Community is how we collaborate, how we become

more aware in our daily life and our actual situation.

Many people think that we have a group of spiritual centers and we do some mysterious practices, etc. [laughter] If we want to, we have the possibility to do mysterious and spiritual things, [more laughter], but the most important thing we learn is for everyone to become a little more aware of their situation and to be able to live freely in our society; with less problems and less tensions. In that way, to study and apply, we also need the dimension of a place.

You see here in this hall [the Gonpa] we have two big circles. These circles [mandalas] are for dancing. Through this dance we coordinate our energy. That is useful for everyone. We also have many course of Yantra Yoga on the physical and energy level, for coordinating our energy. This is



Rinpoche and Officials.

Photo: T. Nguyen

a great service for modern society and citizens.

We can have more prosperity and happiness if all the people living on this globe become more aware and collaborate with less tension. These principles are related to this center, this place, where we apply this teaching and these practices.

Therefore, Tashigar South, the place where we can apply all this, is very useful and beneficial for all sentient beings and particularly

Spokesperson for the Mayor of Tanti

The words of Mr. Gustavo Llanes, Spokesperson for the Mayor of Tanti

“Good day everybody and thank you for inviting us to Tashigar. First of all, I want to greet all of you on behalf of the mayor of Tanti who could not be here because of his duties in the government. Together with the director of Tourism, Prof. Jorge McCormack, we want to give you this honorary diploma that says that this event is of interest for the Municipality of Tanti and also to declare Rinpoche as an honored guest of our town. It is true that at the beginning we received you as guests but now you are part of our community of Tanti and we are very proud and happy to be one community celebrating here together with all of you.”

The Inauguration of the New Gonpa, Losar & 24-Hour Naggon at Tashigar South

February 12-19, 2010

Naomi Zeitz

A few days before the Tibetan New Year we all met to celebrate the inauguration of the new Gonpa at Tashigar South. The day arose perfectly: sunny, warm and clear. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu arrived, cut the stripes of four colors and entered the Gonpa. Giovanni Boni and Alejandro Fabiano were the architects who designed the Gonpa as a collaborative effort.

The fresh, new space was filled with people, including three local officials from Tanti: the secretary of government from Tanti Town Hall, Mr. Gustavo Llanes, the Director of the Secretary of Culture, Sport and Tourism, Prof. Jorge McCormack (both on behalf of Mayor Ing. Alejandro Pérez Baroni, who couldn't make it) and Miguel Ángel Toscano, President of 'Cooperativa Tanti', that provides water, internet, telephone service, etc. It was clear that over the years a very warm and collaborative relationship has developed between Tashigar South and the local community.

When the accolades subsided, including honorary citizenship for Rinpoche from the Mayor of Tanti, Rinpoche gave a wonderful talk about the meaning of the Dzogchen teachings in daily life and society. (See this page) Finally, there was a festive champagne toast and the Gonpa was filled



Rinpoche cutting the ribbons for the new gonpa.

Photo: T. Nguyen

with a sense of joy, accomplishment and friendship.

At sunset a magical and royal gathering took place with Rinpoche, Rosa and all the Community friends. The display was very elegant; we danced and sang Tibetan songs around a big fire, two Community members performed a riveting tango and we ate and drank until there was no more room. At the end of the evening, some of the more hardy folks stayed on and danced under the starry night sky until the wee hours to all strains of music.

At 5am the next day, a swim in the pouring rain in Rinpoche's

swimming pool functioned as the traditional star water purification on the first morning of Losar, and later a Mandarava practice and Ganapuja to celebrate the new Tibetan year. After the Ganapuja there was again some singing and dancing - Rinpoche serenaded us with his melodic flute. He also helped us to clarify some of the Tibetan melodies we had been attempting to master over the past days. Then we played bagchen all afternoon and after our Teacher told us some story of his dreams. Everyone enjoyed!

On February 18th to 19th, we had a 24-hour naggon with long



Naggon, Rahula practice.

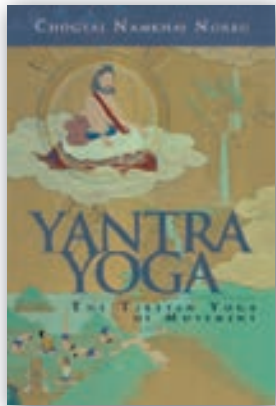
Photo: T. Nguyen

Guardian practice, including Rahula, Sang and Serkyem.

Rinpoche's stay in Tashigar South has been extended, so we will be privileged to continue to

bask in the rays of the luminous clarity of our precious Master for some more time.

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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Merigar West

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GR Italy

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merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it

www.dzogchen.it

Calendar of Events 2010

March

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

March 10
Worldwide Day of Vajra Dance
With Rita Renzi

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

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

March 17, 5 pm
SMS Base Level
With Fabio M. Risolo

Photo: L. Carniel

Yeshe Silvano Namkhai “Narag Ton Trug”

April 1st to 6th
This retreat is only for those who have already received transmission from the Master or a complete initiation related to Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga.

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

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

March 22-29
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Mandarava retreat
Webcast from Tashigar Sur

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

March 28
Psychosomatic relaxation workshop
With Gino Vitiello

March 31, 5 pm
SMS Base Level
With Fabio M. Risolo

April
April 1-6
Yeshe Silvano Namkhai
Narag Ton Trug Teaching Retreat

April 7, 5 pm
SMS Base Level
With Fabio M. Risolo

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

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

April 14, 5 pm
SMS Base Level
With Fabio M. Risolo

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

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

May
May 1
Sang and Serkyem offering
With Aldo Oneto

May 5, 5 pm
SMS Base Level
With Fabio M. Risolo

May 8-9
Semdzin retreat explanation and practice
Fabio M. Risolo

May 9, 11am
Kumar Kumari for children
With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi

May 22-23
Review of the steps of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra
With Rita Renzi

May 29-30
Conclusion of the SMS meetings
With C. Albini & F. Risolo

May 30, 11am
Kumar Kumari for children
With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi

June
June 18-20
Yantra Yoga course for advanced students
With Laura Evangelisti

Merigar Update

At Merigar West the winter is starting to relinquish its heavy grip and the biting cold and gusts of snow are gradually giving way to cool spring showers and low lying banks of grey clouds. The Gar lies in a little weather ‘pocket’ which means that it frequently experiences more extreme climate conditions than the surrounding area and in winter becomes a real ‘Little Tibet’.

Although the cold spell did create a few minor problems like making travel more difficult, the Gar has been able to host several courses and retreats over the last two months. In mid-January, Merigar was very happy to host an intensive long weekend retreat with Yeshe Silvano Namkhai and then another later in February. Then for the Tibetan New Year, Losar, on February 14, many people travelled from far and wide to celebrate at the Gar.

Things got started on the 29th day of the last month of the old Tibetan Earth Ox year with the traditional ‘soup of the 29th’, then on the last day of the old year there was a Ganapuja and a sumptuous dinner for more than eighty people prepared by Migmar and Paolo. In honour of the Tibetan new year, the usual plates of pasta were replaced by cauldrons of wild boar, venison, roast pork, tongue, Chinese mushrooms, spicy Tibetan potatoes and a number of unidentified meats.

The following day the Metal Tiger year began early with a purification practice and washing with ‘star’ water that had been left overnight under the benevolent twinkle of the stars. At noon, people gathered to do the long Mandarava practice together with Rinpoche who was webcast from Tashigar Sud in Argentina.

Over the last months the members of the Merigar West Gakyil have been continuing their work. They are currently taking stock of the entire situation at the Gar, both in the present and the past, in order to plan more carefully for the future, much as in many places of the world where the economic downturn is causing people to investigate their situations more fully and plan for the future with more care. Below, the different sections of the Gakyil set out what has been done, what is in the process of being done as well as future plans, according to their various duties/colours.

Yellow Gakyil

The Yellow Gakyil has prepared the budget for 2010 and planned expenditures based on estimated income. On the whole, regular income at the Gar (membership fees, retreats, courses, etc.) guarantees covering fixed costs such as services, utilities, staff, etc., but with a very narrow margin and means economizing on all other expenses. In particular, the costs of some of the services provided by Merigar West are very high, for example, the webcast service which is enjoyed by the entire Dzogchen Community around the world but the costs of which, at the moment, are en-

tirely covered by Merigar West. For this reason the Yellow Gakyil is examining in great detail the costs of managing the Merigar West complex over the years in order to study and pinpoint possible weak points or costs that are no longer sustainable and that can be optimized. The aim of this is to have greater savings while at the same time maintaining maximum efficiency.

Blue Gakyil

Merigar West is currently offering regular Santi Maha Sangha Base Level sessions with practice and explanations every month. The sessions are led by either Costantino Albini or Fabio Risolo. The Merigar calendar of events also includes two weekend courses of Santi Maha Sangha Level One with Elio Guarisco in March. For children we have organized sessions of Kumar Kumari, Yantra Yoga for children, which are held every second Sunday morning.

The Gakyil has been in touch with the Department of Education in Arcidosso in order to organize a presentation of Yantra Yoga and Kumar Kumari (Yantra Yoga for children). We hope to receive sponsorship from the Arcidosso Town Council for this. The aim of this presentation is to make teachers aware of the benefits that physical activities such as these can bring to both adults and children and to establish courses in the schools or the spaces that the Municipality make available to us. For this reason the presentation will be made by Gino Vitiello who is not only a Yantra Yoga teacher but also a doctor and a homeopath.

We have analysed the relationship between Merigar West and different Lings in order to improve communication and to collaborate in the organization of various courses (principally SMS Base and First Level and others). In this way the travelling expenses of teachers who come from more distant places will be shared with the various Lings involved, starting in Italy and then throughout Europe.

The Blue Gakyil has inserted Merigar West into the Facebook social network. The website is easy to access for everyone and a way to let members participate in what is taking place at Merigar. The Merigar West entry contains not only information about practices and courses which the office at Merigar mainly takes care of but also other events such as festivals, games, film showings etc., the moments that we spend together and have fun, as the Master and Yeshe Namkhai often remind us. We also have photos and films. There are five administrators who can insert material into the entry. We hope to hear from you soon on Facebook!

Red Gakyil

The Red Gakyil has started major work on enlarging Rinpoche’s house, Gadeling. The house is being enlarged on the north side. At the moment the foundations have been created and work done to drain the area and put down the sewage system. The old retreat house has been demolished and will be made into a larger parking area so that the Master can bring his car closer to the house. Unfortunately, the weath-

er has not been very good and so the work is progressing a little more slowly than planned.

Another work taking place at the moment is the creation of reinforced holes in the ground to support the long chestnut poles that are used to string up the prayer flags. The Red Gakyil is currently creating a series of reinforced holes that will go from the Gompa up to the parking lot, past Serkhang and down to the great Stupa and the Capannone.

Some parents may be interested to hear that a small mandala for children to practice a special form of Vajra Dance has been designed by the Molise ling in collaboration with the Red Gakyil and the Vajra Dance teachers. It will be a portable mandala and has already been ordered. The music of the OM A HUM Dance has to be faster for children according to Rinpoche’s indications, so at the moment the music is being prepared and will be composed by Roberto Cacciapaglia. The Gakyil would like to hold the first course of Dance for children at Merigar in April.

Another job being done is at the Capannone where last years heavy rains caused a landslide in front of the building. Work was done on this last year to bring the earth back and also to build a form of drainage just behind the building. This year a small stone wall has been built next to the drainage system in order to stop the earth sliding down.

With the arrival of the spring-time, work will soon start on the gardens around Merigar. ©

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai at Merigar West

Maurizio Piazza

February nineteen, twenty and twenty-one. Merigar West. As usual we started the retreat with rain but as always we finished with a blue sky. What could we expect other than this – Yeshi Namkhai said to us – what else could manifest at the end of each retreat if not a blue sky! Our real condition is like a blue sky, isn't it! It is obvious for Yeshi and it is also obvious for us. Three very full days of teachings listening to the words of Yeshi in the morning and Rinpoche's retreat in webcast from Tashigar Sur in the afternoon. Three days full of advice and explanations – of course – very useful and precious. At the last moment Yeshi changed his programme and decided to explain how the Base and the three Primordial Wisdoms are presented in the root

tantra of the Dzogchen Semde, the Kungyed Gyalpo.

For some years now Yeshi has been going around to all the Gars of the Dzogchen Community helping us all to work in a way that the precious gift we have received from Chögyal Namkhai

Norbu becomes more and more concrete within each one of us. He does this with a patience, devotion and care that make it obvious what it means to serve one's Master, what it means to have a real understanding of the teaching and unconditioned faith. He

shows us the attitude, the way in which we should practice and the way in which we should behave.

But then how could it be otherwise: the characteristic is that the teaching is perfect, so it manifests in a perfect way, but understanding depends on circum-

stances and thus depends on us, on our capacity to understand our potentiality, the way we are, and to observe how it manifests in our existence.

Today two wonderful masters have manifested, what could be more perfect than that. ©



Photo: L. Graf



Participants at the Santi Maha Sangha Base course held at Merigar West December 26–31.



Passages

Married: Janina Dan and Mario Apicella would like to thank all those of the Dzogchen Community for the many good wishes they received on the occasion of their wedding in Castel del Piano, Tuscany, Italy on November 18, 2009. ©

Austria

Yeselling
17–18 April 2010
Yantara of Coordination of Energy

Weekend practice seminar with Oliver Leick: basic breathing practices, preparation for Kumbhaka, basic movements of Yantra Yoga. Begins Saturday at 10 am, ends Sunday at 4 pm.

*
13–16 May 2010
Inner Rushen
Intensive practice seminar with Oliver Leick: Practice of Body, Voice and Mind. Thursday from 4–6 pm. Friday and Saturday from 10 am–12.30 am and from 4 pm–6.30 pm. Sunday from 10–12.30 am.
*

>> *Austria continued*
12–13 June 2010

The 7 Semdzins
Practice seminar with Oliver Leick

Fee: for all courses led by Oliver Leick, a voluntary donation of at least 35 Euro, for Yeselling
If you would like to participate in any of these courses or retreats, please contact us in advance
For further information please see:
www.yeselling.at
or write to : **gakyilaustr@aon.at**

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

France

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Dzogchen Teachings

Paris
Sunday 11th April 2010, 2 pm–8 pm
Meditation in Dzogchen
Public Talk
*
Monday 12th April, 6.30 pm–9 pm
Meeting Inter-Sanghas
with Sangha Loka of Paris – Teaching: **Dzogchen and Buddhicitta** and Ganapuja
*
Thursday 13th April 2010, 7 pm–10 pm
Nature Of Mind, Public Talk
Contact: **confparisdzogchen@yahoo.fr**
For more see the web site:
www.association-dzogchen.org
*

Dejamling
Southern France, has the great pleasure to announce the transmission by Yeshi Namkhai of **The Upadesha on the Total Behavior of Equal State**
Friday April 16th to Monday April 19th
All details on **www.association-dzogchen.org**
The teaching:
This Upadesha belongs to volume 8 of Longsal terma Teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It contains extraordinary instructions on how to deal with the five emotions according to the Dzogchen path of self-liberation. The dreams relating this upadesha are connected to the Mahaguru of Uddiyana Padmasambhava, to Rinpoche's uncle Khyentse Rinpoche Pawo Heka Lingpa (1910–1959/60), and to the ancient Sidha of Uddiyana, Aryapala.

