

THE MIRROR

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Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: G. Baggi

2010

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Photo: R. Fernandez

The Mandarava Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Tashigar South, Argentina, March 22–31, 2010

Cristian Cabra
Translation: Ana García

March spread its sails over the hills of Córdoba, stroking with its invisible hand the trees of Tashigar, preparing the colors for autumn. On the 22nd of March, the Master started a wonderful retreat, a gift for all the fortunate ones who had the chance of attending, either in person or by webcast.

Rinpoche said he had planned to give one teaching, but that in two dreams it had been indicated that he had to give something different from what he had planned and that was what we finally received. When I think about Rinpoche's way of receiving teachings, either in dreams or through visions, it is like a mystery that

surrounds what He is and His Mandala and where we find ourselves thanks to who knows how much merit we have accumulated in so many past lives.

With his very clear manner, Rinpoche explained many methods of breathing, tsalungs, all linked to the practice of Mandarava, the Mother of Immortal life. In her presence, we are in front of Mandarava herself, in front of her illuminated mind that lights the darkness of the ignorance that holds us in this infinite samsara.

The days were passing by, one nicer than the other. We had warm sunny days, as if the weather itself would like to help so that we could all enjoy this sacred place

with our Master. He explained that although Mandarava is a long life and prosperity practice, its aim is total realization, combining it with the methods taught, they became a straight path to that goal. It is really moving when Rinpoche says literally that he himself is alive thanks to this teaching in particular and he says, "If it is so for me, it is also for you." As usual, he pointed out the need of going to the essence of the teachings, the essence of practice.

In this way these teachings were seeping in the deepest part of all of us, but it depends on each of us to do our best to get

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Photo: E. Gromaches

Essential Teaching of Dzogchen

Excerpt from the teaching of Zhi lam dras, the terma of Changchub Dorje
February 19, 2010, Tashigar South, Argentina

Good day to everybody everywhere. Today we are going into the main teaching for this retreat, the terma teaching of my teacher Changchub Dorje. The title of this teaching is the base, path and fruit in Dzogchen – zhi lam dras. More importantly, there are many series of Dzogchen teaching, but the Dzogchen terma of my teacher Changchub Dorje belongs to the series called Lamed Nyingthig Yangthig, which means supreme and essential, and the most important point is that this teaching is the essence of the practice and knowledge of Dzogchen teaching.

Three Vehicles

You already know that there are three different kinds of vehicles. Vehicle means something for traveling, and if we are traveling a long distance, if we want to go to visit Mt. Kailash, for example, then if possible we should go by airplane. How we travel depends on our condition. If we have positive secondary causes we can go by airplane and arrive more quickly, but if we have no money and we have no possibility to take an airplane, then of course we have to take a car. If we do not have that possibility, then we try to go by bicycle, and if we do not even have that possibility, then we walk. If we walk, it takes so many days or months to arrive. That is an example of a vehicle used to get someplace somehow.

We are in samsara, which means transmigration based in our dualistic vision. Samsara is just like an ocean; we should go beyond that ocean. To realize going beyond, we need a vehicle like a ship or an airplane. So in the teaching when we say vehicle, it means something complete for having total realization. For example, if we have two legs we can somehow walk and arrive somewhere. Walking with our two legs is much better than nothing, but it takes a long time. Some vehicles, particularly sutra vehicles, are like that. To have total realization we need many lives, not only one lifetime. When we follow the Vajrayana style vehicle, we have also the possibility to have realization in a lifetime. So you see, all are called vehicles but they are different, a car is a vehicle, an airplane is a vehicle, but we

know the difference very well. We need to discover that, otherwise people say all vehicles are the same.

The refuge vow is indispensable when following Sutra, you must receive it initially, and if you are following the Mahayana style you must cultivate bodhicitta. When you are learning the teaching and going ahead, it means that when you receive a vow, any kind of vow, you are controlling your body, speech and mind in order not to commit negative actions. If you follow Sutra correctly, you are also controlling your existence.

When you are using a vehicle like Vajrayana you don't need to control your body, speech and mind. The main point is that you transform your dualistic or ordinary karmic vision; through karmic vision we produce negative karma. Negative karma is a consequence of our karmic vision. In Vajrayana we have that vision and then we transform our emotion, our base of aggregation and everything in a pure dimension. You see, this is the difference from the Sutra style of teaching, but it is also complete. It is complete for having total realization. It does not mean that Vajrayana is dependent on Sutra or Sutra dependent on Vajrayana; they are all complete paths called vehicles, even if the way of having realization is different.

In Vajrayana, for example, we can have realization in life or in the state of bardo, so you see the vehicles are different. Particularly in the Dzogchen teaching, the main point is that we discover and know how our real condition is. Initiation is indispensable in Vajrayana and in general in Tantrism. If you don't receive initiation you cannot apply the method, but you don't need to receive any kind of vow. There are many monks or nuns who follow vows; this is more related to the sutra teaching. In Vajrayana, there are also many monks and nuns who keep the vows of the sutra and do practice of the Vajrayana system internally. They combine Sutra and Vajrayana, but even if they are combining Sutra and Vajrayana they need to receive initiation. When there is a possibility to follow instruction they need to receive it.

It is not sufficient to read a book – sometimes people buy Vajrayana style books and apply what they read. That creates so many problems. To follow Vajrayana first you need to receive an initiation, then instruction from a teacher, and then what is practiced becomes something more concrete.

Energy Level

Dzogchen teaching is not transformation like Vajrayana. The Dzogchen teaching is called self-liberation, so it is different from the beginning. For example, when we think of our three existences, Vajrayana practice is more related with our energy level. In Vajrayana practice we not only transform into the figure of deity or integrate into the mandala to have that realization, but we visualize chakras, channels, and work with the energy of kundalini and prana. All this is related with the energy level, and for that reason a teacher and precise instruction are needed.

I will give you a very simple example: Prana energy is circulating in our body, but it is not circulating precisely everywhere in the channels, so we do practice and direct the prana to circulate in the channels to have more experience. The experience we have depends on the position of our physical body and the method of the breathing. We can only learn this precisely from a teacher, not with a book. Today you can get many translated books, also books of Tantra. Books are necessary for continuing the teaching so it does not disappear, but people who are interested in the teaching do not think a book is enough; they know the teaching is related with transmission.

When you receive transmission like Vajrayana teaching you can use a book to study and learn, but you should not go to a shop and buy a book on Vajrayana, read and apply it. Some people apply many practices of prana energy described in a book and create so many problems for themselves. If prana energy is circulating where it should not, you become abnormal and have feelings, sensations, visions, and hearing in a very different way. Then the final realization is that you go crazy, and this is not so easy to correct once you have created that kind of problem. For that reason it is called a secret teaching; secret teaching means first you need to participate, then you communicate to the teacher, the teacher gives you the teaching, you seriously apply it and then you can have realization. Otherwise you only create problems, so you must be careful. This is true for Vajrayana teaching in general.

In Dzogchen teaching it is not necessary to receive an initiation, but the principle in Dzogchen teaching is going beyond limitation, so we are not limited by saying that you don't need to receive initiation. A teacher can also use initiation to introduce the knowledge of Dzogchen, a teacher can use Sutra style to explain oral teaching and also introduce knowledge; there are many different ways that depend on the student, if the student has good karma – good karma meaning that in the past life the student somehow had some connection with a Dzogchen teacher and teaching. Even in this life if the student had not yet met a teacher or teaching, when he meets a teacher and teaching he can easily wake up and can get in the knowledge of Dzogchen. Some people have this kind of capacity – these kinds of people are called kalden (skal ldan) in Tibetan, which means a fortunate one who has good karma. People interested in Dzogchen teaching, who participate and follow the teaching, are considered fortunate with good karma. For that reason in the Dzogchen teaching we don't make publicity or use a missionary system. In Sutra, they use a missionary system because they say it is necessary to make people understand the existence of the precious words of Buddha. In Dzogchen teaching, even in the Vajrayana system, we know very well if someone is interested they have already had a connection in a past life, otherwise they would not be interested.

Sometimes it seems someone is not seriously interested in the teachings, but somehow with a good secondary cause they become interested. Someone says, “Oh, I was not interested to receive Dzogchen teaching but my friend was going to a retreat to receive teaching. I was curious and went with my friend and then I received Dzogchen teaching.” Some people have this kind of idea, so even if they received the transmission and are not a practitioner themselves, it means they have good karma that is not complete. So they follow the teaching through curiosity, that curiosity is a secondary cause, and maybe one day it will mature. I have some students who say, “Oh I came to your

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Knowledge of the Mind

from a Teaching on Milam, Primordial Experience given in Donetsk, Ukraine on April 25, 2010

Today I will try to explain something more connected with knowledge of the mind. At the beginning I will introduce this more with Western language and then try to give some references more connected with Tibetan Buddhism, and then go more deeply into the knowledge of the different states of the mind so that we understand more what is meant by mind and what the different aspects of mind are.

The first aspect that we are trying to understand is the easiest and most obvious one. When we open our eyes we have a vision of reality, which means that we can see something that we can talk about, something we have some perception of, that we can touch, that we can feel. For example, when we have an object in front of us, the way we think about this reality means we all understand that it is an object. So we can understand this object of reality, we can analyze it and have more or less an idea.

The moment that we analyze any object of reality, besides what the object is, we are working with our mind. Any object of reality requires some effort with our mind, so if this object is a material object for example, it will have some kind of qualification: it will have a weight, a form, a shape, some way we can describe it and at a general level we can describe and understand how the object is.

At a certain moment we can also notice that this object exists in our mind because we perceived it and we have created an idea of it. Then we can observe how the idea is: if it is like a reflection in the mirror, or if it has already changed. For example if we have no need for the object to change then it remains the same. So I take an obvious object like a glass and I show it to you and then you have an idea, because if I take it away you can remember how it was. It means that object is in our mind.

For example, I can have some feelings for this object. First of all I can recognize it, I can understand it is a glass that it has some kind of function, for example, a glass I use for drinking, which is an obvious function. I probably created this object for this function. Until this moment there has been no need to change this object, but at a certain moment it becomes the subject of a talk between my friend and I. Once we have observed and judged, then we may have different ideas – perhaps I like to drink water and my friend likes to drink wine, and this is more a glass for water, it should be a little different for wine, so the main function has already changed. I can feel I like this object or I don't like it.

This object is still here but my mind has gone somewhere else, and without changing anything about its own nature my mind has already changed something about the condition of this object. Then I can go a little further and imagine it has color, I can evaluate the quality, if it is made of glass or crystal, if it is nice crystal what predominant color it has, blue or red or green, so after a while I can have all possible ideas and feelings about this object. Most of all if my friend starts to have a different idea from me, for example I like something and he likes something else, I have the need to show that what I like is better, which creates tension. If we observe, the cause of all this talk is still in front of us and has not changed at all, it has remained the same, but we have travelled with our minds.