The place:
Dejamling, a private valley (9 ha), consecrated by Rinpoche in 1998, lies in low mountains (alt 400 m) and is planted with green oaks, chestnuts, olives and figs. It is located 1 hour north from Montpellier (international airport and high-speed train) and 1 hour west from Nîmes (high-speed train). The weather in April is usually fine, with lunches out on the terraces. According to the number of people, this exceptional teaching will be held in the mandala room or in the village castle.
Accommodation:
On the land itself we have plenty of place for camping and a few beds available in dormitories.
Very near (4 kms) we strongly suggest the hotel “Le Mas de Cluny” (tel.: +33 (4) 67640681, **lemasdecluny@hotmail.fr**,

www.lemasdecluny.fr), which provides many comfortable rooms (Wifi, etc.) at extremely good rates (3 people 45 euros and 5 people 60 euros). If you are alone tell us we will find other practitioners in your situation for sharing a room.
Registration and fees:
Fees for the retreat are 200 euros with usual discounts for members.
For a better organization, it is necessary that you register in advance. Mail to **association.dzogchen@free.fr**, or leave message at +33 4 67824490 .

Laurent, for the gakyil
lmaurice@worldonline.fr

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: **acomodationservice@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.

Italy

Losar in Venice

by Marco Baseggio

Losar in Venice was an event open to the public and jointly organized by the Venice Dzogchen Community, the Centro della Luce Dorata A.P.S. and the Kagyu Samye Dzong of Venice. Besides the longlife practice of Mandarava with the Master that was reserved for practitioners only, the most wonderful experience was the demonstration of the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas. It was really amazing for the harmony among all the dancers



Losar in Venice. Photo: St. Bonetta and A. Chiavassa

Spain

New Gakyil

Blue: Amparo Far,
amparo_azul@dzogchen.es
Matthias Schmal-filius,
matthias_azul@dzogchen.es
Ester Escudero,
ester_azul@dzogchen.es
Assistants: Elena Rocchi, Anna Diogène,
Adela Moragas, Sachiko
Yellow: Pepa García,
pepa_amarillo@dzogchen.es
Luz García,
luz_amarillo@dzogchen.es
Sol Cañero,
sol_amarillo@dzogchen.es
Assistants: Olaya Martínez, Karina
Cantu, Gloria Pinsach
Red: Zhenya Rud,
zhenya_rojo@dzogchen.es
Isabel Vallejo,
isabel_rojo@dzogchen.es
Jordi Soler, jordi_rojo@dzogchen.es
Assistants: Luís Pascual, Carles Jáñez,
Toni Tejero, Núria Moreno,
Yolanda Benito

Best regards, The Gakyil
gakyil@dzogchen.es
www.dzogchen.es

Kundusling Barcelona organizes:
On the Santi Maha Sangha Project
A Guide on how to study and apply the teachings of *The Precious Vase* (focused on chapter IV)
led by Fabio Risolo
20th to 22nd March 2010
This course is the third of a series that Fabio Risolo is developing together with the Spanish Community in order to deepen in the knowledge of the Basis of the Santi Maha Sangha.

The Precious Vase is the study book of the Base of Santi Maha Sangha, which is a course of study and practice designed by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to deepen our knowledge of Dzogchen. Rinpoche has encouraged all people seriously interested in Dzogchen to learn at least the Base.
At Kundusling
c/ Passatge de la Pau, 10 bis,
08002 Barcelona, Spain
Who can attend?
This course is open to everyone who has received transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.
Contact
Elena, elena_azul@dzogchen.es for more information or if you need a place to stay during the Seminar
Website: www.dzogchen.es

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Dzogchen Retreat

The Spanish Dzogchen Community and Canary Islands are happy to announce a retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Tenerife, Canary Islands (Spain) May 21st to 23rd, 2010.
Retreat venue:
Oceano Vitality Hotel & Medical Spa
C. Océano Pacífico, 1, E-38240. Punta del Hidalgo (Tenerife-Canary Islands).
Further information:
Tel +34 (0) 922-15 60 00
Fax: +34 (0) 922-15 63 52
fabian.reyes@oceano-tenerife.com
www.oceano-tenerife.com
Information on the retreat:
elena_azul@dzogchen.es
(English, Spanish and Italian languages)
Price of the retreat: 150 euro (with usual discounts for members).
Further information about the area (Punta Hidalgo) and hotels:
www.bajamar-lapunta.com
To camp: Punta Hidalgo Camping, located 10 minutes walk from the retreat venue, may open if more than 12 people are interested in camping. People should bring camping facilities.
Those interested should contact elena_azul@dzogchen.es to make a request to the town Council.

and at the end we felt that we had never danced like that before! There were many activities during the event but certainly the presence of outside people who were able to have contact with the Master's Teaching created a feeling a responsibility among us.
A lot of people asked for information and want to come to see the Dance, and some of us felt like we were, once again, at the SMS Base exam for the type of questions that we received from practitioners of other Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions! However, everything went very well, the showing of a documentary on the trip to Kailash, the

buffet and even the other associations, each one of which presented something interesting from their own tradition.
It was an excellent Losar and the fact that it was a public event seems to have been fruitful. ©

Germany

Vajra Dance with the Song of Vajra, course for beginners, second part

with Karin Heinemann
Cologne, Dargyaling, 2nd–7th April 2010
Who can attend:
Those who have received the Dzogchen transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and have learned the first part of the dance.
Location:
Dargyaling, Centre of the German Dzogchen Community
Spielmannsgasse 14, 50678 Cologne
Information and registration:
Evelyne Kleinmayer
Tel.: +49 (0)170-432 11 70
evelyn.kleinmayer@dzogchen.de
Information and accommodation Cologne:
ling@dzogchen.de
www.dzogchen.de *

Jnana Dakini and Vajra Dance Practice Retreat

with Karin Heinemann
in Höfen, 4th–9th June 2010
Who can attend:
Those, who have received the Dzogchen transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and have learned the Vajra Dance. The participants organize inde-

pendently the overnight stay/catering and the reimbursement of the teacher.
Location:
Retreatzentrum Höfen
Höfen 12, 91460 Baudenbach
Registration for overnight stay:
Hans Vogel
Tel.: + 49 (0)9166-99 53 11
Fax: + 49 (0)9166-99 53 13
HansVogel@t-online.de
Information and registration:
Evelyne Kleinmayer
Tel.: + 49 (0)170-432 11 70
[evelyn.kleinmayer\(at\)dzogchen.de](mailto:evelyn.kleinmayer(at)dzogchen.de) *

Vajra Dance of the Three Vajras for beginners

with Karin Heinemann
in Munich, 9th–11th July 2010
Who can attend:
Those who have received the Dzogchen transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.
Location:
Studio Freitänzer
Euckenstr. 15 (rear build.), 81369 Munich
Information and registration:
Evelyne Kleinmayer
Tel.:+ 49 (0)170-432 11 70
evelyn.kleinmayer@dzogchen.de

UK

Rinpoche's teachings in London have been extended from 28th May to 1st June with the presentation of the 'Light of Kailash' on 2nd June at the Brunei Gallery.
Full information and booking:
www.dzogchencommunity.org

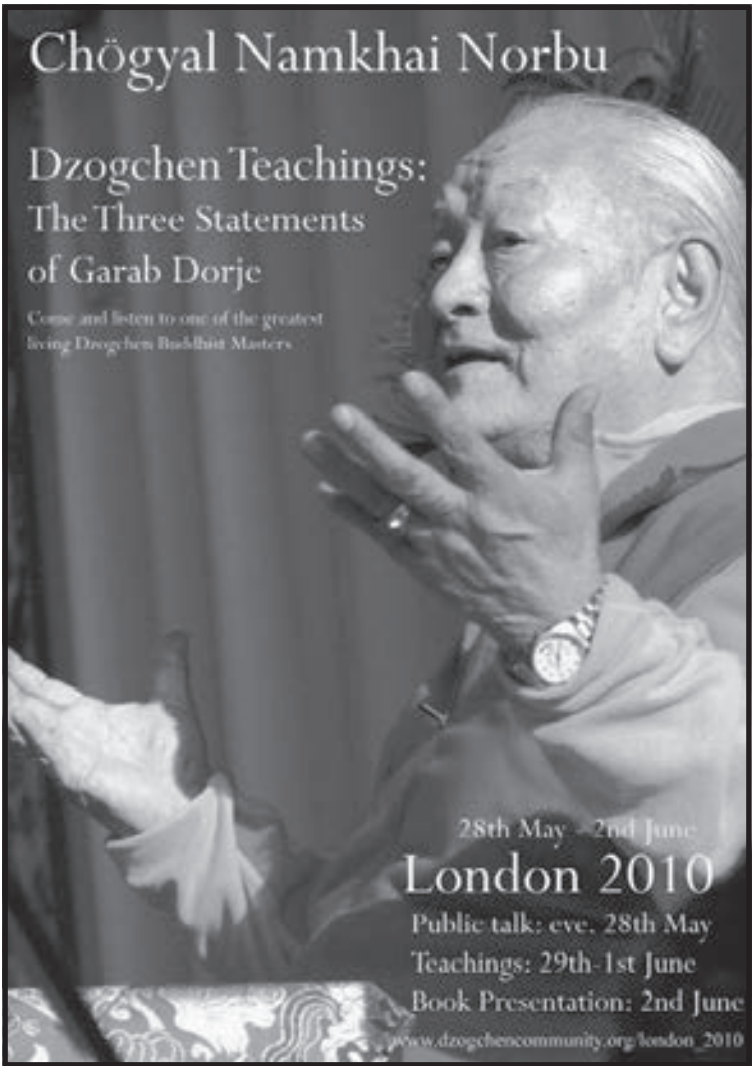
The Circle of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies presents
The Shang Shung Institute Annual Lecture
Professor Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:
“The Light of Kailash”

Wednesday 2nd June 2010 at 6–8 pm
in the Brunei Lecture Theatre
And Photographic Exhibition of Tibet with refreshments 5:30–9 pm
in the Brunei Hospitality Suite; School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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www.dzogchencommunity.org/london_2010



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www.dzogchen.ro

Gar Plans Finally Approved

Dear Vajra Family,
We have some important news from Merigar East!

We are very happy to share this joyful message with all of you: after a long time of waiting and a lot of efforts, finally our documentation has been approved by the local authorities and we can go forward with the development of the Gar! Thank you all for your support!

That means, the Gonpa construction can start soon and there will be a lot of work for everybody!

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Dzogchen Teaching retreat
9th of July–16th of July

We are very happy to announce that our precious Master is coming this summer 2010 again to Merigar East for more than one month (from the 5th of July to the 7th of August).

It is a very special place with its particular conditions. One of them is that apart from the Geko couple and few people from the neighborhood there are no practitioners on the spot. For that reason also the Gakyil of Merigar East is international (Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, Lithuanian).

As you know there will be a rich program for this summer at Merigar East:

Vajra Dance Teachers Training
with Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo
17th of July–22d of July

*
The Merigar East gakyil would like to announce

Santi Maha Sangha
1st Level Exam & 2nd Level Training
19–22 July and 23 July–1 August 2010

We would like to remind all of the candidates for the Exams to follow the SMS examination procedure (the official form should be filled in, approved by your local gakyil and sent to Shang Shung Institute a minimum of 3 months before the Exam) as is described on the website of Merigar West
www.dzogchen.it/dzogchen/teachings/santi-maha-sangha

For more information please contact your local gakyil or blue@dzogchen.ro

Karma Yoga at SMS Retreat

19th of July–1st of August

To organise such a long event Merigar East needs your participation. We are looking for:

- A Project Manager for the whole period or just a part of it (English speaking indispensable, management skills, experience is welcome but not mandatory).
 - Team Leaders that can take responsibility to organise different tasks starting from building the crew, ability to prepare things on distance and acting directly on the spot, in following directions:
1. Namkhai family service
 2. Gonpa
 3. Registration
 4. Audio/video recordings and webcast
 5. Kitchen/Catering/Cafe
 6. Ganapuja

7. Cleaning
8. Camping
9. Transportation (preferably Romanian speaking)
10. Accommodation (preferably Romanian speaking)
11. Security
12. First aid (professional medical workers)

There is no problem if you have never been a Team Leader before, here you have a chance to discover your capacities and develop them!

If you wish to do karmayoga and some small, particular works, you are very welcome to join one of the teams.

Please send your applications to red@dzogchen.ro

Only together are we able to create a fantastic and beautiful story like Retreat at Merigar East! Sun and Sea will help us!!!

With love, Merigar East Gakyil

Wintertime at Merigar East

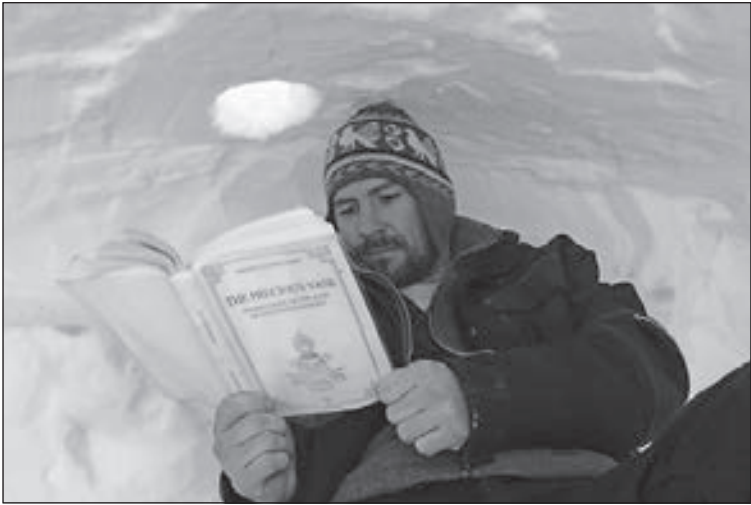
Greg Ladra

Usually the climate of Dobrogea, the very eastern province of Romania along the Black Sea coast, is hot in summer and mild in winter. Usually...

When, shortly before Christmas 2009, the first snow fell and a cold wind started to blow through the fields freezing everything in seconds, we thought

it was for a while. But in the following days when we realized that going from the Gar to the village, where we have a small office in Rinpoche's house, was not possible by car, it was a little less funny! Walking through the knee-deep fresh snow across the windy fields with -15°C is a nice but cold experience. Even Fiu the dog noticed that he prefers to travel by car. It was a strange feeling to see the white and frozen landscape where in summer everybody is used to walking around almost naked because of the heat.

Five times the big excavator from the Mayor's office cleared the snow on the road from the village up to the Gar, and five times, after a maximum of 3 days of freedom, it was covered by snow again. A kind of retreat situation, and so the flocks of geese, a red fox, hawks, rabbits or an owl became the highlights of the day! We also tried to use this extraordinary opportunity mostly for studying Santi Maha Sangha, observing impermanence of samsaric manifestations and not remaining in doubt that one day the spring will definitely come.



SMS-Igloo.

Photo: G. Ladra



Photo: Greg Ladra

The geko's house (Meribarn) bravely repelled the gusts of wild wind giving us a bit of peace and a warm space in the middle of white. One morning, the temperature record was broken: -21°C! The water pipes froze. Drinking water reserves were enough but we had to melt snow to wash the dishes. The old, wild east methods...

Although many of you know this place as a sunny oasis, sometimes it can have a different face. Maybe more white, but also beautiful!

This was a very special winter here in Merigar East. People from the village don't remember such deep snow and frost. We hope for an early spring and a hot summer on the beach at Merigar East!!!
Greg and Mira – the Gekos ©



World of ice.

Photo: G. Ladra



Czech Republic Passages

Born: On Tuesday December 29 at 6:10 a.m. near Prague, Czech Republic, a daughter, Anna Katerina, was born to Tereza Starkova and Vitek Pulda. ©

Total Perfection with Yeshi Silvano Namkhai in Athens, Greece

Nicholas Liber

Kindly accepting an invitation from the Hellenic Dzogchen Community, Yeshi Silvano Namkhai arrived in Athens on December 28, 2009, for a 5-day Dzogchen teaching retreat in the city. This event was of major significance for the local

tended by a lively audience of some 120 or more people. Considering both the peculiarity of the holiday season’s timing and the local Dharma circumstances, this number should be regarded as very satisfactory for the time being.

next morning and was hosted at the conference hall of the Electra hotel in Plaka, which was soon shaped according to the needs of the event. Naturally, here participation was not as wide as in the public talk of the previous evening but, still, some 50–60 individuals attended the whole retreat and it’s worth noticing, perhaps, that quite a few of them were newcomers seriously interested in the teaching. Besides, several vajra brothers and sisters had come from abroad (i.e., Italy, Russia, USA, Luxemburg, Hungary, etc.) especially for this retreat, and this

moment-to-moment daily life. In general, it would be no exaggeration to say that Yeshi’s introduction effortlessly dissolved all doubts, thus making questions and queries irrelevant to arise. By means of yeshe zangthal guruyoga, the state of Dzogchen was totally clarified to all participants and the potentiality of each individual’s personal discovery was further explored through some fundamental semdzins and rushen practices. While Yeshi’s teachings were taking place in the mornings, every day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.,

note on the meeting that the local Gakyil and some practitioners had with Yeshi to discuss community matters. It seems that the Greek community is currently facing some issues – the same issues more or less like several other sanghas, too – therefore they thought of asking Yeshi for his opinion and advice on how to cope with them. After listening very carefully, Yeshi’s direct response came in an astonishingly simple and deeply wise way – a true revelation, indeed! Tactfully bypassing the meaningless trivia that’s con-



A view from the retreat – YSN and participants.

Photo: Z. Gelle

community of students and practitioners – definitely, the most important one since 1994 when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had been in Greece for the last time. Contrary to north Europe, where Yeshi Namkhai had just come from, the weather here was pleasantly smooth and sunny, as it usually is at this time of the year. So, the following morning, a long casual walk through the picturesque little streets of Plaka (the old town district) and up to the Sacred Rock of Acropolis seemed like the best idea. Then, on the way down, Yeshi passed by several other neighboring ancient sites, too, and visited the ruins of the temple of Zeus. His tight schedule, however, did not leave much time to show him around many other interesting places. On the very same evening, Yeshi’s first talk took place at one of the central neoclassical buildings of Athens University and was at-

Combined with a presentation of the Greek edition of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s book “Dzogchen, the Self-Perfected State”, Yeshi’s public talk skillfully employed a wide variety of reference points familiar to Westerners – ranging from the Pre-Socratic to Marcel Duchamp and quantum physics – to pointing out that the understanding of the view and the experience of the state of Dzogchen are not limited by any cultural specifics or national particulars, etc. The public talk also served as a very good introduction to the subject matter of the teaching retreat as a whole. Later on, after the end of the talk, everyone was invited to an open dinner at the University’s elegant restaurant in the same building, where people had the chance to meet Yeshi in person and to talk with him in a relaxed way. The main course of the teaching retreat started right on the

was a very pleasant surprise! The general framework of the event was provided by “Dzogchen, the Self-Perfected State”, Rinpoche’s classic exposition of Dzogchen from the mid 80s. Yet, in addition, the specific teaching retreat was a unique, direct and profound approach based on the actual knowledge and wisdom of Yeshi Namkhai himself, absolutely complementary and in natural extension to our Master’s words. To my ears, Yeshi’s teaching sounded brilliantly simple and crystal clear. And, at the same time, also very deep and sincere, totally perfect and complete in every aspect and all possible ways. By speaking straight out from the firm base in the heart of his very own experience, words spontaneously manifested in a natural flow that felt as if it was internally governed by a certain kind of mathematical structure (so to speak) – utterly meaningful both in regard to the essence of Dzogchen as it’s been traditionally exposed, and in terms of a direct self-cognitive approach within the ever fresh actuality of

practitioners had the chance to also follow Rinpoche’s audiovisual webcast from Tashigar Norte in Margarita, that was running on the same days from 4.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. So, for those who followed both teaching events, it was a really exciting full-time experience! So, after five inspiring and content days, the teaching retreat eventually came to a conclusion around 2pm on Saturday, January 2. The moment had come to say goodbye and many participants along with Yeshi got together for a last lunch at a simple fish tavern around the corner from where the retreat took place. Everybody was in a good mood, happy and relaxed, sharing and enjoying each other’s company in the uniqueness of this special moment. Before closing my report from Athens, I should make a last little

stantly created by ordinary mind, he went straight to the core of the matter and patiently explained again about the realistic principle of actual collaboration, which is the very characteristic of how we deal with all our practical affairs in the Dzogchen Community. This simple essential reminder felt as if a window had suddenly opened wide and a fresh breath was brought into the situation. Stagnation and stale obstacles automatically began to dissolve and something very nice started moving within the realms of the local community. Is this going to lead to a lasting new dynamic of growth and prosperity for the Greek community? Well, only time can tell about this. Yet, it’s been evidently clear that Yeshi’s future comings for teachings to Greece (if there will be any) would certainly help a lot in this direction! ©

Latvia
Padmaling’s website
The Latvian community Padmaling is happy to invite you to visit our first website!
It was created on the occasion of the 19th birthday of Padmaling.
Since our Community, as well as all Latvian society, is bilingual (Latvian + Russian), the website uses 3 languages.
http://dzogchen.lv/comm_e.html
http://dzogchen.lv/teacher_l.html
http://dzogchen.lv/teacher_r.html

Liga Zarina, red gakyil of Padmaling, Riga, Latvia
Skype: liga.via

Russia
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Retreats in Russian-Speaking Countries

The Gakyil for the Russian-speaking countries is happy to announce the forthcoming retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Russia and Ukraine.
June 11–16 in Moscow
June 18–20 in Saint Petersburg
June 28–July 4 in Crimea, Ukraine.
For now the preparations are still going on and we cannot definitely give more details, but very soon you can get all the detailed information on
<http://2010.dzogchencommunity.ru>

This website will be dedicated to all three retreats and you will find all information on travel, lodging and accommodation as well as other details. Currently most parts of the website are still under construction, but hopefully by the time you read this it will be populated. If not, come back in a few days. Please also note, that the end of June is high season in Saint Petersburg and especially in Crimea, so it’s better to decide in advance and book your accommodation early. In any case, if you have any questions feel free to send an email to ryag@googlegroups.com (“RYAG” is just a Russian pronunciation for abbreviated “Russian-speaking countries Gakyil”). All the best, RYAG



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The Story of Rinchenling in Moscow, Russia

Ivan Shakhov

Moscow, the beginning

It all started when the Soviet Union broke up at the beginning of the 1990s and several people from Russia went to Tsegyalgar in the USA to invite Rinpoche to come there and give a teaching. Our Master sent Fabio Andrico first to teach Yantra Yoga in Russia and clarify what the situation in the country was like.

Rinpoche himself came afterwards, in 1992, visiting first Saint-Petersburg and giving his second Russian retreat in its capital, Moscow.

Everything was very much different from what it is now – the country, people, views... In spite of the prohibitions on spiritual life

due to mass construction, which started right in front of it. It was a bad sign for the Community to lose it though, and bad times for the Russian Community in general – the problem with Kunsangar was also about to arise and Rinpoche later asked to sell it. The Teacher made us understand that he would not be in Russia soon and asked us to travel if we wanted to meet him (not many webcasts were held that time).

For more than a year the Moscow Community was homeless, wandering from one place to another, trying to find something which would fit our needs and could become a new page in the life of Rinchenling. In 2006 one



in the Soviet Union, it was flowing vigorously underground and there Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was already famous for his books, which were being copied and passed from one person to another.

So, his first retreat in Moscow became a noticeable event and was attended by people from all over Russia. After the teaching, Rinpoche immediately asked those present to elect a Gakyil and start a Dzogchen Community there.

In the beginning we did not have a Community place and were always gathering at someone's house, performing collective practices and sharing experiences.

In 1993 Rinpoche gave the name 'Rinchenling', which means 'Precious Ling', to the Moscow Community and several years later we were able to find a stable place, which he also consecrated.

For several years it was the Community site in Moscow, but, unfortunately, we were unable to keep it and lost the building

of the people from the Community said that there was a nice hall in the building where he worked at that time. We moved there, but could not stay for a long time, as our landlord decided to rent it to some company and offered us a place on the rooftop of the same building. Although smaller, it turned out to be a wonderful place, with access to a huge roof, large windows along two walls, cozy and with a lot of light.

Start again

We were able to start again. And soon in 2008 there was Yeshe Silvano Namkhai's first visit to Russia. He gave teaching in a place that was Kunsangar before (and was bought by one of the Community people to start something like a more general retreat center) and then stayed in Moscow for a couple of days. This time with his help Rinpoche decided to give Russia a second chance and said he would give a teaching there

soon. Several venues for the Russian retreat were proposed and the Master chose Moscow from among them.

Not having much experience both in being a real Dzogchen Community and dealing with such huge events (Rinpoche's teaching in Russia would gather more than 2000 people) the Gakyil of Moscow had to organize the Teacher's visit within three months.

It would have been completely impossible without Yeshe's help so he generously offered to assist us. Having returned at the end of June 2008, two months after his first visit to Moscow, he gave his first explanations at Rinchenling concerning the principles of the Community, explaining the meaning of the Mandala of the Dzogchen Community. Fabio Andrico, who was at that time in Moscow too, was also asked by Yeshe to give some short explanations of how we should work as Dzogchen practitioners.

In the next weeks Yeshe gave several teachings and we had many Gakyil meetings with him. He taught us diligently, breaking through our limitations and considerations that were so far from what the Dzogchen Community should be.

We managed to hold the retreat with Rinpoche in September 2008. Again, being the Dzogchen Community was the hardest part of it. Yeshe told us several times that it wasn't so hard to organize a retreat itself, but we needed to do it according to the principles of the teaching.

It's incredible how much Yeshe has done for Moscow. Having spent a lot of time here over the last two years, he has always tried to create good opportunities for the Community to develop and step up to the next level of its existence within society. For example, he was the initiator and led the presentation of Yantra Yoga and Dance of the Vajra at the biggest fitness festival right in the center of Moscow, next to Red Square. There Yeshe explained the principles of Yantra Yoga in a simple language that was understandable by those who are used

to fitness terms. This then led to publications about Yantra Yoga and interest from several television stations.

Upadesha Teaching in Rinchenling

In the winter of the same year the Gakyil thought our Ling space was too small for everyone and the mandala for the Dance of the Vajra could not fit there, so we started to search for some other possibilities. There was an office building found with a huge hall that would fit several mandalas and be able to accommodate an office, a shop, etc. We were almost ready to move, when we got a letter from Yeshe, saying that we could not change a place that has a connection with a teaching just as we like. The Gonpa is always connected to the Teacher and thus the Teacher should be asked if we want to make any changes. No matter if we rented this place or owned it. He said that he had an Upadesha teaching that had been revealed in connection with our place and if we changed it, he would not give this teaching here.

It was 'The Upadesha of the Total Behaviour of Equal Taste', found in Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Longsal Terma Cycle, that Yeshe Namkhai had had dreams of. And he agreed to give this teaching in Moscow in January 2009. There were around 600 people present and because our place could not hold everyone, we managed to rent a hall on the first floor of the building and connect it with audio and video to the Gonpa on the roof where Yeshe was teaching. This Upadesha contains magnificent methods for understanding the nature of all our emotions, working with them in pure Dzogchen style.

Rinpoche visits us again

In May of the same year Rinpoche's retreat was planned in Moscow. It was held at the same place as the previous year and was a huge event.

Rinpoche arrived quite ill at that time and had serious health problems that had manifested several months earlier. And we don't know what would have happened if Yeshe Namkhai hadn't

been there to help again. With Yeshe's help we found a clinic for Rinpoche in Moscow where he stayed and started to feel much better! We paid a visit to him once and the Teacher seemed quite happy. He asked if we could play some music and then said, "Maybe all the doctors and nurses will think that we have some kind of club here".

After the Teacher was released from hospital we had a picnic with all the Community in one of Moscow's parks with music and a lot of fun.

Next step

Rinpoche then made a visit to Rinchenling and was able to climb the very steep steps that lead to our roof on his own! In the Gonpa the Teacher consecrated the place and presented us with a small Tibetan statue of Buddha and two thangkas. Yeshe gave a short speech saying that even though Rinpoche was more ill than before, he was able to come and that we always had to have strong confidence in our Teacher.

When we thanked Rinpoche for coming to the Ling and consecrating it, he looked at us and asked, "And?" And every time we said something he would ask again, "And?". We were all a bit lost and realized we should state something, not just words of politeness, but our expression of intentions for the future. We said that we would try to find some land for a Gar in the Moscow area and that this Gar could be a place where the teaching would develop and spread. "It's a good idea," Rinpoche replied.