Then it starts to be interesting because we can understand that mind has some kind of potentiality; by using my imagination I can change even the physical aspect of this object. For example I can imagine something even more interesting than what it is in reality, I can imagine it [the glass] is made of light, or is made of water like clouds or I can imagine that instead of containing water it contains nice thoughts. Somehow I still recognize it is a glass and what is in front of me is still the same, but my perception, my idea or my feeling have changed. So we can easily understand what is material and real and what is unreal, like the mind.

The mind has a completely different characteristic. The aspect of material things is limited, because I have one glass, not many. But I can have thousands of these glasses in my mind and instantly I can imagine there are millions, so this aspect of qualities and quantities is different for the mind. So this means that mind is not limited, like material objects, but has these characteristics of being unlimited and unreal. So do I believe or not what is in my mind?

Let's give a simple example. For example I can have the idea there are streets that are very dangerous to walk. The same street during the daylight seems normal, but at night I feel fear on the same street. This feeling of danger relates to something concrete, real, based on statistics that walking on a certain street at a certain time can be dangerous. I can be more or less certain of different situations and then maybe I do not walk there so often at night.

But then at a certain moment a shooting star or something like this appears and everyone is very stressed because this can be a bad sign. Statistically if we walk at night something can happen and we can read newspapers and understand that, but shooting stars do not fall every day. Meteors don't arrive every day so the perception of fear can be different. I walk on the street every day, but I don't see meteors every day, so it means I am less confident with this danger, with this idea.



Photo: Liane Gräf

So I can have different perceptions and a different feeling of fear. I can feel even more fear of something I do not know.

For example, I can have strong fear that someone will arrive during the night with some terrible weapon and break my door while I am sleeping, just like in the movies. If we observe this aspect we understand there is nothing rational or logical in it - defining fear with something logical is very difficult. We can understand what the cause or source is. For example fear can be very useful to learn how to protect ourselves: through fear we learn not to get hurt if, for instance, when we use a sharp object like knives, scissors and so on because we learn they can be dangerous. We tell children not to play with these objects and in this way they have the opportunity to learn. Maybe sometimes they get hurt but then they learn and pay attention.

At a certain point children are afraid of the dark and they don't want to sleep without light. So going beyond with this knowledge we are able to develop our imagination: we started from a single object and arrived to us, how we feel, what we like, what we don't like, etc. What children fear in the dark is totally unreal because turning on the light doesn't change anything in this reality. If there is nothing in this room to begin with, turning the light on or off does not change anything, just like having an object such as a glass in front of us, it always remains the same. What changes is our perception and so fear develops or increases or decreases. This is the unreal aspect of the mind.

Mind has the aspects of two opposites. Mind can understand day and night, but if only day or only night exists, it is very difficult for the mind to understand.

Without these opposites or contrasts, mind cannot understand, so if there is good there should also be bad, if one day is nice another will be bad, and as we have life we also have death. We are not certain about anything in life but we are totally certain about death. Death is an interruption of life and sooner or later it will arrive, we don't know precisely when, but hopefully when we are older.

But how is life – we don't know. Let's imagine and observe our mind a little. How many times do we think about death and how we will die? How many times do we think about our life and how it will be and what we will do today etc.? In how many ways do we imagine our death? In how many millions of ways do we think for hours about how our life is? In the real sense we know there will only be death and this is the only thing we are sure of. We know nothing about life, but we imagine millions of things about it every hour. The only thing we know about for certain is that we imagine nothing. This means the unreal aspect of the mind.

For example if we observe how we live, we have many perceptions and sensations in our life, but we are most of all in contact with two aspects. The first aspect is air, because we need to breathe. The second is water because we are made of water, we need to drink, we also need to eat, but first we need to drink. We are not very aware of this because what we pollute most of all is air and water, even though it is in front of us twenty-four hours a day. It is not in our mind as awareness. So all these aspects are related with knowledge of what mind is, just like looking at one's own face.

We have this face and we look outside and do not discover we have this face until we discover

a mirror. Maybe the first time we see ourselves we don't recognize ourselves and it may take some time to understand it is our face. Generally in Tibetan Buddhism when we introduce what mind is, these are typical examples, not traditional but in a more modern style. What is most important is to understand this aspect of what is material and immaterial, what is real and unreal. For example, how much do all these immaterial things control or condition our lives, because if all these aspects of the mind are in control, we should understand whether they have some basis in reality. For example, if we live in a beautiful place on an island where it is summer every day, where it is always a beautiful day, how long does it take until we start to get bored? Even though everything is perfect and we have nothing to do like a job, we just have to enjoy ourselves, after how many days do we become tense? We should observe this.

Then, for example, we go on holiday. Perhaps we work all year and then for 3 or 4 weeks we have holidays. During these holidays we should do something fantastic because we have worked continuously for the rest of the year, and so this month should be full of activity. Then we can observe how we relate with this idea, how much we project before going on these holidays. Holidays should be something nice, some kind of enjoyment, but before choosing where to go we are already fighting because one has one idea and the other another. I prefer to go to the sea and the other to the mountains, so what was supposed to be enjoyment, before even leaving, becomes a pain.

Then we find an agreement, organize everything and go. But obviously we are not the only

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retreat ten or twenty years ago but I didn’t follow then.” Then many years passed and now they are interested and come to the teachings. They are also interested because they are getting old and noticing that they are getting to the end of life; they want to know a little more about what the teaching of Dzogchen is. That is an example of how there is always cause and a reason why people become interested.

Garab Dorje

The first teacher of Dzogchen on this globe, in this epoch, is Garab Dorje. Garab Dorje is a *nirmanakaya* emanation – a realized being. Already from his birth, when he was child, he chanted the very essential Tantra of Dzogchen and with these words always explains going beyond cause and effect. This happened in the time of the kingdom of Oddiyana. In this time there was a very powerful king of Oddiyana who was a follower of the teaching of Buddha. The king had many royal teachers and Buddhist pundits around him, and when Garab Dorje was around six years old he told his mother he wanted to discuss with these pundits and she said he could not discuss with them because he had still not changed his teeth. That means he was around six years old. Later Garab Dorje spoke many times with pundits and they were curious and wanted to listen when he chanted this Tantra that said something about going beyond cause and effect. Many pundits were worried that it was something contrary to the teaching of Buddha Shakyamuni. Buddha Shakyamuni spoke about the rule of the karma, of cause and effect, and that we stop negative cause and develop clarity following the law of karma.

The pundits sent a message to Nalanda University in India. In that period the university of Nalanda was a very large Mahayana style university with so many pundits. All of them were worried that in Oddiyana there was a small child, something like the nephew of the king of Oddiyana, who was chanting and talking about something beyond cause and effect. They decided to go and argue and eliminate that idea. They chose Manjushrimitra, who was the most famous among them in that period at Nalanda University. Manjushrimitra, together with other pundits, traveled to Oddiyana. At that time the distance between Nalanda and Oddiyana was very long. There was no train or car, or even roads to pass easily, but they traveled a long time and in the end they arrived at Nalanda. Immediately Manjushrimitra started to discuss and argue with Garab Dorje and present some questions. Garab Dorje replied, not arguing but only replying, and Manjushrimitra woke up because already in previous life he had had a connection with and knowledge of this teaching. Manjushrimitra discovered that this teaching is the real essence of teaching of Buddha; he discovered what the teaching *prajna* paramita really means in Sutra and that the real *prajna* paramita is the state of Dzogchen.

Instead of discussing, Manjushrimita said to Garab Dorje, “I am very sorry, I recognize that you are a real emanation of Buddha Shakyamuni and your teaching is the essence of the Buddha. I had the bad intention to argue with you. How can I purify that bad action?” Garab Dorje said, “You

don’t worry, you are a pundit of Mahayana, particularly the Yogachara School, so you explain what you have now understood from me in the language of Yogachara. You explain that and you can be purified.” Manjushrimitra immediately wrote a book called *do la ser zhun* (*rdo la gser zhun*), which means a very refined gold. That is an example of the most essential teaching on the material level. Then Manjushrimitra asked Garab Dorje to become his student, so Manjushrimitra is Garab Dorje’s first student. Manjushrimitra’s group of pundits became Garab Dorje’s students as well. Since that time, Garab Dorje taught Dzogchen and later at the moment Garab Dorje manifested the rainbow body, Manjushrimitra received the three statements of Garab Dorje. These three statements are something like a key for the Dzogchen teaching; how we follow the Dzogchen teaching, how we apply the Dzogchen teaching and how we can have realization with the Dzogchen teaching. All this is included in these three statements.

Ngondro

The first statement is direct introduction, which means the teacher introduces to the student to make the student understand and discover what their real nature is. This is the first thing we should do. For example, in the Sutra style of teaching, we purify the physical body with prostrations. Combining that system with Vajrayana, a preliminary practice called *ngondro* is presented. *Ngondro* means preliminary practice with prostrations, the practice of refuge and *bodhicitta*, and purification with *Vajrasattva*. Some teachers say if you do not do preliminary practice you cannot receive the main practice of Vajrayana. This does not correspond to the real sense of the teaching of Vajrayana, but it is a traditional way. Traditionally each school is trying to do everything: Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana, all combined together. If someone new is following the teaching they are considered stupid about Buddhist teaching, so for that reason they should do *ngondro* preliminary practice. This is the traditional way.

In our society if you have capacity and you want to study at the university, first you should go to the office of the university and ask permission. At the office they ask for your diploma and how you got a diploma for entering the university. You should go to elementary school, middle school and then higher. That is how it is done traditionally. This does not correspond with the real sense of the teaching, also in the Sutra teaching. In the Sutra teaching Buddha said that you should teach the teaching with *kham wang sampa* (*kham s dbang bsam pa*), by combining what the student desires with the student’s capacity and circumstances.

So someone cannot really decide if the student has high capacity or not; for example if you have high capacity but you have no diploma you cannot study at the university. It is the same way with Vajrayana practice and Dzogchen, if you have no diploma from elementary school and you are not accepted, you are losing time. You need so many years to get all these diplomas. To complete only the preliminary practices perfectly, particularly for a Westerner, how can you finish even just the prostrations? First of all you have no time, secondly you don’t have that kind of attitude and thirdly you need many years to finish.

I remember one of my students was following a traditional teaching and at the end he had an illness of paralysis. He never finished his prostrations for the preliminary practice. He said he was following that teaching for seven years already. I told him to do the practice of Vajrapani because he had the illness of paralysis. You need to receive transmission and the initiation of Vajrapani to do the practice, but he did not ask me for the transmission. If you are not participating, I cannot give the transmission to you if you do not ask, that is not my job. That is the job of the people who are interested. The next year he came again but his condition had gotten worse. Firstly he came to me because he had discovered that I am also a Tibetan physician and he wanted to get some information, so of course I gave it to him. The next year when he came, he listened to my teaching a little bit, but he still did not participate. I asked him if he received the Vajrapani transmission or initiation and he said not yet and that he did not do the practice. I told him that it was really very important to do and that he should insist to his teacher to give him that initiation. Then he went away and one year later when I was doing a Dzogchen retreat, he finally came to the teaching but now he had become blind. He arrived with a dog. He followed the teaching, but his physical condition was very weak and now it was too late. Then I heard that one year later he passed away.

That is an example of how sometimes preliminary practice can create so many problems, particularly for Westerners, because they are not comfortable with doing those things. Therefore the teacher must be aware. As the Buddha said: “You learn and understand the condition of the student and then if you have something like nectar to put somewhere you need a vase, and you should put the nectar in the vase in a perfect way and then the nectar remains perfectly.” It is the same way with the student; he is trying to understand and prepare for receiving that teaching, particularly the teaching of Dzogchen.

Direct introduction

For example, I am giving this teaching so I should give direct introduction as Garab Dorje stated, otherwise the teaching has no life. Many of my students have received direct introduction many times, but for a new person it is indispensable. It is my consideration that people, who are interested to come and listen to my teaching, even if they are only curious, are fortunate people and must have a good connection with the teaching and transmission. Of course then, I should do as Guru Garab Dorje taught. If I am doing as Guru Garab Dorje said, it is the perfect way and there is no mistake. If someone is only curious and wants to know ‘what this Namkhai Norbu is teaching’, if someone has that kind of attitude then it is better they don’t come because they are destroying their possibility to follow Dzogchen teachings in the future. I am doing what Guru Garab Dorje taught and I am innocent; I don’t want to create any problems for anybody. This you must know and do your best.

Transcribed by Andrea Calbucci
Edited by Naomi Zeitz

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Schedule 2010–2011

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Spain
October 1–7
Barcelona Retreat:
Ati Dzogchen Tregchod, a Terma of Master Rigdzin Jyangchub Dorje

Brazil
October 13–17
The Invocation of Samantabhadra, (Tib. kun-bzang smon-lam)

Costa Rica
October 29–31
Costa Rica Retreat

Venezuela
November 5–9
Tashigar Norte Retreat

Peru
November 26–30
Peruvian Retreat

Argentina
Tashigar Sur
December 8, 10–12 am
Practice of Mandarava collectively

December 10–16
Tashigar Sur Retreat

December 21
Total Lunar Eclipse, we do *Ganapuja* and the *Invocation of Samantabhadra*

2011

December 27–January 2
Christmas Retreat

January 4
Partial Solar Eclipse, we do a practice of *25 Spaces of Samantabhadra* collectively.

January 14
Ganapuja

January 19
Mandarava practice with its Ganapuja

New Zealand
January 28–30
Weekend Teaching

Australia
February 4–8
Namgyalgar Retreat

February 18–22
Caloundra Retreat

March 11–13
Melbourne Retreat

March 18–23
Namgyalgar Retreat

Singapore
March 31–April 4
Singapore Retreat

Taiwan
April 8–11
Taipei Teaching Retreat

Japan
April 15–19
Tokyo Teaching Retreat

Russia
April 25–May 1
Moscow Retreat

May 2–6
In Hospital of Moscow

Ukraine
May 13–17
Crimea Retreat

Romania
May 25–29
Merigar East Retreat

May 30
Leave for Merigar West

>> *Knowledge of the Mind* continued from page 3

ones going on holiday, not the only ones with the idea that it should be something fantastic, just like heaven, but the opposite of heaven is hell and then we arrive at the holiday situation. Everyone is going on holiday – the airplanes are full, trains are full, streets are full, every place you go there are thousands of people going there so it becomes something terrible.

Let’s say we are going to eat. There is already a queue because everyone is on holiday too, so we get in the queue, and then we cannot choose where to sit, whatever we choose from the menu is finished and in the meantime we have forgotten we are on holiday. The principle was to rest, be happy, and enjoy and we were hoping to have good food and good service but we got something average. Now we check – what is the value of what we received, what is the price of the meal, I work all year to earn this money and now I don’t want to waste it this way. Then it becomes a hell, so much so that when we come back home it seems very nice. So it means it was unreal. It was a nice trip and a nice place, but we did not feel that way. Our perception was that it was even worse than ordinary activities.

Now what is more real – the glass in front of me or the idea of the glass? If I don’t see anymore that this holiday place is so beautiful, and I am fighting all the time with my friend, with my girlfriend, with my wife, it means that reality is not as strong as my mind because I believe in this unreal vision of the holiday. If I had known from the beginning that going on holiday would create tension, most of all I would have chosen something that everyone likes because most of all I want to do something that is nice. We believe very much in collective ideas and the places to go [on holiday] are not so many and we all go to the same places, so obviously we will have this kind of tense situation. If we know it will be like this there will be no surprise: we are relaxed, we get in the queue, we know how we eat, how we stay.

This means that we don’t have the idea that we deserve something else. But instead we know exactly what we are doing and

what we get and we are satisfied with this because we understand what is real and what is unreal, so there is nothing new. But if we are surprised and have the idea that we do not deserve this situation, this means that we are traveling with our mind, that we are not very much in this present moment. My mind is conditioning my vision and everything that is connected such as how I feel, my situation and my mood. In this condition it is very difficult to feel happy.

So in general it is useful to observe our condition of reality because we understand where we are, what we are doing, and how our situation is. Then we don’t have these kinds of ideas like why do these things happen to me, I am lucky, I am unlucky, miserable or very powerful, which means looking outside to understand my situation and not focusing on myself. I should understand what would happen if I focus on myself.

Let’s look at the totally unreal aspect of the mind. For example the mind is very fast in creating any kind of project or activity. When we are choosing what to study or if we want to change job for example, we have a lot of ideas. Each morning when we wake up we have different ideas and according to how we feel we create a new life. But we should observe how fast we do this; every time something changes we perceive change in our reality, we should observe how fast the mind is able to create a new life, a new destiny and so on. Normally we go after what we feel more strongly, whether it is something pleasant or unpleasant, a hope, a desire or even a fear.

But this is very abstract. Let’s give an example of something more concrete. For example, I buy a lottery ticket because I want to win. Statistically the odds of winning the lottery are very low, but if I do not buy the ticket there is no possibility. This is something absolutely material. Now I have this ticket and then I start to imagine what I will do if I win. I haven’t won anything yet but I’ve already started to develop all possible ideas. When I start to think about the biggest prize I understand that it is really a lot of money.

So first I go into the more material level, thinking about buy-

ing this and that, but maybe I want to do something for culture and religion, then after a while I start to think about my relatives, my parents, because then all of them will want something. Then I start to think how I can hide this situation and maybe I may have to hire a lawyer to pick up the prize. I only have the ticket in my hand and I already have a problem with my friends and my relatives. If I win it would be something positive so I should be happy, but since I am going after unreal things, mind has already arrived [at the conclusion] that they are guilty and I have to hide and I already have problems. On one hand there is a large amount of money and idealistically happiness, while on the other hand there is no money and idealistically a lot of problems, just like two opposites. If there is happiness on one side there is sorrow on the other.

But we have nothing material in this moment. There is no ground for this and it is totally unreal. It is an aspect of the mind. Mind cannot conceive of only one thing; mind has what is called in Tibetan Buddhism dualistic vision. It can only conceive of two opposites and it is just a matter of time for it to jump from happiness to sorrow. Just like we see with our eyes, impermanence means things change. When we say ‘after 100 years’ not one of us will be here, we understand this and have this perception of change. This is how we normally introduce the idea of impermanence. In the same way mind is in this field, but it is not so limited and conditioned by it and always goes to the borders, to this opposite. The mind goes from happiness to sorrow very fast, and we are already suffering even though we did not win anything.

When we find out we did not win the lottery, which is more realistic, then we are angry. But what is there to be angry about since we knew from the beginning that it was not realistic. We are angry because we worked with mind, because we developed all these desires and we even made our relatives and friends guilty. And if we have an idea that we made them guilty, not honest, we are angry two times. We are judging ourselves and maybe we

think it was not really good behavior because we have the idea that we should behave in a particular way, what is right, what is wrong, what is correct and incorrect, all ideas of ourselves, and we go after all these aspects that are not real and then create suffering.

But this aspect is just the way of the mind; we can think of the mind as something that is working continuously and producing thoughts. All these thoughts arise continuously, so after one thought there is a pause and then another thought arrives. As soon as we look and observe this and we feel something then we are entering this thought, just like we are dreaming. For example if we have this lottery ticket in our hand and we enter into all these ideas of how it is to win, we cannot understand that it is just like we are dreaming with open eyes. After a while we cannot even see what is in front of us. We lose perception of reality because we are into the production of the mind. And then we go after these thoughts and it is exactly like dreaming.

In this context we understand that if we don’t win we are angry. But this anger arises and develops because we have an idea of ourselves. If we have an idea of knowledge that it is very difficult to win, we don’t get involved with the idea of how this situation relates to us. We don’t relate this lottery with ourselves; we only know it is very difficult but if we succeed we win. But if I feel this anger it means I feel I don’t deserve to lose in the lottery – I don’t deserve to be unlucky. I can observe it is something related to the idea of myself, to my idea of myself. It’s enough to observe – if I think I never win anything, I am not lucky, just like winning the lottery changes the understanding of whether I am lucky or not, because if I win a lottery I am lucky.

Where is luck? Maybe we can ask someone who is lucky to come here and sit. But this is not real, no one will come here because it is not something material. It is something like a concept, not something we can prove with a material aspect. We can observe that nothing will change if we win. Why does nothing change? Because we already know that we will fight with parents and relatives. We already have this prob-

lem before we win because it is the aspect of unreal things of the mind; they are only concepts. We can give a lot of importance to being lucky for a few seconds, a few minutes, a few years, but maybe after a few minutes something else becomes more important.

Just like when we meet someone we like very much. We have the first date and now we are happy and excited while before life seemed so terrible. Now everything has become perfect. Then we have the second date, third date, and at that point something goes wrong. The person doesn’t dress the way we like, doesn’t like what we like, does something we do not find intelligent, whatever but something goes wrong. Now we don’t like them anymore. Then we start to feel all of our problems are connected with this person. The more time that passes, the more serious the problems become and the most beautiful thing in our life becomes the worst possible, because from love only hate can arise. Not something else. Not like indifference, because the opposite of love is hate. Mind can only perceive these two aspects, so it can only jump from love to hate or the opposite.

We meet, for example, a colleague and find him difficult to deal with, we work in the same office but we don’t trust him or like him. Then we go a little further with this relation and at a certain moment something happens more at the level of action, and we are face to face and we talk, maybe we beat each other up, and then after an hour we drink beer together, get drunk and become best friends. This is because if we feel something it means the opposite makes sense, and we have only two possibilities, just like day and night, so we should understand this.