We then invited him to go outside on the roof, as it was a nice sunny summer day. Rinpoche sat there and said, "What a nice place. If you have some problems, you can come here, and then you don't need any doctors. You should try to build something there, using crystal..."

And that is what should be the next step in the development of Rinchenling – building a structure with transparent materials on our roof that can become a new support for teaching there.©



Ukraine Tashiling: The New Ling

Mariya Stepanyk

Just before the New Year at TashigarNorte, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave a name to the Kiev Dzogchen community. On 30th of December practitioners received an envelope from Rinpoche, opened it and saw the name – Tashiling. In Tibetan “tashi” means “fortune”, “auspicious”. We thank our Master for kindly giving this name and wish him tashi delek!

Before Rinpoche gave the name to the ling, we already had Tashi. During the retreat in Romania last summer, a red kitten manifested at Merigar East and two girls brought him to Rinpoche. Our Master stroked the kitten and Sasha Pubants suggested giving the name ‘Tashi’ to the cat. At the end of the retreat our two practitioners brought the kitten back to their apartment in Kiev. For a long time we had webcasts, Ganapujas, SMS studies in this apartment – and every time this cat Tashi was present and participating. So we jokingly said that if each ling had it’s own animal, our animal would be this red cat!

Arriving in Kiev, people usually note that this metropolis has a very gentle character, a rich culture and an ocean of historical places to visit. Many trees – and among them chestnuts, the sym-

bol of the city – bloom in May. And Kiev is not overcrowded – only 5 million people. 70 of them are members of Kiev Dzogchen Community, and also more than 10 members live in other parts of Ukraine.

The Community was organized here in 2003, and in 2005 before the retreat in Crimea the Gakyil invited Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to Kiev where he gave a public talk. At that time the Community was new and small and almost no information was given, but more than 800 people came to listen to Rinpoche’s public talk.

For many years we did not have our own premises or even a constant stable place to rent. It was only in 2006 that we rented our first permanent Gompa for few months. It was situated on the outskirts of the city, in an office building, not in a very convenient area, but many people participated actively, not only by going there, but also by improving the place. Somebody decorated, another person made shelves and chairs and somebody brought an electric kettle. The Community would gather there, watch the video journals of the Dzogchen Community and do practices. We made an altar next to one of the walls and painted the area sur-



Photo: K. Klimenko

rounding it in five colours, but just a week later the owner of the office called to say that he was about to demolish the walls and that we should leave.

After that group practices were held in many different places: a psychotherapy center, the children’s art club, apartments of practitioners, the forest, an art-gallery near the President’s Secretariat and on the island. We were moving like nomads and every month it was a new combination of places, you never knew for sure what would happen.

Also throughout all these years we organized webcasts of the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Yeshe Silvano Namkhai, many retreats on Santi Maha Sangha, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga, group practices, lessons for beginners, regular Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance studies, studies of Santi Maha Sangha Base Level and then, in 2009, 1st Level. The Community continued to grow, and after each worldwide transmission more and more people would come to attend practices and so the situation with the Gompa needed to be solved.

So, at the beginning of 2009 a group started to search for a place to rent and possibly to buy. By the time of Rinpoche’s retreat in Moscow we still had nothing and we came to Yeshe Namkhai for advice. The group told Yeshe that we couldn’t even find mon-

ey for the rent, and also that we didn’t know how to make people more active, to start collaborating in this way. Yeshe gave clear and essential advice that first we needed to do something, and that people would see this and start to be active. And we should believe in that – if we didn’t, how could we believe in enlightenment?

Eventually in November 2009 we found the place: situated in a very good location in the basement of a building, suitable for all to come, close to the underground, to the park, in a house with 5 floors. There was also the possibility to either rent it or buy it, but it required construction and repair. First we had to take away debris, and then build a plasterboard wall to make a separate entrance from the owner of the premises.

For many weeks we worked together to make this Gompa. People helped as best they could. Inspired by the creation of Merigar that they had seen in the video journal, men drilled, made the plasterboard walls, took out the trash. From the beginning the women were even more active, cleaning, painting the walls, feeding the karma-yogis. It was not only something material, but also practice for all of us. It was happiness just to be in the Gompa, to see all the changes, to make them with our own hands. And other people collaborated by giving money for the repairs.

When we held the first retreat there – the base level of Santi Maha Sangha with Alexander Gommonov, the repairs in the Gompa were still not finished. Three walls had been built in plasterboard but the fourth one was still brick. One of the pipes was leaking and we had buckets to catch the water that was dripping continually. Then there were group practices, celebration of the New Year, and, day-by-day the Gompa changed. Now we are continuing to work on this project and are thinking about the possibility of buying this place in the future.

Besides this, Tashiling now has its own bookshop where people from the Ukraine can buy Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s books. We hope to have a local Yantra Yoga teacher – in July 2009 Nina Tkacheva passed the Yantra Yoga supervision with Fabio Andrico. She is leading a group, and now is going to be examined by Rinpoche. February 1–8, Nina led a Yantra Yoga 1st Level retreat for those who had received transmission.

At the moment we are preparing for the retreat with Yeshe Silvano Namkhai in April and invite all practitioners to visit Tashiling!

©

New Gakyil of Tashiling

Blue

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Nina_tkacheva@mail.ru

Red

Sergey Yermakov,

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Sergey Grischenko,

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Yellow

Konstantin Klimenko, klime@ukr.net

Olga Bondar, olyn@bigmir.net

CHINA



Yantra Yoga course with Tracy Ni in Shandong China, Jan. 23–24.

Photo: W. Guo

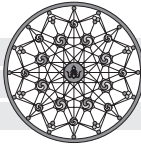


Six Lokas Vajra Dance course with T. Ni and W.Guo in Shandong China, Jan. 25–26. Photo: W. Guo



Six Lokas Vajra Dance course Beijing China, Jan. 30–31, with T. Ni and W. Guo. Photo: W. Guo

Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



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Namgyalgar Summer Program, Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat Dec 26 09 to Jan 1 2010

On the evening of 26th December we gathered at Namgyalgar for a Ganapuja marking the start of the Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat led by Cheh Goh, which ran until January 1. The retreat incorporated the teachings on the SMS Base by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu that we received via webcast from Tashigar Norte.

Cheh's teaching – focusing on different methods of working with our behavior – was detailed, clear and lively and provided a rich complement to our Master's teachings. We enjoyed the many illustrations he gave through stories of his own experiences and those of other students. Thank you Cheh for making the trip from Singapore, and thank you Amare for leading the Eight Movements of Yantra Yoga with such care for the beginners.

There were forty of us for the full moon Ganapuja at the retreat's close, and the close of the year, and we did additional Guardian Practice for helping to establish Namgyalgar North, in the Glass House Mountains in south Queensland. The Namgyalgar Gakyil is busy working to bring this about. ©

*



Yantra Yoga with Emily Coleing and Amare Pearl at Namgyalgar.

Yantra Yoga Intensive Retreat January 3–9, 2010

Under the kind guidance and support of Amare Pearl (2nd level instructor) and Emily Coleing (1st level instructor) around twenty Yantra Yoga enthusiasts sweated it out for a week in the Namgyalgar Gonpa. Amare and Emily are currently the only two active authorized Yantra Yoga teachers based in the whole wide land of Australia, so it certainly was a rare privilege for students to come together to receive instruction from not one, but two experienced Yantra Yoga teachers at the same time!

The aim for this intensive was simple – to take Yantra Yoga to new heights in Australia! Therefore, with this in mind, Amare and Emily had set out an ambitious program for us, including the preliminary groups (Tsigjong, Lungsang, Tsandul) as well as instruction in all five groups of Yantras, including several of the advanced variations. We also covered the 1st, 2nd and 3rd groups of Pranayamas, with a special focus on the Humkara breathing technique and visualization.

Although primarily a Yantra Yoga retreat, practitioners also found time to participate in daily Mandarava, Chöd and Vajra Dance practice, as well as make frequent trips to the beach to enjoy the sun and surf! The retreat was concluded on Dakini Day, with a wonderful, and harmonious Ganapuja being held in the Gonpa.

Many, many thanks must go out again to Amare (the) Pearl and Emily (elastix) Coleing for their tireless efforts in the promotion and training of Yantra Yoga in Australia. This intensive will set a strong foundation for many students to be built upon in the coming year.

Tashi Delek!

Adam, Sam, and Suze

Yantra Yoga students in Melbourne ©

*

Vajra Dance Practice Retreat Combined with Jnanadakini Practice January 2010

Vajra Dance Practice Retreat was held at Namgyalgar for a week over the summer holidays in January. Around eighteen people came from many areas of the east coast of Australia and Alice Springs, and all enjoyed a harmonious and joyous time together. Practitioners worked together practicing Jnana Dakini in the morning followed by the Vajra Dance. The practice consisted of 2 days dedicated to each of the three dances so that for two full days we danced the Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces and on another two days the Vajra dance of the Three Vajras and then the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra. We had Dance sessions morning and afternoon and also evening. In the heat of the middle of the day most people went swimming in the cool water of the beaches nearby. One day was so hot it was very difficult to dance and

so we took our dinner down to the sea and spent the evening cooling off in the sea breezes. Everyone joined in preparing the food and delicious meals were prepared for all. There was a lot of fun and simple enjoyment enhanced by the beautiful practices we were doing. The retreat was an integration of heat and cool water and much warmth between practitioners.

Jean Mackintosh, an authorized local Vajra Dance teacher, led the retreat. There was also collaboration by practitioners who have learned and studied the Dance very well and hope to do further training this year in Teacher Training courses in Tashigar North. We wish them all the best and hope to increase our pool of authorized teachers so that the Vajra Dance can continue in Australia. The retreat finished with a Jnana Dakini Ganapuja that was very moving and beautiful. We would like to thank our precious master for the gift of these practices. ©



Practice Retreat in New Zealand with SMS instructor Angie Glibert.

New Zealand

New Zealand Retreat

Kate Shelley

We were meandering through the kauri lined Huia road in the Waitakere ranges, wondering if no.1322 really existed, and sure enough, in the heat of our Auckland summer, we arrived to see Angie Gilbert, Santi Maha Sangha Base teacher. Angie kindly flew in from Melbourne to lead the explanations of the Jhana Dakini practice.

She read the history of how Rinpoche received the Jhana Dakini teachings in his dreams from the Longsal vol.7 text, and the explanations about how to do the practice. She also taught us the Secret Rushen of the body and of the voice. She explained the Four Understandings from the view of Ati Yoga and also the verses from the Kunjed Gyalpo from The Precious Vase text.


Between the sessions we made the most of our circumstances with daily tidal swims in the harbor below. We had a spacious walk out to Whatipu beach where the horizon is wide and large enough to curve. Another day we walked up through dense bush where a waterfall and swimming hole awaited – splashing and floundering around totally refreshed us.

We also held a meeting, co-facilitated by the highly energizing Jerry Bassi; (now returned from Margarita Island, welcome back) and Alastair Gager where, thanks to them, we made a few plans for the New Zealand program, and for our Karamea (scented flower) land. We made these four steps:

- 1/ Direct introduction: Visit the land
- 2/ Don't remain in doubt: Do practice on the land.
- 3/ Continue in that practice: Do retreats on the land.
- 4/ Return back to daily life and continue with Karamea in our hearts.

All in all, we give huge thanks to beautiful Angie, so relaxed and full of integrity; the retreat rocked! Brilliant to have so many 'old' practitioners there and some 'new ones'. Despite the constant threat of mosquito bites, the tasty meals, large laughs and silence kept on coming. Driving home in the long awaited rain, feeling truly blessed, we look forward to Angie's return. ©

Sacred Mysteries DVDs



Infinity
THE ULTIMATE TRIP
A Film by Jay Waldner

Neale Donald Walsch
Gregg Braden

Dannion Brinkley
Alberto Villoldo

John Holland
Stanislav Grof
Robert Thurman

Brian Weiss
Dzogchen Ponlop
Renate Dollinger

JOURNEY BEYOND DEATH

"A highly recommended film that gently and convincingly opens new vistas of truth and understanding."
-Light of Consciousness Magazine

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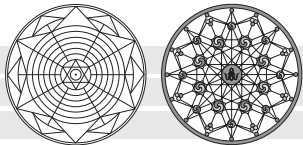
Using vital and beautiful imagery, along with personal accounts of near-death experiences, reincarnation and more, Infinity brings forth the story of our own infinite nature, what to expect after death and the magic and beauty that awaits us on the other side. Featuring noted experts Brian Weiss, Dzogen Ponlop, Stanislav Grof, Dannion Brinkley, Dr. Alberto Villoldo, Gregg Braden, Neale Donald Walsch, Robert Thurman, John Holland and Renate Dollinger, Infinity: The Ultimate Trip brings a message of hope and optimism concerning the most mysterious act in a human life; the end of this life and journey to the beyond.

"Gorgeous imagery, personal accounts of near-death experiences and reincarnation, and more round out this incredible presentation that offers a remarkable level of optimism and hope to viewers of all backgrounds."
-The Midwest Book Review

"Powerful stories told against a a dazzling array of beautifully filmed visuals whose images lend support to the words being spoken.
This is a quiet film with a powerful message."
-Believe 1111 magazine

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Calendar of Events 2010

April 1-10
Yantra Yoga Advanced and Teacher Training
with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico

April 11
Kumar Kumari
with Laura Evangelisti
3-6 pm Tsegyalgar Gonpa

April 23-25
The Yoga of Prana for Clarity and Emptiness
with Elio Guarisco

May 7-9
History of Tibetan Medicine Seminar/
Shang Shung Institute

May 29-30
Short Chöd Weekend

June 26-27
7th mind training
with Jim Valby

July 12-20
Yeshe Silvano Namkhai

August TBA
Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Practice Retreat at Khandroling
with Jim Valby

Dream Yoga with Michael Katz TBA

For more information contact:
secretary@tsegyalgar.org
or call 413 369 41 53

Khandroling Vajra Hall/Retreat Center Development: Update and Ways You Can Help

Thanks to the generous support of many members of the International Dzogchen Community, the Khandroling project is well on its way in this year of the Metal Tiger. Nearing completion on Lower Khandroling is now a home for Rinpoche and a base for our Community to begin its transition from Conway to Lower Khandroling for regular practice and administrative offices. This will centralize our activities on Khandroling and provide more space in the Conway Schoolhouse for the rapidly growing Tibetan Medical School of the Shang Shung Institute. On Upper Khandroling, the foundation of the magnificent Vajra Hall is now complete and the pavilion that will enclose the Universal Mandala will begin to be erected in late spring.