There isn’t anything else between day and night, just like our emotions that have this aspect. Normally in Tibetan Buddhism we call this potentiality and it means this is the way we show ourselves outside, just the way we are. So this is our aspect and it always has this opposite because we perceive everything like this. ☸

Transcribed by Naomi Zeitz
Edited by Liz Granger

Khyentse Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Schedule 2010

- 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, Tsegylgar 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, Tsegylgar 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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The Earthquake in the Yushu Tibetan Prefecture

On April 14 a violent earthquake struck the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture killing more than 2,000 people, injuring more than 12,000 and leaving about 100,000 homeless and without anything. These are the official statistics given out by the government, which, however, have not been confirmed by the local popula-

salvage wood and anything useful to build some kind of shelter from the icy winds and snow.

Yushu Prefecture is located at an average altitude of 4000 meters above sea level and is one of the poorest and most remote regions in China. 90% of the population is made up of Tibetan nomads from the Khampa ethnic group.

The name of the capital of the prefecture where the earthquake took place is Jyekundo in Tibetan, often abbreviated to Jyegu, coming from the short form of "Kyelwa gu" and has different mean-



ASIA staff meets Jiegu Department of education.

tion that witnessed the disaster and speak of many thousands of victims and entire villages razed to the ground. After the main earth tremor at 7.1° degrees on the Richter scale, recorded at 7.49 in the morning at Jiegu, another 700 tremors have literally destroyed the town which has been reduced to a pile of rubble. 70% of the schools (192 in total) cannot be used, the only existing hospital has collapsed as have 60% of the Buddhist monasteries in the area including the Gyanak Mani, the temple with the largest collection of mani (stones with prayers carved by hand) in the world, more than two billion, and eight stupas and prayer wheels that are 10 meters high.

Since the day of the earthquake, the population has been digging through the rubble of the buildings that have been destroyed (90% in total) searching for survivors and those living outside, in below zero temperatures,

ings. One of them derives from "Kyelwagu", meaning "ninelives" and means that a life lived in this wonderful sacred land is equivalent to nine lives lived elsewhere.

Another meaning has to do with the geographical position: the suffix "do" indicates that the place is situated at the meeting point of two rivers (just like Chamdo, Dhartsedo etc.), the Dza-chu and the Peltang-chu. A wider geographical term for the whole territory is Kham-toe, or northern Kham.

Yushu, the name of the region in which Jyekundo is situated, comes from the Tibetan "yul shu" which literally means "vestigial land" from the epic poem about King Gesar. Yulshul was the land where King Gesar's beautiful wife, queen Singcham Drugmo, was born, and where her father, Ga Tempa Gyaltzen, ruled. Due to this link with Gesar's queen, Drugmo, the women



Distribution in Demo village.

of Yushu are famous for being beautiful and regal.

Traditionally Jyekundo has been one of the most important cultural and commercial crossroads in Tibet since it is at the hub of many important roads linking Yushu to the largest Tibetan cities: Lhasa, Chamdo, Derge, Kumbun, Dhartsedo.

Unfortunately this sacred and historically rich land has been damaged by the terrible earthquake of April 14 that, besides destroying houses, monasteries, schools and hospitals, has also brought the population – already one of the poorest in China – to its knees. The climatic conditions, the harshness of the area and the distance from the capital all contribute to making Yushu Prefecture one of the most remote and deprived areas in the People's Republic of China where the population, prevalently nomadic, live on an average wage of 300 dollars per year.

For these reasons ASIA has operated several times in Yushu in the past at the request of local people. The most recent intervention was an emergency project for the struggle against famine and for economic self-sufficiency of the Tibetan nomadic tribes in 2003/2004 using funds from the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The project planned to cope with the emergency in which the Tibetan nomadic tribes in Yushu Prefecture found themselves and restore economic self-sufficiency by means of a complete intervention dedicated to re-establishing the herds of livestock, to developing family agriculture and to setting up small sustainable activities that would generate some income.

In light of our knowledge of the territory and our links with its people, the day after the earthquake ASIA took action to bring help to the population of Yushu. The response to our appeal to collect funds was enthusiastic and immediate and allowed us to organize the first distribution of aid in a short period of time.

The first convoy left Xining on April 22 with 800 kits of essential necessities: food, blankets, soap. Our staff was directly involved. A team made up of the ASIA project coordinator in Qinghai, Federica Grassi, an architect, Pierfrancesco Donati and the local staff at the ASIA office in Xining left for Jyegu. As soon as they arrived they reported from their office/tent how the town had been reduced to a pile of rubble and how everything was needed: first of all blankets, tents and food. There was no water, no electricity and the conditions of hygiene were disastrous.

During the initial phase the ASIA team concentrated on assessing the needs of the population in coordination with other groups who were there. When this first step had been completed, the distribution was organized.

Some of the kits were distributed to the government distribution centre where a camp hospital had been set up. Others were given to families who had difficulty reaching the base camps (with the precious help of Jigme, a vet who had worked with ASIA in Yushu in the past), to nomads in the Gyegu resettlement and to the main primary school where all the teachers and staff of the school were camping.

When distribution was finished, the ASIA staff continued

their inspections and meetings with local institutions in order to understand better the situation and the damages caused by the earthquake, particularly to schools and hospitals. The general situation of the schools is serious. 70% of the school buildings in the township have collapsed and all educational activities have been suspended. The only working hospital is the one that has been set up in the tent city because the old hospital in Jiegu has collapsed and the new one is still under construction.

In the last few days the ASIA staff has been preparing a second distribution of essential necessities to 1,800 children of the primary school most seriously damaged by the tremor.

The fund raising campaign is continuing, as there is a lot to do to help the population of Yushu start to live again.

Rinpoche has asked all of us to help these people by offering what we can.

"The ocean is very big and full of water", he said. "Together we can really make a quantity of water as big as the ocean by offering even just a drop and integrating it in the water of the ocean ... in this way our merits will never finish. Please help".

Thank you!
To donate and for updates:
www.ASIA-ngo.org/en

Initiatives of the Ka-Ter Translation Project

We are pleased to invite you to our summer courses at Merigar

Training for Translators from Tibetan

led by Fabian Sanders
Merigar, July 5-24, 2010

In summer 2010 we will offer the 8th Training for Translators.

Three different levels of training will be offered to all interested people: for advanced students, for intermediate students and for beginners.



Advanced students will continue to translate Taranatha's *bka' bab bdun ldan* as well as other select text sections in order to practice different styles and topics.

Intermediate students will read simpler texts and will concentrate on identifying words,

grammatical structures, particles and so forth.

Beginners will receive initial guidance on the alphabet, the syllables, pronunciation and basic grammar.

The daily schedule will be from 9am to 1pm and from 3 pm to 6 pm.

Course on Precise Pronunciation

Especially focused on the correct pronunciation of the ritual texts used by Rinpoche

led by Fabian Sanders
Merigar, July 25-26, 2010

Recently Rinpoche has often clarified the importance of correct pronunciation of the words and

mantras used in our practices. This seminar is a wonderful possibility to correct one's pronunciation so that it becomes precise and correct.

Costs of these courses:

These courses are **free** for all ordinary, sustaining and meritorious members of the Shang Shung Institute.

If you are not a member yet and you want to attend these courses, you need to become a member of the Shang Shung Institute.

Please visit our **webshop** in order to become a member or to renew your membership.

Each member of the Shang Shung Institute also gets a free copy of the new Merigar calendar.

Join our activities and become part of it.

Very best wishes,
Oliver Leick
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Healing with Fire

Dear All,
I am very pleased to inform you that the next publication in the Ka-ter Translation Project of the Shang Shung Institute will be **Healing With Fire: A Practical Manual of Tibetan Moxibustion**.

A text written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2006, it is entitled in the original Tibetan *me gtsa'i lag len nyung bsdus dwangs shel me long* (the clear crystal mirror, a concise guide to the practice of moxibustion).

Rinpoche indicated that its rendering in a western language should be part of the Ka-ter Translation Project, an initiative of the Shang Shung Institute Austria to translate the works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other great Dzogchen masters from Tibetan into English. He entrusted this collaboration to Elio Guarisco, his long time student who, for years having acted as interpreter for illustrious Tibetan doctors in exile, has a long-standing connection with Tibetan medicine that enables him to be an ideal translator of this subject matter.

Elio Guarisco began the translation in 2007 and many questions arose, in particular in identifying the precise locations of the moxa points. He met with Rinpoche on several occasions to dispel doubts and insure the accuracy of his translation. In 2009/2010 the translation was edited and the illustrations completed. The book, approximately 200 pages in length, includes an introduction, an index and numerous detailed drawings indicating the sites of the moxa points.

Shang Shung Publications Italy will publish this book in summer 2010.

As the coordinator of the Ka-ter Translation Project since its inception in 2003, I have had the opportunity at close range to appreciate the great importance of the translation of these unique and extraordinary texts of Tibetan wisdom. We are making these texts, originally written in Tibetan, a language that few and highly qualified people are capable of translating, available in correct and precise English. There

is good reason to hope that with the aid of this project, the treasures of experience and insight of Tibetan masters will not be lost, and, indeed, become accessible not only to the present generations, but also to the children of our children and to recipients in the distant future.

These translations are not an easy task. A long time is needed as each translation is an ongoing process of translating, checking, editing, correcting, retranslating, checking again, and so forth. A translator has to be versed in the subject matter of the book and have precise personal experience relating to its content, so that the translation avoids the risk of guesswork and of not being rooted in the real meaning of the text. Hundreds of hours of work are needed to complete a translation, and in general two to four years are required to ready the translation for publication. The estimated costs of the work done on this book – translation, editing, drawings, layout, and printing – are about €30.000 or US\$40.000.

Please support the Ka-ter Translation Project and become part of this exceptional initiative to help offer Tibetan wisdom to the world. We particularly invite the Gars, the Lings, the Gakyils and the worldwide Vajra family to sponsor the publication of this new book. Your generosity is the only way to guarantee the continuity of the Ka-ter Translation Project and of the publication of the many other translations of the teachings of Rinpoche into English already programmed.

Your donations can be sent by credit card or via a web-safe site. You can also contribute by purchasing one of our Donation Packages. For information, please consult Contact and Donations.

Thank you so much for your understanding and support.
Very best wishes,
Oliver Leick
Coordinator of the Ka-ter Translation Project

Here is a short description of this wonderful new book:

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Healing With Fire: A Practical Manual of Tibetan Moxibustion

Translated from the Tibetan by
Elio Guarisco

This precious and unprecedented book on moxa is the exceptional result obtained by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his delving for years in a myriad of ancient manuscripts of Tibetan moxibustion. This text describes five hundred moxibustion points, with their precise location and therapeutic indications.

The origin of Tibetan moxibustion, a complete art of healing, is to be found in the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung – the cradle of Tibetan civilization – in the pre-Buddhist era. With the growth of Tibetan medicine into an homogeneous and integral system, moxibustion became extensively known and widely applied throughout all regions of Tibet.

The unique approach to healing of Tibetan medicine considers health as the fine balance between body and mind, and energy as the crucial link between the two. Unbalanced energy can be the fissure through which all illnesses enter and evolve. For that reason maintaining one's energy in a perfect condition is crucial to one's health.

One of the best ways to restore the balance of the elements of one's own body and mind is to infuse the regenerating power of heat on specific points of the body, mapped through centuries of experiential knowledge. The application of moxa brings immediate benefit in a vast range of specific illnesses and physical and emotional complaints.

In an epoch in which health care is ever more delegated to others, the ancient knowledge of moxibustion offers a unique method of healing which one can learn to apply to oneself and thus reappropriate in an important measure the responsibility for one's own health.

The Author

As a young man in a Sakya college in Eastern Tibet, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu studied traditional

Tibetan medicine, and in particular the major work known as the *Four Medical Tantras* with Khyenrab Öser, his spiritual teacher and a practicing doctor.

Later, while residing as a college professor in Darzendo at the Chinese border, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu again studied the text with the eminent scholar and saint Bo Kangkar Shedrup Chökyi Senge who was the lineage holder of the oral medical instructions of the renowned master Kongtrul Lodrö Taye.

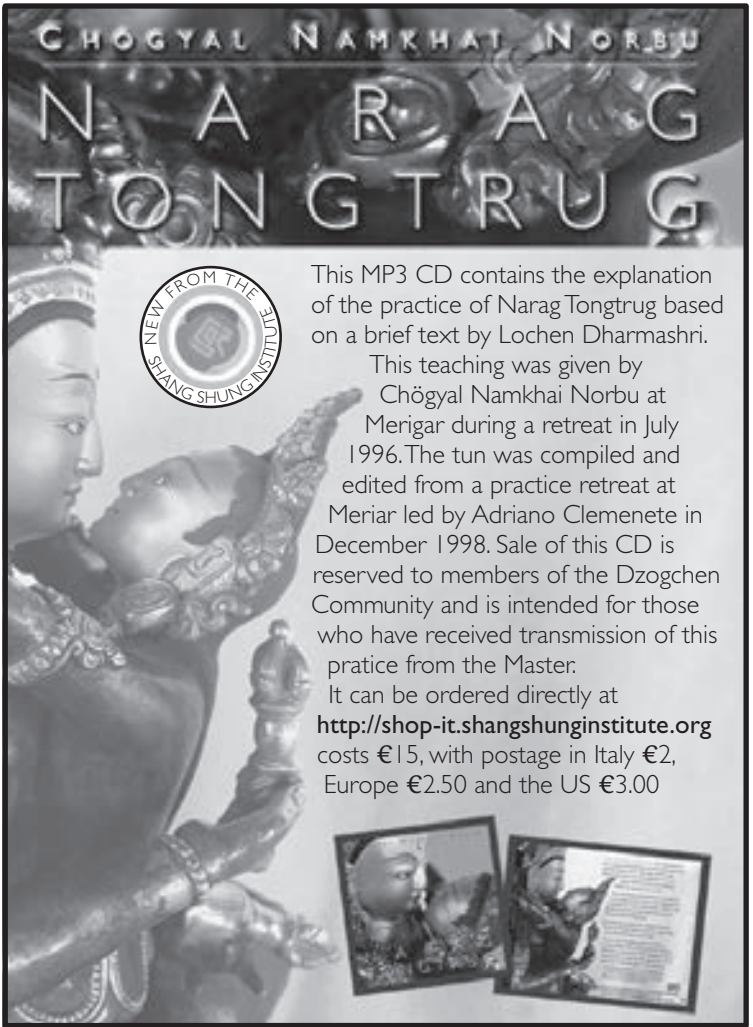
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's medical studies at the College had been principally of a theoretical nature. Through his encounter in 1955 with Rigdzin Changchub Dorje, a unique being of deep inner wisdom, his medical knowledge also assumed a practical orientation.

Although Changchub Dorje was known for his remarkable spiritual prowess, he led the life of a simple country doctor, attending to the needs of a stream of patients that arrived at his door every day. He had not made a formal study of medicine, but had

been introduced to a knowledge of the properties of herbs by an old shepherd whom he met while tending cattle in the mountains. Changchub Dorje developed into an exceptionally gifted doctor whose cures had great healing power, a result of the depth of his spontaneous knowledge.

Changchub Dorje assigned Chögyal Namkhai Norbu the task of cooperating with his students in performing various therapies for his patients. Thus Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had the opportunity to learn how to recognize herbs precisely, how to prepare and administer them, and also how to perform external therapies such as blood-letting and moxibustion. With his practical knowledge having increased daily with this training, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu became a doctor who successfully treated many patients with the cures of his master. ©

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“Day of the Open Doors” in Ye Sel Ling and Shang Shung Institute Austria

On 16th of April 2010 Ye Sel Ling, the Ling of the Dzogchen Community Austria, in collaboration with the Shang Shung Institute extended an invitation to the “Day of the Open Doors”. About 50 people visited our large beautiful Gumpa and the rooms of the Shang Shung Institute. In his initial talk Oliver Leick, the director of the Shang Shung Institute Austria, thanked the mayor and the local community for all their support. He also spoke about the regional and international importance of Ye Sel Ling, the first Buddhist centre in East Styria, and of the Shang Shung Institute, the only cultural

institution for the preservation of Tibetan culture in Styria, for the local community. Mr. Erich Prem, the mayor of the community, congratulated the team of the Shang Shung Institute and of Ye Sel Ling for all their achievements and spoke about the importance of opening one’s mind towards different cultures. The highlight of this afternoon was an introduction to Buddhism given by Michael Aldrian, the official teacher for Buddhist religion in schools for Styria. Michael is also student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and member of the Dzogchen Community.



From left to right: Mr. Prem – the major of the local community, Oliver Leick; Mr. Schratter – director of the Harrer museum, Michael Aldrian – official school teacher for Buddhism in Styria.

Besides guests from the nearer and closer neighborhood several special guests of honor made this event unforgettable: the mayor

and the catholic priest of the local community, the director of the main bank, the former director of the Harrer-museum in Huetten-

berg, who came all the way from Carinthia just for the event, the editor of the local newspaper, and the chairman of the local youth-group. The “Day of the Open Door” was a very successful event and everybody returned home happily and relaxed. Please visit our website and see the beautiful photos: www.ssi-austria.at/ssi-engl/ssi-news-frame-engl.htm Very best wishes, Shang Shung Institute Austria for Tibetan Studies Ye Sel Ling – Buddhist centre of the Dzogchen Community Austria Cell phone: 0043 676 3221365 Office: 0043 3386 83218 Fax: 0043 3386 83219 www.ssi-austria.at www.yeselling.at ©

SSI Donation Packages

For all practitioners I have arranged very special Donation Packages: When you order one of these Donation Packages you will get various important and very useful material like books, CDs, DVDs, etc., and at the same time you also support all the activities of the Ka-ter Translation Project and the Translation Project Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Only due to the tireless work of the translators working on translations from Tibetan into English, are we all able to read, understand and follow the written Teachings of our precious master. Join our activities and get one of these donation packages. Thank you for your collaboration. You can get all these things in the shop of our website.

The Longchenpa Donation Package For your order you receive important books of the famous Dzogchen Master Longchenpa delivered to your house without any mailing costs, and at the same time you also support the activities of the Translation Projects (Ka-ter and Complete Works).

For your donation you receive:

- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Longchenpa’s Advice from the Heart;
- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Longchenpa’s Precious Ship;
- the book: The Great History of Garab Dorje, Manjushrimitra, Shringha, Jnanasutra and Vimalamitra.
- 3 different picture cards of: Garab Dorje, Guru Padmasambhava, and a precious gem;
- a crystal with the Tibetan A in its centre.

Important: In order to get this Donation Package one must have received the transmission of the Master. Price: Euro 150.00

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The Mandarava Donation Package For your order you receive all the necessary practice material that you need for your Long Life Practice of the immortal Dakini Mandarava, and at the same time you also support the activities of the Translation Projects (Ka-ter and Complete Works). This donation package will be sent to you without any mailing costs.

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- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Mandarava Tsalung Practices;
- the booklet: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Cedrub Dorje Sogtig Gya practice booklet
- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Practice of Long Life and Chüdlen of Mandarava – An Oral Commentary;
- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Practice of Long Life of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava, (Terma Texts and Their Origins);
- the DVD: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Mandarava. Explanation and Practice (new).

Important: In order to get this Donation Package one must have received the transmission of the Master. Price: Euro 170.00

The Tibetan Culture Donation Package For your order you receive the latest and most precise information about Tibetan Culture, and at the same time you also support the activities of the Translation Projects (Ka-ter and Complete Works). This donation package will be sent to you without any mailing costs.

For your donation you receive:

- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Light of Kailash: A History of Zhang Zhung and Tibet. Volume One: The Early Period;
- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Necklace of Zi;
- the booklet: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Origins of Tibetan Culture and Thought.

Price: Euro 150.00

The Yantra Yoga Donation Package For your order you receive all the necessary practice material that you need for your Yantra Yoga practice, and at the same time you also support the activities of the Translation Projects (Ka-ter and Complete Works). This donation package will be sent to you without any mailing costs.

For your donation you receive:

- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Yantra Yoga – The Tibetan Yoga of Movement;
- the book: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga for Children;
- the DVD: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The 8 Movements of Yantra Yoga;
- the DVD: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Yantra Yoga The Tibetan Yoga of Movements: First Level Demonstration by Laura Evangelisti.

Important: In order to get this Donation Package one must have received the transmission of the Master. Price: Euro 200.00

SSI Digital Archives Project

We are happy to share the news about the Digital Archives Project with you. Recently we have concentrated on the acquisition of material related to the beginning of the Dzogchen Community of Italy (1983-1985) and Argentina (1990-2005), research into and expeditions to the Khyung Lung Valley (1988, 2001), the Shang Shung Kingdom (1988, 2001), expeditions to Kailash (1988), Tibet (1988) and many other events related to the life and Teachings of our Precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. If you go online to Youtube, on the Shang Shung Institute page, you can find two videos entitled ‘Early Years of the Dzogchen Community’ that we have prepared from the Digital Archives 2009.