It is now more than ever that we need your support to manifest this perfect dream of our Master in the place where he first had the dream of the Vajra Dance. Here on Khandroling, the seat of Gomadevi, Rinpoche has said that many practitioners from all over the world will pilgrimage to practice the Vajra Dance. Help us make it come true by placing a bid on a beautiful statue or by coming to Khandroling to participate in Karma Yoga!



Golden Statues of Gomadevi & Vajrapani Yab-Yum
Throughout this year we will be auctioning several statues both of Gomadevi and of Vajrapani Yab-Yum. These statues are very fine quality gold-plated statues custom made in Nepal for the Dzogchen Community. Please consider placing a generous bid on one of these statues. By doing so, you will help ensure that this amazing project comes to completion and that you will be able to practice the Dance of the Vajra under a majestic Vajra Hall, a structure that came directly from the dreams of our Master!

Please visit **www.ebay.com**. Go to *advanced search*. Go to *Items: by seller*. Enter: *DzogchenCommunityofAmerica*. The most current statue will appear. If you have any trouble finding this, have any questions or would like to place a bid outside of eBay, please contact Matthew Schmookler of the Tsegyalgar East Yellow Gakyil at **matt@shangshung.org**

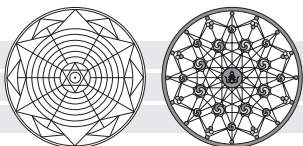
Free Camping at Khandroling with Karma Yoga

The Tsegyalgar East Gakyil welcomes all members of the International Dzogchen Community who would like to come get their hands dirty and put some sweat into Khandroling to help make it become a retreat PARADISE! In exchange for your Karma Yoga we will offer you free camping on Khandroling. For those of you who are skilled laborers with specific skills to offer the project, we welcome requests for travel and food expense reimbursement as well. Please contact Ruben Eduardo of the Tsegyalgar East Red Gakyil at **rubeneduardo101@gmail.com** ©

Canada

Toronto Dzogchen Community presents **Longchenpa's Thirty Words of Advice from the Heart** led by Elio Guarisco
April 16-18, 2010
Kokoro Dojo 358 Dupont St, Toronto
Longchenpa Drime Öser (1308-1363) was one of the most important Dzogchen masters of the past and a pivotal figure in the Nyingma school. His Thirty Words of Advice From the Heart are a beautiful teaching which embraces many aspects of spiritual practice, probably written when Longchenpa was still a young man engaged in his studies. They are like nuggets of gold offered to us in his open hand, so that their inspiration can turn our mind to a sincere and uncontrived spiritual practice.
Schedule: Fri 6-8 pm; Sat 9-11 am, 4-6 pm; Sun 9-11 am, 5:15-7:15 pm
Course fee: \$ 50 / session; or \$ 200 for weekend (5 sessions) Discounts for members, early registration
For information, or to register:
Contact Deepak at **416.258.1537**
Or Yulia **yjtkova@yahoo.com**

TsegyalgarWest



Tsegyalgar West

Baja California Sur, Mexico

tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com

http://tsegyalgarwest.org

News from Baja

Cabo, Mexico: "This place is a paradise that inspires you to practice." So says Nina Robinson, Tsegyalgar West's favorite big sister and guide to the precious teachings of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu. (See Nina talk about Tsegyalgar West in a 5-minute video on our website).
In her February retreat we did two sessions a day of "Liberation of the Six Lokas", and two sessions a day of "The Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra" with Bodhi Krause. He said, "This is an amazing place to dance", and all 12 people on the mandala agreed as we gazed out into the vast blue sky.
We gathered for morning sessions of Mandarava practice, and Ganapujas were held under the famous Fig Tree that Rinpoche recently mentioned during the Drubchen in Margarita. The week ended with a Losar celebration of Yoga, Dance, food, and of course a campfire. Immediately following was a Yantra Yoga retreat with our friend Lynn Sutherland. Held under the palapa-roofed dance pavilion, students from three countries listened intently to Lynn's patient instruction.
Scott Schroeder and I recently had the privilege of hearing Rinpoche's agri-turismo/eco-tourism wishes for Tsegyalgar West, while meeting with him in Tashigar Norte. It feels good to

know that we're right on track by finishing the 19 casitas. Between Dzogchen retreats, we are to rent the central area to other groups for sustainability. Yeshe Namkhai told us the same, and we're well on our way.
We've heard your requests for lower camping and casita prices, so look for that on our website. We want to create a dormitory in the large metal buildings so that financially-challenged karma yogis can practice and earn karma yoga time. Personal retreats are a major focus here so contact us to plan your visit now. Our main season is November thru April.
Keep in mind that the Rushen Arroyo is 3 km from the kitchen area and there are no facilities there yet. In general we are acting with transparency and a spirit of friendly openness so that all practitioners can see the overall plan for the Gar and collaborate in its creation. We have many plans for expansion including a new kitchen/comedor/bookstore/office farther away from the teaching site.
Check this amazing breakthrough in composting: **www.peepoople.com**.
Please email us with any and all of your questions.

Upcoming: March 31-April 3 Michael Katz returns for a Dream Yoga retreat and External Rushen practice in the huge and magical Rushen Arroyo. 1,300 hectares (nearly 3,000 acres) really gives you space.
Come dream, sky-gaze, and swim with us.

November 7-26, 2010 Yeshe Namkhai once again graces us with his presence and wisdom. Do not miss this one! Reserve your casita early by placing a deposit. We're still assimilating all the gifts he gave us when he came before, so clear your schedule and tell your boss you're headed to Cabo! You'll remember it for years.
Also our Lings and satellite groups are busy with activity. San Diego, California just acquired their first dance mandala, and meet not only for Ganapujas but for a Short Tun every Sunday at 12 Noon at the Taoist Sanctuary. They are hosting Elio Guarisco for an SMS Base study May 14-16, 2010.

Contact: **tsegyalgarwest.org/meetings** or Joel at 619.495.0030.
The Portland, Oregon group have a Yantra Yoga retreat with Paula Barry April 16-23, and Jim Valby leads an SMS Base retreat Sept. 3-10, 2010.
Contact: **oregondzogchen.com** or Darren Littlejohn at **primordialknowledge@gmail.com**.
In Mexico City, Pelzomling meets regularly for practice, Ganapujas, and Vajra Dance.
Contact: **pelzomling@hotmail.com**.

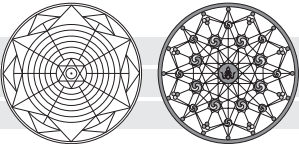
Please see our website for groups in Seattle, Santa Fe N.M., of course Don-drubling in Berkeley, CA, and more.
Lastly it's time to elect a new Tsegyalgar West Gakyil. So if you've visited the Gar before, you plan to visit this year, you've been a member of the Community for 3 years or more, and you're ready to work, please contact our Secretary at **tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com**
An eco-minded architect would be great!
See our expanded photo gallery at **tsegyalgarwest.org**
All thanks to our unsurpassable Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu!
Joel Crisp for The Mirror ©



Nina Robinson and friends at the Losar 2010 retreat at Tsegyalgar West.

Photo: J. Crisp

TsegyalgarWest



Passages

Died: Saturday afternoon, January 30 2010, Chuziko passed from her body. Her family and a few very close friends attended her. Josefa Candelario and Susan Harris sang the Song of Vajra at the time. In the near days preceding her transition, Chuziko exhibited the

qualities of a practitioner. She showed strength, courage and presence and never complained. Sangha members attended to her daily and sang Song of Vajra and the 100 syllable mantra with her.

It was apparent she kept Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in her heart and mind constantly. Despite her condition she glowed with an aura of beauty, peace and compassion. She loved Rinpoche, her son, her sangha and life. You could feel intense energy pouring from Chuziko's head chakras shortly before her passing. A beautiful person through her life, she radiated that beauty even after her passing. Indeed she was/is a true practitioner and an example for us all.

Josefa relayed this story of Chizuko's final days and moments. She asked for a picture of Rinpoche and held it to her heart very close to her passing. Many members of our Sangha went to the



Dance of the Three Vajras with Bodhi Krause at Dondrubling in Berkeley California from February 19–22, 2010.

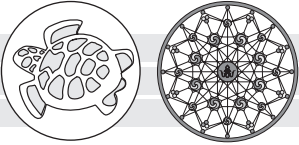
crematorium last night and sang the Song of the Vajra and Shitro as she went into the fire.



Passages

Born: Maiten was born to Carlos Mena and Leticia Receptor on January 19th, 2010. She is beautiful! Maiten means tree.

TashigarNorte



Tashigar North /Finca Tashigar	Prolongación de la Calle Bolivar	Tel: 0058 0295 2580332
	Valle de Pedro González	secretary@tashigarnorte.org
	Isla de Margarita	www.tashigarnorte.org

Security Chief Needed

Dear Members of the Dzogchen Community,

Tashigar Norte is seeking someone immediately to take over as Security Chief of the Gar. Qualifications for this position include some experience managing personnel and the ability to communicate effectively directions from the Security Coordinator. The Security Chief will be the liason between the Security Coordinator and our team of guards. This is a job for a very engaged and active person who can take responsibility for the security needs of the gar. Knowledge of English and/or Spanish is essential. Tashigar Norte

will provide the air ticket to Venezuela and a place to live on the Gar. We can negotiate the salary according to the qualifications of the candidates. Please respond immediately to tashigarnorteseccretary@gmail.com Thank you and best wishes, Steven Landsberg, TN Gakyil

Vajra Dance Teacher Training, First Level
March 2–7, 2010
by Lauri Denyer

The presence of Prima Mai and Adriana dal Borgo drew over a dozen students to Tashigar del Norte, some already dance teachers,

and some who wish to become teachers, as well as those deepening their understanding of the dance. People came especially for this course from Australia, while others had remained since the Drubchen with Rinpoche in order to attend. It was very useful, and several teachers-in-training refined their practice and skills of explanation, and all benefitted according to his or her capacity and application. The Dances of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra and Dance of the Three Vajras were the focus of the course. It was as always, great to dance on the mandala in the Gonpa, and very precious to have the opportunity to work together here for some days.



Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Tashigar North Margarita Island Venezuela
Dec 26, 2009-Jan 1, 2010

Emiliano Diego

The last time I was here all this had just been planted” are the first words spoken by many practitioners arriving at Tashigar Norte. How fertile the land must be, I thought to myself, as something closely related to a jungle absorbed my vision. There could certainly be no more fitting place to receive the teachings of the Santi Maha Sangha base.

A course of study and practice of nine levels, the Santi Maha Sangha was started by Rinpoche in 1994. His aim was to ensure the continuation of the Dzogchen teaching as he has been transmitting it for more than 30 years. The Base level, open to all, is one of three levels dedicated to the Semde category of teachings, which relate to the first statement of Garab Dorje: Direct introduction.

Rinpoche guided us through the contents of the root text, communicating with uncompromising authenticity. The first instruction was an emphatic summary of the Six Preliminary Dharma: “Use your brain!” Rather than be satisfied with our mere attendance at the teaching, we should strive with diligence to understand exactly what has been communicated.

By the third day of the retreat, we had reached the challenging Chapter 5: The Ways to Establish the View. Rinpoche clarified the differences between the Nyingmapa and Sarma traditions, before elucidating the three doors that permit entry to the total perfection of Ati – as communicated by Guru Padmasambhava in The Garland of Views.

The second-to-last day of the retreat was New Year’s Eve and all

collaborated to ensure a marvelous Ganapuja of lavish offerings. The lottery was an eager second on the evening’s itinerary and, after allowing some time for our puja-bellies to settle, Rinpoche got the proceedings under way. Top prizes included a five-jeweled, golden ring donated by the master and consecrated statues of Vajradhara, Amitabha and Shariputra.

The rest of the night played host to various stints of entertainment but the highlight was Rinpoche’s serenade of Tibetan flute and song. Beaming with joy, He tickled the air with mudra and sound, honoring the gathered with his presence until the final countdown to midnight.

The first moments of the new year embraced us and the divine call of sleep pervaded the ears of all but the wildest, who descended on the houses of the Gar for further fun and frolics. The following day, as I took an early morning stroll my ear caught the Gonpa and the following perfectly spoken words:

“At the beginning, when we are learning the Vajra dance, we think only of the steps and we

are not really present. Then, once we have learnt all the steps, there is the danger that the dance becomes very automatic; like walking.”

It seemed that every crack in the wall had a lesson to teach; enticing moments of pure vision that seeped through the failing hands of ignorance. Two hours later, I sat in the gaze of the Master, awaiting the penultimate teaching. “The only rule in Dzogchen is presence”, proclaimed Rinpoche, rather fittingly. Nevertheless, “the three verse conclusion of the Sutra is integrated into the path”. He continued by reading from the text: Do not commit negative actions, Practice virtue perfectly, Tame your mind completely: That is Buddha’s teaching.

But how should we integrate the Sutra? By not creating problems for others. And the Mahayana? By acting for their benefit. What about the Vajrayana? By transforming our impure vision. Particularly with respect to our Vajra brothers and sisters, whilst we see humans, we should regard them as Dakas and Dakinis.

On this final point I sought clarification from a fellow disciple: “When I have some difficulty with others in the community and judgment arises in my mind, what should I do?”

“Apply the instruction to self-liberate.”

“What if I lack that capacity?”

“Never Comment, never discuss and never act angrily.”

The final day of the teaching was dedicated, as always, to advice on the practice in daily life. Rinpoche tirelessly guided us through the cycle of day and night, punctuating every moment with anecdotal treasures and instructions on Guruyoga. After giving the tridlung of the collective practices and expressing the wish to see us all again soon, the retreat was concluded with a dedication of merit.

Emerging from the Gonpa and apprehending the months ahead on this wonderful Gar with my Guru, my extreme fortune became unavoidably apparent. For me, Tashigar Norte will always be the place where names became faces and faces became friends. Where the memories of others gave way to the experience of today.

TashigarSur



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Calle pública S/N

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Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Exam
April 8–10, 2010
Registration Period until March 20

Training of First Level of SMS
April 12–21, 2010
US\$ 220

How to apply to Base Level Exam
Read the procedures outlined below or in this website, and make sure you have fulfilled all the necessary requirements: <http://www.tashigar-sur.com.ar/website/download%20eng/SMS%20exam%20guidelines.pdf>

Validate your Karma Yoga record with the corresponding organization: Local Gakyil or Dzogchen Community linked organizations (SSI y ASIA)

Attach karma yoga form with the completed application and send it to your local Gakyil who will then forward it to SMS Co-coordinating Center. This must be done by March 20/2010.

Your enrollment in the exam is confirmed when you receive the acknowledgement that your admission request has been approved by the examiners. *Enrollment Procedure for Santi Maha Sangha Examinations*
To register for a Santi Maha Sangha exam (including the Base), you must be a member of the Dzogchen Community. For the Base Level exam the membership fee must have been paid at least one year before the examination; for the next levels it should have been paid continuously since the year of the Base examination.