It is important to mention that thanks to the help of seven donations we were able to buy the second module of the new archive and continue the work we started in 2009! We would really like to thank all the donors and supporters for this great result! The actual net storage available in the present configuration is 20 TB, with a high security level of redundancy and hot spare disks ready. The total space that this machine can keep is a maximum of about 30 TB (net of security) so there

Thank you so much for your support!!! Very best wishes, Oliver Leick Director of the Shang Shung Institute Austria Gschmaier 139, 8265 Gr. Steinbach, Austria Cell phone: 0043 676 3221365 Office: 0043 3386 83218 Fax: 0043 3386 83219 office@ssi-austria.at www.ssi-austria.at ©

is plenty of upgrade possible! We have already filled the first 14 TB of space with video material we acquired during previous years. For this reason please continue to support this project so that the archiving work can continue without interruptions. **Project Summary** With your help and support we can continue with the digital preservation of all our video materials and make them available for the future generations! As previously announced, we are looking for 20 donors who can give 5000 euro each. We are organizing a raffle for the donors, each of who will get a special edition of new publications from Shang Shung Edizioni. The luckiest one will also receive the laptop that our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu used every day for three years. The Digital Archives of the Shang Shung Institute are dedicated to ensuring that all information related to the life and teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, as well as all manuscripts, books and documents on Tibetan culture currently in our Library, are digitally preserved so as to remain available and accessible for generations to come. The SSI office premises located at Merigar (Arcidosso, Italy) have been restructured to host technically advanced installation. A climatized room has been designed and built specifically for the data storage system. Some years ago we started the project of indexing contents of video material and we created a new database. Now, we are entering into a new phase of digitizing all the video material in our archive and the data storage we have is not enough for this. We need 2 twin storages for maximum security with a size of 85 TB each to include all the video material we have (around 7000 hours). To start this project, your support is indispensable! © For any information, please, contact Shang Shung Institute info@shangshunginstitute.org

Interview with Igor Legati about Shang Shung Edizioni

January 2010 Tashigar North, Margarita Island, Venezuela

The Mirror: Shang Shung Edizioni, the publishing house of the Dzogchen Community, is in charge of translating, editing, producing and making the layout of all of the books produced by the Dzogchen Community, primarily written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu but also other teachings related to Rinpoche's teachings. Can you tell us a little to start with about the history and origins of Shang ShungEdizioni? **Igor Legati:** Shang Shung Edizioni was founded in 1983, two years after Merigar West was founded in Italy, and Rinpoche appointed Giovanni Arca as the main manager. I was not working there in that moment, but I came to help two years later. Shang Shung Edizioni started in the beginning with some simple books of the practices transmitted by

Rinpoche and we also published some public books. In 1993 we tried to develop more the aspect of public books but we didn't succeed, so after a while we reverted to our old trend. At that moment Tiziana Gottardi and myself were appointed as the coordinators of the publishing house. We went on for about ten years in this way, developing more and more the aspect of internal books – the practices and Rinpoche's teachings for practitioners. We did not have the possibility to work on a wider range of books, especially public books that require a lot of time and many editors. **M:** Were all the books published in Italian in the beginning? **IG:** Yes. Many of them were in Italian and translated into Eng-



lish because in the beginning Rinpoche taught in Italian. Then Rinpoche started to teach in English and little by little the first edition of our books was made in English. But in a certain sense, the English style was not very well developed. More recently, about six or seven years ago, it was decided to publish public books since Rinpoche is now very well

known in the world, so we need new books for the general public. Now we are in the process of bettering this new trend of Shang Shung Edizioni but we are still not finished implementing this new branch. Recently we have found some good English editors. With the newly published books for the worldwide audience we are trying to better the aspect of English style. This requires a lot of new editors; the main problem we have now is to train new editors for the books. We have a lot of people working as karma yoga for the basic jobs as transcribing and doing the first editing of the transcriptions and we also have some new Tibetan translators who are still not as expert as Adriano Clemente, Jim Valby or Elio Guarisco, but they are trying to do a good job. In this way we have many people working for free. But the rough transcriptions we receive at Shang Shung Edizioni need to be worked on extensively and so we need very skilled editors. That is what we are really lacking.

M: You do have some paid staff? **IG:** We do have four paid editorial staff: Tiziana Gottardi, Nancy Simmons, Maurizio Mingotti and myself. Now things are a little better but the work we need to do has increased a lot, so we are still trying to train the new editors because editing is a very crucial point in the publishing. Of course we can count on the general management of the Shang Shung Institute and the support of Luigi Ottaviani who cares about new >> continued on page 30

Shang Shung Institute Medical School Now Accepting Applicants for the Fall of 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 medicine 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) 369-4928. © Shang Shung Institute – USA

Shang Shung Institute USA Intensives

Ka-Ter Beginning Tibetan Language Intensive
Instructor: Fabian Sanders, professor, University of Venice
August 6–12, 2010
10:00am–12:30pm, 3pm–5:30pm
Price: \$375 for the General Public \$280 for Students and Seniors \$250 to attend by webcast
10% discount for Meritorious Members of the Shang Shung Institute.
This course will be webcasted! You can register for the password-protected live internet webcast on our online store!

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.

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.

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. ©



The Clear Crystal Mirror

Forthcoming Book on Moxibustion Therapy
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Elio Guarisco's translation of Rinpoche's book on moxa will be published by Shang Shung Edizioni in the near future. This article, a discussion of moxibustion in the context of Tibetan medicine, was adapted by Elio Guarisco and edited by Lauri Marder and Susan Schwarz from introductory talks given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu during the moxa courses held in Merigar (Italy) in 2005, Crimea (Ukraine) in 2005, and Margarita (Venezuela) in 2006.

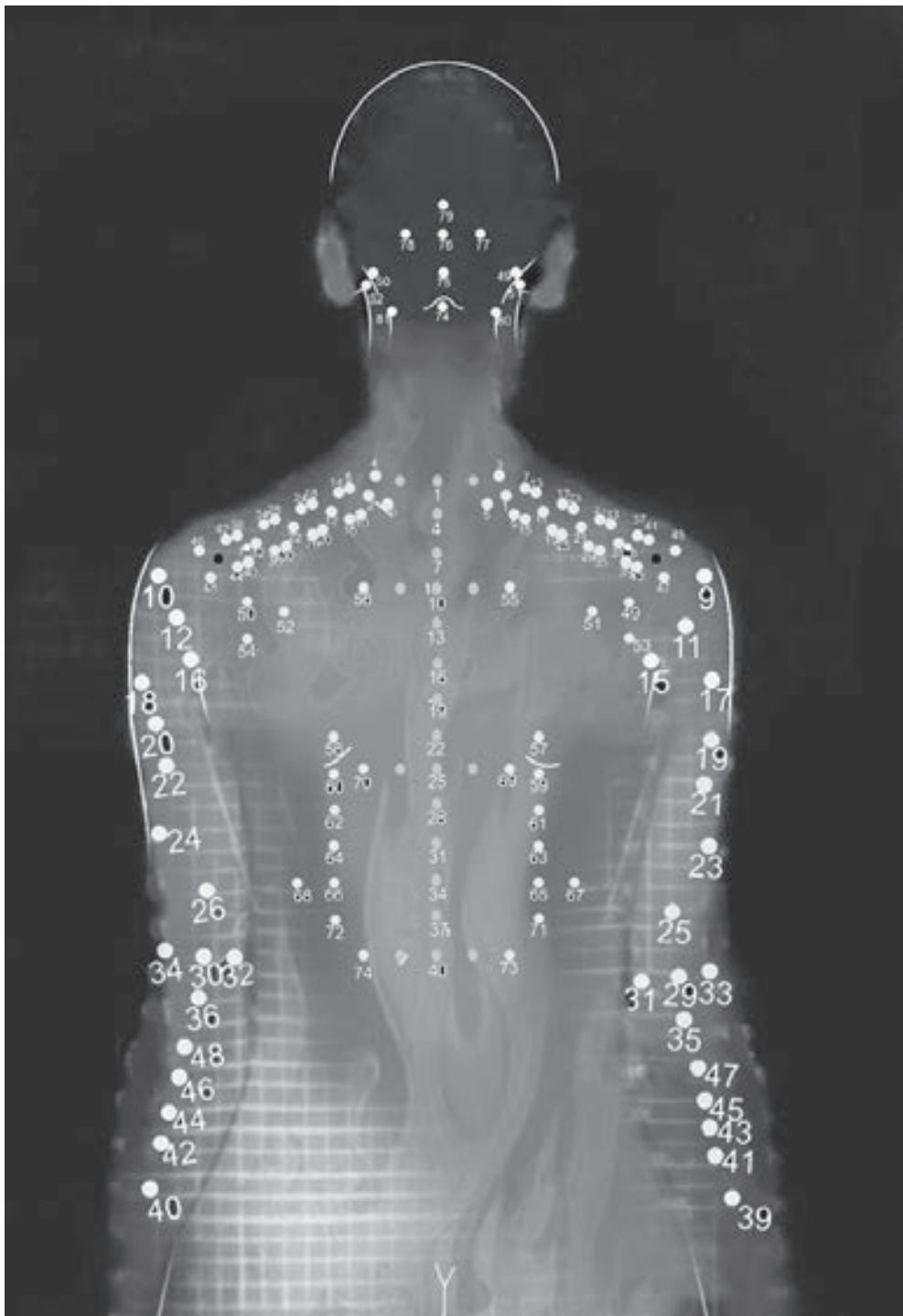
The Origins of Tibetan Medicine

Tibetan traditional medicine, including moxibustion (moxa), is a very ancient system of healing that already existed in the pre-Buddhist era in Tibet. This can be substantiated by two ancient books found among the Tun-Huang documents discovered in the Gansu province of China. One deals with traditional medicine and the other with moxa.

In the period of the early Tibetan Kings, when Buddhism was widely prevalent in Central Asia, Tun-Huang was a flourishing Buddhist center with a library housing a huge collection of Tibetan and Chinese Buddhist texts. Later, Tun-Huang (like other ancient sites on the Silk Road) was buried in desert sand, and for many centuries its temples, statues, and books remained lost and forgotten. When the site was rediscovered and unearthed in early 1900, thousands of original Tibetan and Chinese texts came to light. Many of these documents were taken by English and French academics, but some texts, especially Chinese books, have been preserved in Beijing. A great deal of importance is given to the Tun-Huang documents when researching Tibetan history nowadays, and the colophons of the books on medicine and moxa found at Tun-Huang say that these texts originally came from Shang Shung. This confirms that the Tibetan medical system was already in existence at the time of Shang Shung.

The practice of medicine in Tibet evolved considerably over the centuries. The integration of the Indian Ayurvedic system of medicine is documented by the multitude of texts on medicine translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan and included in the commentaries to the Tibetan Buddhist canon called the Tengyur. There is no question that Ayurveda figured prominently in Tibetan medicine and that the Tibetan system assimilated many of its principles.

Tibetan medicine was also strongly influenced by Chinese medical practices, and other traditions left their mark as well. During the reign of the Tibetan King Songt-



The Moxa points.

sen Gampo (562–650), many doctors were invited to Tibet from China and tribal countries such as Uyghur¹ and Champa.² Later, too, at the time of King Trisong Deutsen (742–797), various doctors from different countries were invited to exchange ideas and further the development of medical knowledge. Altogether, the work, experience, and writings of these various physicians contributed to the emergence of a very homogenous and complete system of medicine, the unification of many traditions that forms the traditional Tibetan medicine we know today.