Instructions for the Candidate
Three months before the examination date, the candidate must complete the official form, including the admission request and a record of his/her Karma Yoga collaboration.

The candidate cannot consider him/herself enrolled in the examination until he/she receives the written confirma-

tion that the examiners have approved his/her admission request.

The Karma Yoga service to the Community, obligatory for entrance to all SMS examinations, must have begun at least a year prior to the Base exam (if the exam is scheduled for 2009, the Karma Yoga must have started no later than 2008). In subsequent years, you must be able to demonstrate a continuous history of Karma Yoga between one level of SMS exam and the next.

Any suitable work offered for the benefit of the Dzogchen Community is valid as Karma Yoga, provided that it is done upon request of, or agreement with, the Dzogchen Community Gakyils and related associations (Shang Shung Institute or Edizioni, A.S.I.A.). Therefore Karma Yoga should always be arranged through the Gakyils, Shang Shung Institute/Edizioni and A.S.I.A.

The candidate should send the completed form to his/her local Gakyil. The

necessary form can be downloaded from the webpage:

<http://www.tashigar-sur.com.ar/website/download%20esp/KarmaYogaForm.doc>

If the Karma Yoga was done for a Community organization(s) other than the local Gakyil, the candidate should send the completed form to the appropriate organization, which is responsible for validating it and sending it either to the Gar where the exam will be held and to the SMS Co-coordinating Center: sms@shangshunginstitute.org.

A copy can be sent also to the candidate.

Instructions for the local Gakyils
As soon as the form filled out by a candidate is received, the local Gakyil should validate the Karma Yoga claim (if the Karma Yoga was offered to the local Gakyil itself), and should add a brief evaluation of the candidate's conduct, participation and activity within the context of the Community.

The evaluation of the candidate's conduct should be approved by at least three Gakyil members after consulting with the SMS coordinator of the Gar.

The form completed in this way should be sent to the SMS Coordinating Center: sms@shangshunginstitute.org

Santi Maha Sangha Co-Ordinators
Merigar: Igor Legati edizss@tiscali.it
Tsegylgar: Jim Valby jimvalby@gmail.com
Tashigar: Ricardo Sued rickysued@gmail.com
Namgyalgar: Elise Stutchbury elise777@austarnet.com.au
Russian-speaking Countries: Igor Berkhin igor.berkhin@gmail.com

SMS Examination Procedure,
December 2008
© Merigar – Shang Shung Institute
Tashi Delegs

Now Come the Words

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai teaches at Tashigar South
January 2010

Griselda Galmez

In January 2010 Yeshi Silvano Namkhai arrived for the second time at Tashigar South after a very long trip. His flight to Buenos Aires was delayed for a day and then six hours more! When he finally arrived at Ezeiza Airport – at midday in the scorching summer sun – he had to suffer again a one and a half hour delay for his connecting flight to Córdoba. This must have been the most tiring trip of his life.

Yeshi's first visit was in 2007 and the following day after his arrival a cloud was filled with the five colors of the rainbow in the middle of a uniformly blue sky and we still remember it with a feeling of wonder. At that time Yeshi was very interested in the operation of the Gar, our projects and Tashigar Mandala. We all felt very glad to have known the son of the Master; listening to his ideas and his suggestions related to the problems we presented him.

Now in January 2010, invited by the Gakyil, Yeshi came back to lead a retreat about the Four Contemplations in Dzogchen Semde. The retreat took place from January 29th - 31st, with two sessions a day. It was Yeshi's teachings that opened the new Gonpa that had not yet been used!

Some of the participants already knew him from 2007, others had followed his retreats via webcast, and some others, absolutely new to the Community, had only read something about him in the communications before the retreats; but we all followed his explanations with the same passionate interest.

And now the words come: the most difficult thing after hearing Yeshi Silvano Namkhai for three days is to describe it in words. There are two main reasons why it is so difficult to put into words the experience of following a retreat with him. The first is the unusual, precise and strong way in which he acts upon our minds with his speech. We could almost say that while he talks, explains and analyzes, he is performing the simultaneous task of construction and demolition aiming at our preconceived ideas due to the education and culture in each one of us.

For example, his absolute questioning of the concept of 'truth' so much valued by our Western minds that it determines one of our biggest attachments and graspings. We like to think that truth is on our side and then we dedicate ourselves to defend our positions to the death. Whereas Yeshi stated during his



first session: 'The teaching is related to the individual, not to the outside...', '...the principle of the Teaching is observing the mind, not observing what truth is like or what the truth is...', '...being all individuals it is difficult to talk about truth, since each one of us sees it differently, according to his vision, that is the way in which someone perceives reality...'

In the subsequent sessions, he devoted himself to going deeper into this task of dismantling, putting special emphasis on different ways the limitations of our thoughts arise from. 'What I have to discover is not what I think, but the arising of the thought and the box it comes from...' 'The base of the Dzogchen teaching is before the 'I am', it arises earlier than the idea of 'I am'. And also showing the pathetic relation of our daily lives with the limitations of the vision we are attached to: 'Ev-

erything we do aims at convincing our mind'.

Finally with the direct introduction of Yeshe Zangthal, he finished de-installing all the ideas and convictions, together with the illusion of their concrete condition. 'Instead of many boxes, we have just one box: emptiness.'

Up until here is the first reason why it is difficult to put into words the experience of a retreat with Yeshi, since not only are words the most efficient allies of conditioned thought, but also they form it and even create it.

The second reason is more anecdotal, but not less strong: when the retreat finished, the members of the Gakyils went up to Yeshi with the offerings, flowers and presents. Seeing me standing by his side with a paper in my hands, he said: 'Ah, now come the words...'. Needless to say there was no joy either in his voice or in his gestures, but a resigned disbelief.

Even in this situation, I read the words I had prepared for him in which we thanked him, in the same way I now write these words, because we should record Yeshi Silvano Namkhai's time in Tashigar South in any way, and in the lives of those who were fortunate to listen to his Teachings. ©



Yeshi Silvano Namkhai meeting the gakyil.

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International
Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

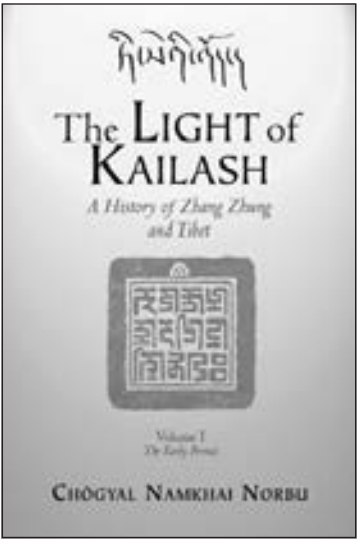
Main Office: PO Box 479, Conway, MA 01341, USA * Tel: 413 369 42 08 * Fax: 413 369 44 73 * mirror@tsegylgar.org ** **European Office:** The Mirror, Istituto Shang Shung, Podere Nuovissimo, GR 58031 Arcidosso, Italy * Tel: 39 32 98 86 52 92 * l.granger@shangshunginstitute.org ** **Editorial Staff:** Naomi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

Reviews

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *The Light of Kailash, A History of Zhang Zhung and Tibet, Volume One, the Early Period*, 257 pages, Shang Shung Publications, Merigar, 2009, ISBN 978-88-7834-103-6

Fabian Sanders

Reconstructing the ancient culture and history of Tibet is an extremely difficult task. The advent of Buddhism and its development in the Land of Snows – especially during the second translation of the *Buddhadharma* – has produced a strong tendency to understand history as a powerful symbolic and didactic tool designed to fuel sacred devotion. The history of Tibet has thus been represented as a sort of macrocosmic Sacred Biography (*nam thar*) in which the teachings and practices of the Buddhist path are the only civilizing, elevating and qualifying factor of an otherwise barbarian humanity. Accordingly the time previous to the planting of the seed of *Buddhadharma* has been deemed a dark age, barren, barbarous and uncivilized and thus looked down upon with contempt, ridiculed and effectively



swept under the carpet. While this is perfectly normal and understandable from both doctrinal and historical points of view, it has been largely ignored that a seed – that of the Indian *dharma* – can never, sprout, flourish and bear fruit if it is not planted in fertile, well plowed and manured soil. The first Volume of the trilogy by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *The Light of Kailash*, addressing the early period of the history of the Land of Snows, is a remarkable scholarly achievement that clearly demonstrates that the Himalayas were not in the least a barren land before the advent of

Buddhism. The ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung, centered around the holy mount Kailash and ruled according to the principles of the Bon tradition, had already developed a full featured civilization. In the cultural history of many parts of the world it can be easily observed that oftentimes a comprehensive religious tradition, complete with metaphysical and cosmological doctrines that incorporate all aspects of human thought and activity – philosophical, ritual, social, hierarchical, political and so forth – due to historical developments, may lose the institutional ground on which it stands, typically the patronage of the very temporal authority that it legitimates. This can be due to internal or external causes, like the collapse of a dynasty or empire, or the appearance of a new *dharma* from other lands. When this happens the wisdom, knowledges, beliefs, myths, legends and tales of the vanishing tradition, Bon and the kingdom of Zhang Zhung in this case, dive into the memories of common people who carry them on from generation to generation until they meet someone who makes the effort to record and write them down. Unfortunately

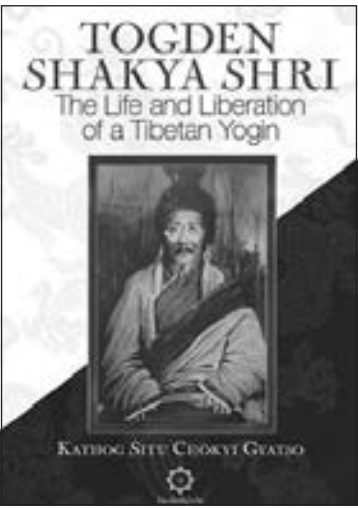
ly very few tangible testimonies of that ancient culture remain, so that transmitted knowledge remains the only source of information. The *The Light of Kailash* is a guided journey among a great variety of these sources, stemming from different backgrounds and epochs. An enormous number of quotes is skillfully arranged and organized in the text according to topics. The discussion is divided in a number of thematic chapters dedicated to the human generations of ancient Zhang Zhung, Bon lineages, royal lineages, the written language and civilization of that ancient land. This includes extremely interesting accounts of cosmogonic myths, sacred geography and legendary beings, all rescued from the remote past. In addition to these topics, in the section on civilization, such rarely discussed subjects as the nature of *gzi* and *thog lcags* is described, as well as various methods of divination that are distinctively tibetan – i. e. non-Buddhist – in nature, and had many parallels in ancient central and east Asia. It is interesting to note that in the original sources much vocabulary is borrowed from Buddhist phraseology while context

and topics remain distinctively pre-Buddhist in character. In our opinion this suggests a readiness to adopt mainstream language in order to make concepts understood rather than adapting them or expose them to the risk of being forgotten. The english translation, surely an enormous task, has been carried out masterfully, with Prof. Donatella Rossi's habitual precision, coherence and skillfulness and, in addition to that, has greatly benefitted from the close collaboration of the author with the translator, given the great number of technical and rare terms, many of which are not mentioned in dictionaries. Many words and phrases are followed by the original in tibetan in transliteration, a feature that makes this book an invaluable instrument for students of the tibetan language interested in these topics. In short *The Light of Kailash* is a veritable treasure trove of information for western readers and, together with the two forthcoming volumes, can't be missing in the libraries of any people interested in the history and culture of the Himalayas, both scholars and amateurs. ©

Togden Shakya Shri *The Life and Liberation of a Tibetan Yogin* By Kathog Situ Chokyi Gyatso Translated from Tibetan and compiled by Elio Gaurisco Shang Shung Publications, 2009, Merigar, Italy, 327 pages

Jacqueline Gens

The biography or in some cases, autobiography of individuals who have attained great spiritual development (often referred to as hagiography or sacred biography) in the Tibetan tradition is known as *namthar* or “liberation” story. These “liberation” accounts chart the inner and outer journey of an individual leading to their enlightenment. Unlike western notions of biography, the spiritual liberation story reveals in visionary and sometimes mythic terms the accomplishments of individuals who have mastered conventional reality to achieve awakened primordial awareness. As such, they provide an important “how to” map for practitioners still on the path towards realization and serve to prompt greater diligence. They also notarize like a seal, the various empowerments and practices received and conveyed by the master for future generations to come. All of us who have heard teachings from many masters can attest to the Tibetan penchant for telling stories about their precious masters and early training. The telling of such stories also provides a rich cultural context of vajra family that fuels our inspiration and sense of transcendent community. Such is the case, for instance, of the many stories that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has conveyed to



us about his root guru, Changchub Dorje, himself a disciple of Shaka Shri. The close relationship between Adzom Drukpa, the previous incarnation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, further strengthens the connection between Shakya Shri and our lineage. As in many well-known biographies we have had access to in translation, it's clear that Tibetans love a good story rich in narrative detail and particularities. Shakya Shri's (1853–1919) biography is no exception. The boy from humble circumstances whom his monastic schoolmates chided as “big nose” or “onion head” was a lowly cook in a Drukpa Kagyu monastery with little status who would become one of the greatest masters of his time. As Elio points out in his Appendix, there is no indication that Shakya Shri studied philosophy but achieved his mastery through practice and exceptional devotion. His practice was often done around his kitchen duties. One oft repeated story is the following: “On one occasion, while Shakya Shri was reporting to