The most famous root text of Tibetan medicine is known as the Four Medical Tantras. The origin of the Four

Medical Tantras is controversial and has been the subject of much discussion. Many doctors and scholars claim they were first taught by the Buddha Shakyamuni in the form of a healing buddha and were translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan. However, other doctors and scholars disagree, asserting instead that they were composed by the eminent Tibetan doctor Yutog Yönten Gönpö³ as a compilation of all the different types of Tibetan medical knowledge. This second hypothesis is more likely as there are several pieces of evidence that support it. For instance, the Four Medical Tantras cite the names of certain medicines written in the ancient Shang Shung language, and they also in-

Introduction

The Great Healer: Discovering Tibetan Medicine

Elio Guarisco

In this issue of The Mirror we focus on Tibetan medicine and are pleased to present an excerpt from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's book Birth, Life and Death, published in English in 2009 by Shang Shung Edizioni. In addition, there is an unpublished transcription excerpted from introductory talks given by Rinpoche during the moxa courses he held at Merigar West, Tashigar Norte and Crimea, as well as a transcribed lecture on mental illness by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo of Shang Shung Institute's School of Tibetan Medicine.

Traditional Tibetan medicine is one of the most valuable and

useful aspects of Tibetan culture that can be exported to benefit the whole world. Its origin dates back some 4,000 years to the ancient kingdom of Shang Shung, the cradle of Tibetan civilization.

Over the course of many centuries, Tibetan medicine absorbed various elements of medical knowledge from neighboring countries such as Persia, Nepal, India and China. Yet it distinguishes itself in that it retained a unique flavor as a holistic approach to health that takes into account all three central aspects of a person: the physical, energetic and psychological level.

The common thread that makes up the fabric of Tibetan medicine is a deeper knowledge of the microcosm – the individual – and the individual's relationship with the environment in which he or she lives – the macrocosm. This knowledge is integrated within a synthesis of

the ancient Bön understanding of the relationship between human beings and nature and the understanding of an individual's energetic level found in the myriad tantric systems that are based on Buddhist psychology.

When a physical remedy is needed, Tibetan medicine takes recourse to the healing properties of plants, minerals and other natural substances. There are also a number of external therapies, including massage, moxa and acupuncture. When the illness involves an imbalance of energies, a good Tibetan physician not only prescribes pills, but also directs the patient to the appropriate form of breathing exercises and yogas to restore balance. And when the problem is connected to the person's psychological makeup, a Tibetan doctor knows that the best way for him or her to regain a fundamental ground of sanity is by

discovering it through authentic spiritual teaching and practice.

Thus, when properly understood and applied, Tibetan medicine is not just a science of healing, but a way to uplift individuals to a higher level of consciousness that empowers them through their own awareness to relate in a proper way to their body, energy and mind. This awareness, as shown by the excerpt from Birth, Life and Death, is the basis for both physical health and the quest for the true meaning of life.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has dedicated much of his life to the preservation of Tibetan medicine, by first of all providing traditional medical advice to people who approached him, and secondly by promoting congresses on this subject. Moreover, by founding the Shang Shung Institute, he created the conditions for Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

to establish the first full-fledged school of traditional Tibetan medicine in the Western world.

All those who are interested in learning the ancient art of Tibetan healing now have the opportunity to study at the school, located in Conway, Massachusetts, in the United States. For centuries, Tibetan medical knowledge has been hidden by a difficult language. At the School of Tibetan Medicine, Dr. Wangmo and her staff provide access to this knowledge in the English language.

In an age where health care is delegated to specialists, learning an ancient art of healing is a way to reappropriate the right and the ability to take our health back into our own hands and cure our ailments at the root. It also gives us the ability to benefit others by sharing this knowledge with them.



clude many explanations that are specific to the sociocultural context of Tibet. Moreover, the Tengyur, a collection of writings translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan, contains many different texts on medicine, some of which are Ayurvedic texts translated from Sanskrit, but we will not find these four tantras among them.

Some claim that the Four Medical Tantras are a transposition of the so-called *Membum*⁴ of the Bön tradition into the Buddhist context. This claim is not so easy to substantiate, however, because the original Bön *Membum* is not very old. It is considered to be ancient because it is a rediscovered treasure or *terma*, but its discovery is fairly recent.

When we ponder the origins of Tibetan medicine, we might suppose that this system of medicine developed directly and exclusively from the life experiences and activities of the Tibetan people. But in ancient times, before scientific methods of discovery and research were available, most aspects of human knowledge (including medicine) came from the clarity of certain individuals who had attained inner realization. Hence, it is correct to consider that Tibetan medicine and the spiritual teachings of Tibet are strongly linked. Moreover, Buddha Shakyamuni gave many teachings on medicine that we can find in the Tibetan medical texts. In fact, both the vinaya and the sutras contain various medical discussions as well as advice on how to cure certain ailments.

Of course, the Tibetan medical system did not solely develop or arise in the minds of realized beings and emerge from the wisdom of Buddha Shakyamuni: people have also learned a lot from their daily experiences. For example, if a person has had a certain illness and has suffered a lot from it, he or she will understand a great deal about the specific qualities of that illness, the conditions that produced it, its symptoms, etc. In this way, the diverse experiences of people from ancient times to the present day have become part of medical knowledge, and Tibetan medicine also developed in this manner.

Tibetan Medicine's Specific Approach to Healing

Tibetan medicine, like the system of Ayurveda, considers the three humors to be the underlying cause of all illnesses: Wind or *lung* (equivalent to *vata*), Bile or *tripa* (equivalent to *pitta*), and Phlegm or *peken* (equivalent to *kapha*). The three humors sustain the formation, maintenance, and destruction of the human body and therefore constitute the basis of each individual. The wind humor has the mobile quality of the air element, the bile humor the hot, burning quality of the fire element, and the phlegm humor the solid and stable qualities of the earth element and the moist and wet qualities of the water element.

From the moment the body originates, forms, and reaches its full development, and for the entire span of its life, the three humors in their diverse potentialities can be factors that, concomitant with various adverse accidental factors, disturb the organism. This does not mean that the three humors are three kinds of illness. When the three humors are in perfect condition and are in accord, they ensure the health of the person. It is only when their condition is altered or out of harmony that they become the cause of illness.

The roots of the three humors are the three emotions of ignorance, attachment, and anger. If we observe ourselves well, we can discover that the fundamental cause of all our illnesses lies in our emotions, especially these three. Ignorance produces Phlegm; attachment, Wind; and Bile, anger. The emotions are linked to and influence the humors, and when the humors become unbalanced, illnesses arise.

To deal with our emotions, we need medicine that reaches a higher level, and this is what is transmitted through the Buddha's teachings. This is why Buddha Shakyamuni is sometimes called *Menpa Chenpo*, meaning great doctor or universal doctor.

Tibetan medicine offers a unique approach, if correctly applied. First it is necessary to determine the level on which the patient's illness is manifesting, whether it is in the body, the energy, or the mind. It is very important to ascertain this, because not all illnesses are physical. If they were, it would not be that difficult to treat them.

The nature of an illness can be investigated and discovered using various diagnostic methods, such as taking the pulse, analyzing the urine, observing the patient's appearance, asking about his or her diet, finding out how he or she feels, or analyzing his or her dreams. Often, the medical practitioner will be able to provide some standard form of treatment, for instance by recommending a suitable diet, offering advice on the patient's behavior, and prescribing medicines or external therapies.

But many illnesses, especially illnesses related to our energy and our mind, cannot be detected using only standard diagnostic methods. Such illnesses can be the consequence of negative provocations or *dön*.⁵ There are different methods to discover whether an illness is related to provocations.

Once it is understood that an illness is related to provocations, it is necessary to control the negative force that has caused it. If the doctor does not have the capacity to do that, he or she will not be able to cure that illness with medicines or therapy alone. On the other hand, if the negativity can be controlled, any medicines or therapies used will also be more effective.

When an ordinary Tibetan doctor discovers that a patient is experiencing problems related to some form of provocation, the patient will commonly be advised to consult a spiritual teacher with expertise in treating that type of problem. At times, the doctor himself or herself might be a spiritual practitioner and have expertise in such problems, as was the case with my teacher Changchub Dorje. Of course, this kind of doctor would know which method to use and would have the capacity to identify what kind of provocation is involved. But to find such a doctor is not easy.

Various kinds of spiritual practices are used to cure conditions caused by provocations and illnesses related to our energy and mind, above all mantras. Mantra is sound and sound is related to the breathing. Breathing, in turn, is related to energy. So sound and breathing can be used to coordinate or control a person's energy. Knowing this principle, realized beings conferred specific functions to the sound of certain mantras and transmitted them.

Illnesses related to the mind and the emotions are far more problematic than any physical illness. In these types of cases, the medical practitioner must work at the level of the condition of the mind, and the only way to do this is through the methods found in spiritual teachings. So we can see how the discipline of Tibetan medicine is very closely related to spirituality.

External Therapies in Tibetan Medicine

The most widely used external therapies in Tibetan medicine are bloodletting, medical baths, stone and compress therapy, massage, and moxa.

blood runs its normal red color. Then it is necessary to do a moxa treatment to ensure that the illness does not resurface. Through this kind of bloodletting it is possible to eradicate illnesses that have persisted for many years and resisted other types of treatment.

Medical baths, called *lum*, are prepared with herbs. This therapy can be effective for some forms of chronic illness.

Yet another treatment is *tug*, or stone and compress therapy, which can be applied hot or cold. In stone therapy, cold stones or are applied for illnesses of a hot nature, such as a fever. In Tibet we would use stones that had been placed outdoors at night in the cold winter weather. Hot stones are used for illnesses of a cold nature. Traditionally they would be heated in the sun or placed next to a fire. Sometimes other materials are used, including bricks, for example, but most commonly the heating or cooling effect is achieved with stones. Tibetan medicine distinguishes seventy-five or seventy-six different kinds of stones and minerals, each with specific qualities for given indications.

Another therapy is *kunye*, or Tibetan massage, which is performed in conjunction with the application of medicinal oils or creams. A very long chapter in the Four Medical Tantras deals with the various therapeutic properties of oils and creams. For *kunye* practitioners, it is important to learn the properties of the individual creams and oils. *Kunye* is particularly effective in treating Wind disorders caused by stress and fatigue.

Finally, among these five main external therapies, known as *che*,⁶ moxibustion is considered to be one of the most important, since many illnesses that cannot be otherwise treated or cured can be remedied with moxa.

All of these therapies are generally applied in conjunction with internal Tibetan medicine. Altogether, there are some twenty or twenty-one specific therapies which are very useful for curing various illnesses, and which are all effective and easy to apply.

Moxa

Moxa is a form of therapy that we find in the Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese medical traditions, as well as in the traditions of other countries. Nowadays it is known in all parts of the world. In Tibet, moxa was practiced very extensively, and enjoyed a level of popularity comparable to



Application of Moxa.