Tsognyi Rinpoche (1849–1904) on his progress in his practice, one monk shouted up from below, ‘Nephew of Pema! Come down and start the fire in the kitchen!’ Hearing the monk, Tsognyi Rinpoche called down, ‘Well! It seems that without the nephew of Pema nobody in Drugu monastery can keep the fires going in the kitchen.’ Laughing loudly, he added, ‘One day you will beg to drink his piss!’ (p. 53) The author of this *namthar*, Kathog Situ Chokyi Gyatso repeatedly refers to Shakya Shri as a “hidden yogin” which allowed his practice and training to flourish unimpeded so that he could realize his potential. Shakya Shri never took ordination as a monk, which further diminished his status. Eventually, a family man with many children, he and his consort(s) and children lived in a cave above a remote village – vilified by some locals as that ‘dirty’ pack of yogins. Yet all of his direct descendents and their children were accomplished practitioners whose influence survives into the present. His retreat encampments were known for its strict discipline and simple lifestyle. We Westerners are deeply indebted to the generation of masters Shakya Shri was born into, for he and his contemporaries exerted extraordinary efforts to collect and preserve all teachings in anticipation of the gradual demise of Tibet's sovereignty as the sacred container for the Buddha's teachings as well revitalize the Dzogchen lineages through the many revealed treasures including those of Shakya Shri. Reading this biography offers an abundance of illuminating details about that unique period and the masters who were

influential at that time –. We will recognize their names – Adzom Drukpa, Za Patrul Rinpoche, Khamtrul Rinpoche Tenpe Nyima (Shakya Shri's root guru), Jamyang Khyentse Wangmo, Mipham Rinpoche and so forth. Translator, Elio Guarisco's concerted work in compiling information about how this biography came to be, his accompanying essays and his clear translation proved a joy to read from “cover to cover.” Elio really poured his heart into the project and it shines with many additional features which merit comment. There are several amazing teachings contained in the Shang Shung publication, not part of the original text. These include, “Opening the Door to Liberation” and “The Five Things Difficult to Accomplish.” A man of passionate intensity, Elio has included several of Shakya Shri's extraordinary Vajra songs, including one about his consort, Namkha Dronma. They are quite special. Elio writes in his essay at the conclusion of the book, “The Free Spirit of Shakya Shri,” “Presented as saintly in the biography, Shakya Shri, was certainly also a man who, within the light of his vast mind, blended all the conflicting aspects of human life. He was a human being of deep passions who at the same time had the wisdom to resolve them to benefit himself and others.” (p. 223) Whether the tradition of *namthar* will continue as a literary genre in Western contexts is uncertain. No doubt, various electronic delivery modes in the future will replace these kinds of accounts. For now, let it suffice to say, that continued translations

like Shang Shung's publication of this book are of great service to practitioners everywhere. Here's a bit of my personal take after reading this biography. In the West there seems to be a growing interest in miraculous and supernatural occurrences. This orientation has permeated both popular film and literature for a couple of decades. One of the greatest selling publications in the history of the written word is the Harry Potter series. Millions of children around the world have been nurtured on the heroic and magical forces of the world of sorcery. The great secret that is Tibetan culture is that such miracles are everyday manifestations not just imaginative yearning for the extraordinary. They are secret because they are not to be appropriated for egoistic agendas. Reading Shakya Shri's biography is an incursion into the fantastic world of the impossible becoming possible. The real magic and adventure, of course, is discovering our own mind and cherishing the source of that knowledge – our masters. Shakya Shri's liberation story reminded me of that principle on a deep level. I sincerely hope those interested in such life stories will read this book. You won't be disappointed. In the end, I offer many thanks to all those who worked on making this text available to us. ©

Bhutan’s Buddha Mushroom and Other Fungi

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The tight curves wound their way up the narrow valley along a mountain river. The gushing water was brown from the heavy monsoon rains. I was already a day late for the conference on Traditional Asian Medicines and eager to make the late morning session on medicinal plants and their increasing scarcity in Asia. We passed by a farmer selling apples and peppers along the roadside. He also sold small plastic bags full of a yellow product that reminded me of chanterelles. Could that be? A few kilometers up the narrow road I spotted another improvised stand, and passing by more slowly I clearly saw mushrooms. In a hurry or not, I had to call a stop and rushed out of the car before it stood still. Two farming ladies were selling bags of smallish, bright-yellow chanterelles, aromatic whitish brown matsutake, and big purple corals. Quickly, I took pictures, bought some chanterelles and a coral, and got back in the car.

I was invited to Thimphu, Bhutan, to present my research on the caterpillar fungus (*Cordyceps sinensis*) in Tibet at the quadrennial conference on Traditional Asian Medicines. At first I was hesitant to participate, since the invitation came only with a small grant, just a fraction of the travel costs. However, once I realized the conference was taking place during mushroom season, I knew I had to go.

I had wanted to go to Bhutan for 20 years, but somehow it had never worked out before. Partially this is explained by Bhutan’s policy to minimize the impact of tourism by letting in only a very limited number of guided groups while maximizing the financial benefits by offering high-end tourism. However, through the years I had been in contact with Dr. Phuntsho Namgyel, a Bhutanese researcher who used to work on the caterpillar fungus and matsutake, Bhutan’s most precious fungal resources, as a source of rural income. So I had my hopes up to be able to explore Bhutan’s fungal economy instead of joining exclusive tours ignoring the forest full of mushrooms.

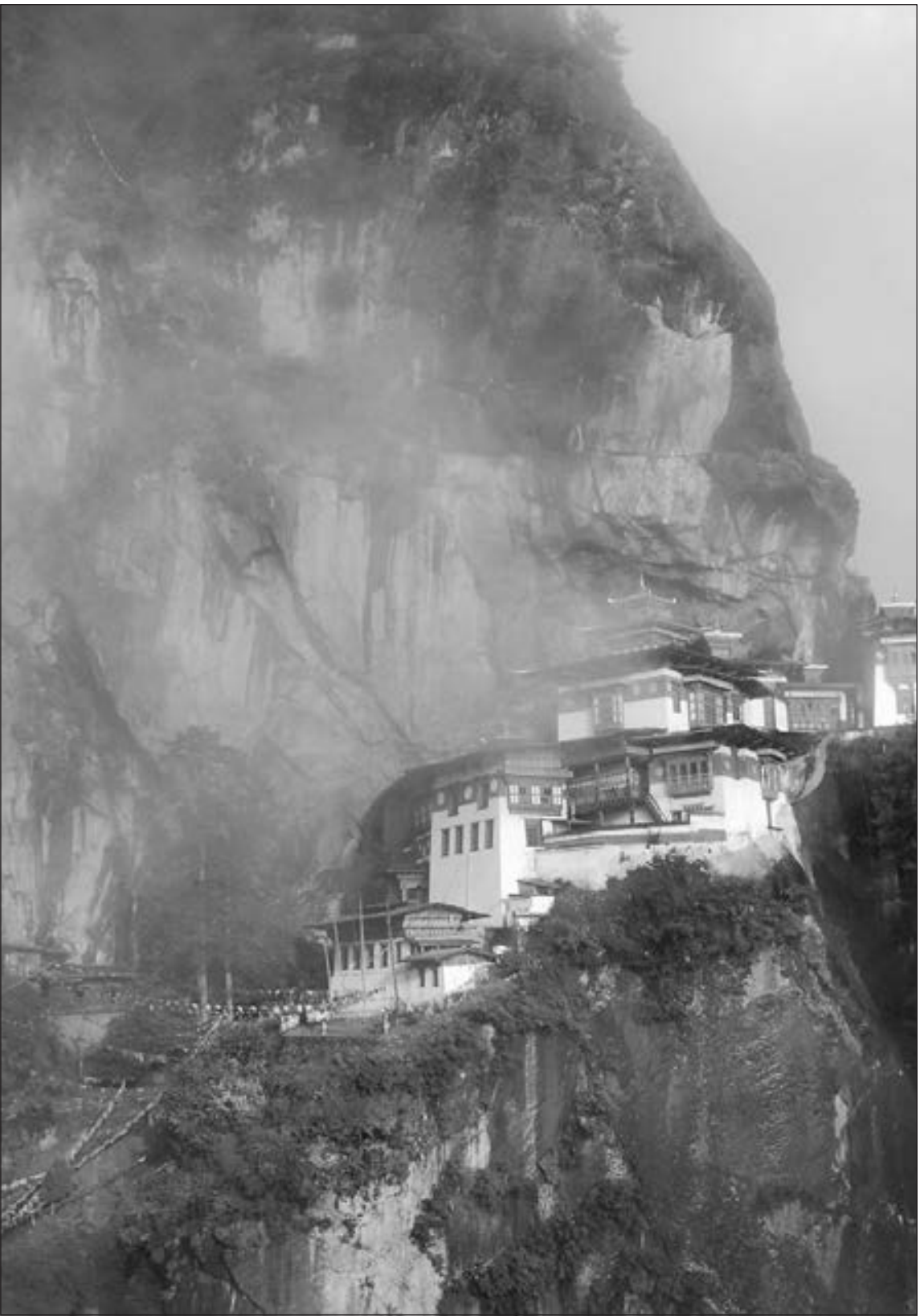
It wasn’t so easy to get back in contact with Phuntsho. As it turned out he had switched fields and was now the director in the Election Commission of Bhutan, a new office, since the King, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, had ordered Bhutan to become a democracy. This move was not so popular with many people, but the 4th king pointed out that democracy is the future and one bad king could ruin a country.

Bhutan is located in the Eastern Himalayas, sandwiched between India and Chinese-administrated Tibet AR. It is nearly the size of Switzerland and has fewer than a million inhabitants (Switzerland has 7.8 million); the whole valley with the capital Thimphu might have around 100,000 now. The strong pull of the urban area worries planners. The administration is working hard on improving living conditions in the countryside to slow down emigration.

In this context, rural mushroom income is regarded as an important factor for rural development, and Bhutan has been dedicating resources to this cause for many years now. For example, the annual *Cordyceps sinensis* harvest is being sold via a government organized auction system to maximize local income in remote regions, which otherwise have an extremely hard time generating a cash income that would allow participation in a modern economy. Also, Bhutan has the most advance field trials researching *Cordyceps sinensis* ecology, although Bhutan’s annual production is below a ton and thus less than 1% of the annual production of the Tibetan Plateau and the Himalayas. And the interest in *Cordyceps* is great. Most people I talked with were familiar with “Yartsa Goenbub,” as it is commonly known in Bhutan. I was even interviewed by the *Bhutan Today*, a daily newspaper, and invited to present my *Cordyceps* research from Tibet at the ministry of agriculture [see http://www.moa.gov.bt/moa/news/news_detail.php?id=845 for a web version].

Still during the conference, Phuntsho took me to the National Mushroom Center, just a short walk from the venue, to meet his friend Dawa Penjor, the NMC director, whom I presented with booklets on PNW chanterelles, morels, and matsutake. We connected quickly through our shared fascination with mushrooms. I told Dawa that I would love to go out in the field with them.

Dawa was so kind as to organize an overnight excursion to Ganekha, the village where the “first” matsutake was found. Actually, this mushroom was known before, but in 1988 a Japanese visitor realized that Bhutan’s “Po shamu” (penis mushroom), as it was nicknamed back then for its sometimes suggestive shape, was identical with the famous Japanese matsutake. Already the next year, commercial harvest had started, and ever since then it has been collected in several areas in Bhutan that have warm-temper-



Taktsang in clouds.

Photo: D. Winkler

ate oak-pine forests. Most of the matsutake are exported fresh by plane to Japan. All it needed was a new name; everyone now knows it as “sangay shamu”, the Buddha Mushroom.

In Ganekha we met the village headmen and the chairman of the local mushroom cooperative, who coordinates the matsutake harvest. We talked about matsutake in Bhutan, Tibet, and the Pacific Northwest. Our visit was timed so that we could attend the matsutake market the next afternoon. Several buyers come to the village three days a week, and all the local collectors bring their matsutake, which are sorted into two categories. Class A are specimens whose caps have not fully opened and whose partial veil is still more or less intact. Collectors can sell this class for US \$5 per pound. Class B are open-capped mushrooms and fetch \$2. Most mushrooms sold are class A. Collectors make \$650–850 per season, which constitutes over 40% of their income. A decade ago matsutake generated over 80%, but the money from the trade has been used to invest in agriculture to buy cows, diversify crops, and introduce power tillers. Thus, the fungal in-

come enabled farmers to increase overall income. This strategy was also strongly supported by Bhutan’s king, who, when visiting Ganekha, pointed out that complete dependence on matsutake is not a smart strategy for sound rural development and suggested diversification.

Dawa and Phuntsho had arranged with Aum Kuchum, the lady who had found the first matsutake, to stay the night in her house and join in on an early morning matsutake hunt. She lived in Zamto village, about half an hour’s drive on a very rough road up the valley. On the way we encountered a collectors’ camp on a small meadow surrounded by dense oak forests. Thirty-five men from a lower village for whom the walk up into the woods was too far for a daily hunt had camped out in group tents. Their daily work was done, and they were playing Khuru, throwing heavy metal darts over a distance of 20 yards. We were invited to join in, and it took quite awhile until I managed to figure out how to give the weighty dart the right spin to fly straight.

We continued on, only to find the road blocked by a landslide. In May, totally untypical, a

typhoon had struck Bhutan and caused much destruction. So we had to hike the last bit. The narrow valley opened up between forested slopes. The southern slope was dotted with tall, beautiful wooden farmhouses with ornate windows surrounded by already harvested fields.

Once in the house, which we entered by way of a small bridge over a dry moat, we were served milk, tea, and cookies. This was soon followed by a sumptuous dinner.

First we received a big bowl of “red rice”, a rice with a natural pinkish grain. I was shown how to use the cooked rice to clean my hands by first rubbing it and then kneading it in my hands. The color change convinced me that my hands should be clean enough to eat my food with. On top of my rice I received a ladle each of “ema datsi” and “shamu datsi”. Datsi is a cheese sauce, somewhat close to our idea of a cream sauce, and a Bhutanese favorite. Ema are green chilies. In Bhutan hot peppers are a vegetable, not a spice. Incredible amounts of hot green and red chilies are eaten every day. Not surprisingly, the shamu datsi – mushrooms in cheese sauce – were also enriched



Lady with Matsutake mushroom.

Photo: D. Winkler

with lots of chilies. The mushroom served was the Himalayan Gypsy (*Rozites emodensis*), which looks just like its close relative the Gypsy (*Rozites caperata*) but can be distinguished by the pinkish-purple hue of its gills and the wrinkled cap. It was difficult to discern its taste beyond pleasantly fungal owing to the overwhelming presence of the green peppers. Rounds of arak, a grain, often rice-grain-derived clear alcohol, were also served, but arak turned out to be the wrong kind of drink to fight the spiciness of the food. We went to bed early, since we were scheduled to rise at 5 a.m. to hunt for matsutake.

At dawn, following Dema, the daughter of Aum Kuchum, we quickly traversed some pastures covered with aromatic wild hemp on the way uphill to the matsutake forest. The altitude of nearly 10,000 ft slowed me down. In the morning light, the forest of stout evergreen oaks (*Quercus semecarpifolia*) and bhutan pines (*Pinus wallichiana*) decorated with long strands of *Usnea* lichen interspersed with tall *Rhododendrons* and *Pieris* shrubs seemed like it was out of a fairy tale. The silver gray *Usnea longissima* is also known in Bhutan as Dakini hair. Dakinis are female beings which usually reside in a different sphere but once in a while manifest in the human dimension to help humans along the path to wisdom.

It did not take any divine intervention to find the first mushrooms. Bright yellow chanterelles and a variety of *Russulas* dotted the ground. Matsutake were much more elusive, the daily collection by locals having cleaned out the forest successfully. Or maybe they were all hidden? A small Class A budding

matsutake was found, but since it was still below the minimum size of 3 inches required by collection regulations we hid it under some moss so it could grow some more.

Soon I lost sight of Dema, Dawa, and two of his people, since taking mushroom photos and identifying species to a new member of the Mushroom Center slowed me down. We found many familiar mushrooms such as chanterelles (*Cantharellus cibarius*), russulas (*R. emetica*, *R. cyanoxantha*, and *R. delica*), amanitas (*A. citrina* and *A. franchetii*), milk caps (*Lactarius scrobiculatus* and *L. rufus*), and a whole range of *Tricholoma* such as *T. sejunctum*, *T. sulphureum*, and *T. focale*. Also we came across a big purple *Ramaria* called “Bjichu kangru”, the bird foot; nobody knows the exact scientific name, but everybody eats it. Also abundant was the Himalayan Gypsy (*Rozites emodensis*). We picked the young ones, but left behind many more old ones, which lose much of their pink-purple complexion. But, of course, there were plenty of mushrooms I had never seen in my life or just couldn’t place.

Returning to the farmhouse, we started an ID session with European and Japanese books, as there are no Himalayan mushroom books. Dawa is very troubled by using European names, but has no real alternatives owing to the lack of comprehensive taxonomic research in the region. I told him many mushrooms in North America were also named for European species and received their own names a century or decades later. Dawa was aware of the case of our Pacific chanterelle, *C. formosus*, which was known for a long time as *C. cibarius*, although it is very distinctive.

Talking about chanterelles, while collecting with Sabrintara and Dorji, both members of the NMC, below Cheri Gompa up the valley from Thimphu, we found “regular” chanterelles (*Cantharellus cibarius*), white chanterelles (*Cantharellus sp.*), and a blue-gray chanterelle (*Craterellus cornucopioides*); the last, known as the Horn of Plenty, is an excellent edible but is not often eaten in Bhutan because of its dark color. (Interestingly, close by in Tango I found the winter chanterelle *Craterellus tubaeformis*, but was told by a fungophile monk that this mushroom was not edible.)

Also on this very moist shady slope under deciduous oaks, I found my first *Amanita rubrovolvata*, a beautiful, tiny, light-red, spotted fly agaric with a red volva. Another tiny, but stunning, mushroom was a viscous *Suillus* with a dimpled dark brown cap. Big old oaks served as habitat for *Ganoderma* and hand-sized *Oudemansiella*, which grew below leaning trunks, probably preferring the rain protection for fruiting.

With us looking for mushrooms in the woods were a bunch of young Nepali women (Bhutan has a big Nepali population), who were picking any good-sized mushrooms, often asking us if they could eat them. We told them we didn’t know what they were picking, and it is not smart to eat any mushroom you cannot recognize for sure. They did not care for that bit of information and went their way with a wild assortment, at least with no deadly mushrooms as far as we knew. Also, several people told me that there are many people who are convinced that any toxicity in a mushroom can be neutralized by cooking them with the seed from a native Prickly ash, “tingay” (*Zanthoxylum sp.*), known in China as Sichuan pepper.

The consumption of mushrooms not really known to the collectors is a big problem in Bhutan. Every year many people get sick or even die from eating poisonous mushrooms. One of the Mushroom Center’s main objectives is to educate the public. Dawa and the NMC have published two posters of the main edible and poisonous mushrooms. They have also produced table calendars and brochures about poisonous mushrooms and mushroom poisonings – with symptomatic diagnoses – which have been distributed widely in Bhutan. In addition, the NMC is working on a compilation of Bhutan’s mycota, but there is no end in sight. (In Europe some mycologist suggest calling the fungal flora “funga,” which seems a good choice, staying with Latin in the context of flora, fauna, and funga, not to mention the catchy alliteration.)

Dawa emphasized that NMC would love to be able to send some of its staff abroad for training to improve their taxonomic skills and pointed out that taxonomic experts interested in coming to work in Bhutan – which not only has a forestation rate of over

70% but also boasts an incredible biodiversity, from tropic Himalayan foothills to high alpine areas peaking out at 24,000 ft – may have the opportunity to help NMC in mushroom taxonomy. If there is any mycology department interested in cooperating with Bhutan and able to offer an opportunity for training, I would be glad to help in making a connection.

Another main task of NMC is disseminating the know-how of mushroom cultivation in the country. When I was visiting, NMC was growing Shiitake, *Pleurotus*, and *Ganoderma*.

But let’s get back into the soaked oak forest on a 60° slope. The extreme steepness slowed us down and the mossy “ground” in the form of the slope was right in our faces. As I was photographing a big white *Ramaria* (the main challenge was not sliding down), I noticed a minute, filigreed fruiting body with a yellow base and the rest all covered in white spores, like a small tree covered in powder snow. Eureka! I had found a *Cordyceps*. We looked all around and found four more minute similar fungi. Well, it turned out we had found three different species, all technically not *Cordyceps*, but anamorphs of *Cordyceps*, one of them most probably *Isaria tenuipes*. This I was told by Dr. Nigel Hywel-Jones, a Welsh mycologist who started out as an entomologist but slowly was caught in the fungal web and has been researching *Cordyceps* fungi in SE Asia for two decades. His recent research focus is in Bhutan.

Although it is absolutely fascinating discussing *Cordyceps* and other entomophagous fungi with Nigel, he himself is not much of a mycophagist. However, that wasn’t much of an issue in a country where the only Italian restaurant serves you an excellent pizza con funghi cooked with fresh Sisi shamu, the oak mushroom, which we know as chanterelles. ©

PS: I will be posting photos from Bhutan on my webpages: www.MushRoaming.com



Matsutake Khyentse shrine.

Photo: D. Winkler

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Loïc Leretaille

“Behaving like a bee, taste all teachings!” is a Dzogchen precept (SMS 1) I have spontaneously applied – even without knowing it – during at least a half century (I am now 73).

Being born in Brittany (cf. my name: Loïc) where at that time (1937) everybody was Catholic, I was baptized the early morning of my birth, and very young I became an alter-boy, then a seminarist, studying: theology, liturgy, dogmatics, metaphysics, ethics, ontology, Latin and Greek. However, I didn’t become a Catholic priest because I got married and became an economist. But such a materialistic field didn’t satisfy my spiritual quest. So, I began to read some books on Oriental spiritualities and polytheistic religions, and I asked myself: ‘If I hadn’t been born in Brittany, but in Asia, Africa or an Aboriginal country, maybe I wouldn’t be a Catholic, not even a Monotheist, but an Animist, a Hindu or a ... Buddhist!’. Furthermore, philosophically reasoning, I stopped being convinced of the theological supremacy – and even the primordial necessity – of Monotheism. Consequently, I – logically – progressively lost my Catholic faith and, henceforth, my quest has been – and will remain – exclusively for a ‘non-dogmatic spirituality’ which is the final point of my half-century wanderings preparing me for the encounter with Buddhism on my way to meet Chögyal Namkhai Norbu!

Thirty years ago, in Paris, I had a friend who was Buddhist. Once, she invited me for a Tantric Initiation given by the famous Nyingmapa Lama Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. But we arrived late, exactly when he was ringing the bell, playing the damaru, throwing rice around, agitating a peacock feather in order to send some purifying droplets of water in all directions, and simultaneously chanting numerous esoteric (for me!) Tibetan incantations and Sanskrit mantras, while his Assistant was passing through the crowded room holding a stick of incense. Intrigued by such a strange ritual ceremony of Empowerment I had never seen before and without an equivalent in Catholic liturgy (except the incense), I wanted my friend to explain the meaning of all that to me, but I wasn’t allowed to speak, nor even whisper! And, since that Abhiseka lasted hours, I felt worse and worse, until I felt sick (probably by somatization!); I ran out into the street and vomited ... near the wheel of a very big luxurious car! I tried as best as I could to clean my vomit; just when

I was finishing, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche came out to take that car near which I was standing. So, at a distance of one meter, I saw that very tall and very fat Master, smiling at me with his marvelous unforgettable smile (maybe he was thinking that I was there on the pavement in order to open the car door?). But, immediately after, the driver came to open that door. So, Rinpoche got in and they left quickly.

That unique (in every sense of the word) instant of time was my first and strongest (gazing into each other’s eyes) contact with a Tibetan Buddhist and Dzogchen Master! Some years later, I received many teachings from Dilgo Khyentse, but at that first moment – because of my ignorance of Buddhism – I peremptorily told my friend: “Today is the first and the last time I’m coming to a Buddhist meeting: YOUR Buddhism is made of obscurantist magical rituals, YOUR very fat Guru with HIS big car with chauffeur looks like a leader of a sect, who get fat pumping out money from his credulous followers, and speculates with these incomes!”. Now, I am ashamed to have pronounced words which insulted that Master and offended that Vajra-sister ... but it was due to my ‘mental opacity’! If this doesn’t excuse me, I implore ‘extenuating circumstances’!

Anyway, she didn’t tell me off about my stupid thoughtless declamations about that event, but we never talked of Buddhism again for one year! Later, that very wise dakini one day said to me (sic): “Please, give me ANOTHER CHANCE: this time another famous Tibetan Buddhist Master, called Kalu Rinpoche, is coming to Paris; he isn’t Nyingmapa, but a Kagyupa; he isn’t fat at all, but a very thin yogi; and ... he hasn’t got a limousine!” I answered: “In this case, I accept to give you YOUR ‘second chance’, but it will be the LAST one.” Of course, she didn’t tell me that we were going again for an initiation. So, I was surprised when Kalu Rinpoche began asking: “First of all, before the Abhiseka, those who didn’t ‘Take Refuge’ earlier are invited to come to the front row near my throne.” I asked my friend: “But what does TAKE REFUGE mean?” She replied: “Go immediately in front of Rinpoche and do everything he asks ... it will be explained!”. I went two meters from Kalu Rinpoche, when his translator said: “Put your right knee on the ground and repeat three times the following Tibetan ritual commitment.” Kneeling down looked to me like the ‘Knighthood Dubbing’ ini-



tiatic ritual, equivalent to the ‘Adoubement’, in French, with which I was familiar, so I didn’t reject that; but, I also had to prostrate three times – not in front of God, but in front of a man! – which was rather difficult to accept for my ego; furthermore, having to repeat publicly an incomprehensible (because untranslated) sentence of commitment seemed to me unacceptable (for I wouldn’t commit myself until I knew for sure what such an oath implied).

Therefore, again, I wanted to escape, but I was so closely circumvallated by the other ‘New Refugees’ that I could not abandon leaving my place! So, after three minutes of that triple Tibetan psalmody finishing with “Legs-so” (excellent), I had my hair cut and I was given a so-called ‘dharma-name’: Karma Dondrup Tashi. This second “Baptism”, even if for me it had to be ‘auspicious’ (which is the meaning of Tashi, in Tibetan), seemed surrealistic at that moment. Nevertheless, as Kalu Rinpoche was the Vajra-Master in front of whom I took Refuge the first time and who gave me my Tibetan name, K.D.T., I was convinced that ipso facto he – and only he – the Owner of the Changpa-Kagyü Lineage – could be my Root Master forever, even if after that ‘Prise de Refuge’ I followed many other Masters of the five Tibetan Traditions: Kagyupa, Nyingmapa, Sakyapa, Gelugpa, Bönpo. This is why I said, introducing this spiritual autobiography, that I have applied the traditional precept because: “behaving like a bee” I tried to “taste all teachings” during approximately a full decade!

But, according to Hegelian dialectics, after the thesis (Dilgo) and the antithesis (Kalu) comes the synthesis (Norbu)! This “Third Dimension” occurred ten years after the two above-mentioned episodes and it was again thanks to the same egeria who asked me to translate an audio-cassette of teachings given by another Tibetan ‘Reincarnate’ called Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from Italian into French. Having some knowledge of Tibetan and Sanskrit languages, I replied: “Namkhai Norbu in Tibet-

an means poetically Celestial Jewel and Chögyal is a very rare and precious historical noble title meaning Dharmaraja in Sanskrit, Roi du Dharma in French. I am impatient to translate that Teaching!” So, I immediately translated the whole cassette at one stretch orally, although like a parrot, because it was the first time I had ever heard a strictly Dzogchen teaching with its specific terminology. But I instantly had the intuition (was it *gsal-ba*, the Dzogchen ‘clarity?’) that this *Dzogpa Chenpo* was something not only very vast (*Chenpo*), but an Accomplishment (*Dzogpa*), very profound, quintessential, synthetic and extremely powerful. Obviously, I wanted to meet that prestigious Dzogchen Master as soon as possible!

The first opportunity was the summer when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu came to France to give teachings from the 18th to the 24th of July 1994, in a place with a very ‘auspicious’ (like my name: Tashi) toponym called “Le Domaine du Vajra”! During these seven days – which were like a ‘new birth’ for me – Rinpoche taught many subjects. Among them: THE ROOT MASTER, about which he said that this *Mulaguru* is not necessarily your chronologically first *Vajracarya* (Spiritual Teacher), but the most “essential”, the Guru who makes you understand the “True Essence” of Teachings ... which is – in ultima ratio – your ‘Real Nature’ (*rang-bzhin*). Suddenly, I realized that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was and would be my *rtsa-ba’i blama*! So, immediately at the end of these two hours of teachings, I ran to him, saying: “After the criteria you presented this morning, it is evident for me that you are my ‘Root Teacher’ but – because of the ineluctable reciprocity of *Samaya* – the choice must be mutual: so, do you accept me as your Student?”. Fortunately for me, with the direct and sharp manner of an authentic *Dzogchenpa*, he replied without hesitating: “Va bene!”.

By these two Italian words, like *Kadag* and *Lhundrub*, with three syllables, like *Tri-kaya*, composed of six letters, like *The Six Spaces of Samantabhadra*, I got – for all my lives until my Full Enlightenment – my precious Root Lama: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu! May he have a long present life allowing him to realize his strong wish: to teach the *Santi Maha Sangha* until the 9th Level! And, being myself a little older than him, may I be able to follow his Teachings as long as possible ... under Mandarava’s auspices!

Now, my wanderings are finished: the “bee-in-me” has no need to go for honey-gathering furthermore ... since all the “spiritual honey” I need is included within the *Dzogchen Teachings* that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu generously offers! The only N.S.C. (Necessary-and-Sufficient-Condition) is knowing how to INTEGRATE them for the benefit of oneself and of all beings (with special regards towards the bees!).

Sarva Mangalam

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ཨ་ཕྱི་རྒྱལ་ཁྱེ། Desde el Sur
Adriana Battisti
Jewelry & Accessories



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House For Sale

near Merigar West
Case Brezza
between Pescina
and Seggiano

120 sq.m., 3 large
bedrooms, 2 bath-
rooms, Kitchen/
dining room, sitting room with fireplace, store-
room, pizza oven outside, gas heating, completely
renovated, new roof.

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