Bloodletting, called *tarka* in Tibetan, does not simply mean extracting blood. I also had that idea at one time. A year before I met my teacher Changchub Dorje, when I was in China, I learned how to do injections, and I thought that might be a good way to bleed a patient. But later, when I practiced bloodletting with the students of Changchub Dorje, I discovered that to perform it with a syringe would not have been the same. There are several reasons. First, in bloodletting through incision, one lets out the so-called "vapor" of the illness. Second, there is a precise procedure to follow. Before bloodletting, an oral medicine must be administered to the patient for two or three days, sometimes two or three times a day. The function of the medicine is to separate the impure blood from the pure blood, and to gather the impure blood at the prescribed extraction veins. The blood that is extracted is not normal blood, but impure, dark blood. The impure blood is let until the

acupuncture in China. Moxa is particularly effective when performed in a cold climate. This is probably the reason why its practice developed to such a degree in Tibet.

Moxa is applied both to general and specific points on the body. The general or localized points are those located where there is a problem that can be treated with this method. The specific points are those explained in moxa manuals, and have to be measured and identified according to instructions. Although many moxa points are also used for acupuncture, moxa points and acupuncture points do not always correspond. In acupuncture, the needles are placed along the meridians, while in moxa the points do not specifically follow the system of the meridians.

In Tibetan moxibustion practice, a distinction is made between four different degrees of heating. The most extreme form is called "cooking," or *tsowa*. It is a direct moxa

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method and is indispensable for some types of illness, especially those that cannot be cured with medicines. In *tso-wa*, the *Artemisia* cone is placed directly on the point and burned all the way down until the skin is “cooked” and cracks. However, to perform this type of moxa, the therapist should have a level of medical knowledge equivalent to a qualified Tibetan doctor; it is not sufficient to just have a little experience with moxa.

The second is called “burning,” or *segpa*. In this form of moxa, the skin is actually slightly burned. Once the application is completed, only a small and inconsequential red burn mark remains. This form of moxa is very effective.

The third is called “warming,” or *sowa*. In this form of moxa, the prescribed point is warmed deeply by applying heat in a slow and steady fashion.

The fourth is called “threatening,” or *digpa*. The burning *Artemisia* produces a strong heat and the patient feels the “threat” of getting burned although no burning actually occurs. In this case, the heat is applied more superficially than in the previous type of moxa.

Although these four forms of moxa are explained in Tibetan medical texts, most people do not have a clear idea about them. Traditional doctors in Tibet or in Mongolia invariably apply moxa directly, so as to “cook” the skin. They intentionally burn the skin around the point, and when the fire of the *Artemisia* is about to go out and a little glowing ember remains, the doctor blows on it slowly to intensify the heat until a small piece of the burned skin pops up with a cracking sound. I also thought that moxa should always be like that, and used to do it that way.

However, some years ago when I was in China, one night I had a dream. At the time, I had been searching for some different moxa books in the Beijing library. In my dream, a doctor explained very clearly to me that it is not always necessary to apply moxa directly so as to cook the skin, and that there are other ways of applying moxa that can still be very effective, such as using Japanese stick-on moxa or the Chinese moxa rolls.

From that dream I understood that moxa does not always need to be applied as it is traditionally done in Tibet and that moxa could therefore be taught and applied more freely, without the need to be a doctor or an experienced practitioner.

My Experience with Tibetan Medicine

Khyenrab Öser, my teacher when I was very young and studying Buddhism in college, was also a physician. At a certain point, he gave medical classes to two Tibetan monks who had come from some other place especially to learn Tibetan medicine. He taught them the Four Medical Tantras. Seizing the opportunity, I asked my teacher’s permission to attend the medical classes and so I was able to study medicine together with the two monks.

After the completion of my studies at the college I went to Khamding, also known as Dartsendo, a town on the border between China and Eastern Tibet. There I spent more than two years as a teacher at the school. At that time, a very good master called Kangkar Rinpoche was also a resident teacher there. I came to know that Kangkar Rinpoche held a lineage of transmission of the Four Medical Tantras that came through the famous master Jamgön Kongtrül.⁷ I was very interested and requested him to teach me those texts again. So while working at the school, every morning I was able to see Kangkar Rinpoche and receive lessons on medicine. I received the complete explanation from Kangkar Rinpoche of the first three texts, but because of a lack of time, he was not able to teach the fourth of the Four Medical Tantras, called the Last Tantra or *Chime gyü*.⁸

So although I studied the Four Medical Tantras thoroughly, twice, and gained general theoretical knowledge of Tibetan medicine, I still lacked practical experience. Later, I met my teacher Changchub Dorje, an important Dzogchen master who was also a very good doctor. During his life, he received the revelation of special hidden treasure teachings on medicine, but he still practiced ordinary medicine as well and was an expert in that field. Many of his students were also knowledgeable in medicine.

Changchub Dorje did not acquire his medical knowledge in an ordinary way, by studying at a college. His biography says that when he was very young he went to tend animals on a mountain, and there he met an old man who introduced him to the knowledge of medicinal plants. He started to collect and use these herbs and found them very effective for curing illnesses. His mother was worried that by giving out all these different medicines, he could kill someone and get the family into trouble. But then some traditional doctors observed his work and understood that he had a wonderful talent as a healer. Later he dis-

covered several hidden teachings on medicines, but he did not write any texts on medicine taken from other books. These rediscovered hidden teachings on medicine are of a particular importance.

I did not go to Changchub Dorje to learn medicine; I went to receive Dzogchen teachings, after an interest in meeting him arose in me through one of my dreams.

Changchub Dorje was not a common Dzogchen or Tantric master who spent all his time teaching. Every day he would sit outside his room, in an open place, and stay there till sunset, receiving hundreds of people. More people came to visit him for his qualities as a doctor or to seek some general advice than came to seek his spiritual guidance. Of course, some people knew that Changchub Dorje was an important realized being and they went requesting teachings or seeking his advice on meditation, etc. Every day he would interact with people in this way. When I told him my background, I also mentioned that I had studied the Four Medical Tantras twice, and then my teacher said: “It is good. Now you should practice. You have learned all these subjects intellectually, so now you can actually apply them. You should work with my students.” He asked me to perform therapies such as bloodletting and moxa for the many patients who were coming to see him.

At the beginning I did not have much experience, and I was even afraid of applying these treatments since I had only theoretical knowledge of them. But two or three of Changchub Dorje’s very good students were experts in moxa, bloodletting, and other therapies, and by practic-



Application of Moxa.

ing moxa and bloodletting with them day after day, I soon learned these methods quite well, together with their therapeutic benefits. Later, I began to apply these therapies on the patients on my own.

On many occasions we would go to the mountains, forests, and isolated villages to pick medicinal herbs. Before that, I had had only one experience of gathering herbs, when I was in a college. One of my teacher’s students went for two or three days to pick herbs, and I had gone with him. But when I stayed with my master Changchub Dorje, I had the chance to really learn about herbs. I discovered that the herbs I had learned before were identified differently by Changchub Dorje, and were explained differently in his hidden teachings on medicine. Changchub Dorje’s students knew how to recognize these herbs, and by going with them I also learned how to recognize them as well as the precise ways to collect and detoxify them.

Rediscovered Treasures of the Medicine

We are living in time, and in time things are always changing, day after day. Illnesses that we now have did not exist at the time when Yutog Yönten Gönpö compiled the Four Medical Tantras. Thus, the traditional medical texts do not include any methods for curing some of our modern illnesses. But the rediscovered treasures or hidden teachings on medicine mention and explain the different kinds of illnesses that have manifested in our time and prescribe

medicines for curing them. These hidden teachings are intended for the time in which they are discovered. They explain the nature of new kinds of illnesses and which medicines and therapies are needed to treat them. Many of the five hundred points I have described in this book are found exclusively in the hidden teachings rediscovered by Changchub Dorje. These points are not less important because they are not mentioned in the Four Medical Tantras; on the contrary, they are more important because they are particularly relevant to our time.

Cancer is one example of a disease that has appeared in more recent times. In the Four Medical Tantras, the word “cancer” is not even mentioned, because that illness did not exist in the period in which they were compiled. *Dreten*, the Tibetan word for cancer, is a newly-coined term. But in our times cancer is a widespread problem. Adzom Drugpa was a well-known master who discovered many teachings whose purpose is to counteract new diseases like cancer.

Sometimes traditional Tibetan doctors, thinking about modern illnesses, invent some new medicine. But even though they may be good doctors, their knowledge is always theoretical, whereas the hidden teachings were originally taught by realized beings such as Padmasambhava. They are not simply an invention, or new creation based on theoretical knowledge. These beings clearly understand the cause, the nature, and the effect of various illnesses, and on that basis they indicate the appropriate remedy. The rediscovered hidden teachings are of tremendous significance for the medical field.

The Purpose of the Clear Crystal Mirror

Medicine and astrology are among the ancient disciplines of Tibet, and for this reason they are very important aspects of Tibetan culture and history. Moxa in particular is one of the most essential and useful therapies we find in Tibetan medicine. Even without training in all aspects of Tibetan medicine, knowledge of moxa can give a person the ability to cure many problems.

With this in mind, I began to collect Tibetan moxa texts. I then chose seven of them, including documents from Tun-Huang and a hidden teaching rediscovered by my master Changchub Dorje, and by comparing them began to make a compilation of moxa practices. This is an ongoing project, and I hope one day it will be completed. Even though my research is not complete, I thought it would be useful to prepare a book as a sort of summary of my research that interested people can study and use now. For this reason I have made a shorter version of what in the future will be a larger text. It is written in a simple style rather than a scientific manner. *The Clear Crystal Mirror* covers five hundred moxa points, selected from the enormous number of total points, and explains their therapeutic benefits.

By reading this book, people who are interested can learn the many applications of moxa and deepen their knowledge on this subject. Anyone who is acquainted with the principles of Tibetan medicine, not only doctors, can practice moxa to treat themselves and others on the basis of the points and therapeutic benefits explained here. This can be accomplished by applying the simple methods of performing moxa, such as warming and threatening, which do not pose any problems and yet are very effective. ❀

1 The Uyghur are a Turkic tribe that dominated the areas to north of Tibet.

2 Champa or Cyampa, a kingdom in Indochina visited by Marco Polo, now part of Vietnam.

3 Yutog Yönten Gönpö (*Gyu thog yon tan mgon po*): Two outstanding doctors with the same name appeared in Tibet. The one referred to here is Yutog Yönten Gönpö the Elder, who lived in the eighth century. Yutog Yönten Gönpö the Younger (1126–1202) is said to have revised and expanded *The Four Medical Tantras* on the basis of their existing transmission lineages.

4 Tib. *sMan 'bum*.

5 Tib. *gdon*.

6 Tib. *dpyad* or *dpyad lnga*.

7 Jamgön Kongtrül (*'Jam mgon kong strul*, 1813–1899) was a very influential and realized master protagonist of the non-sectarian approach in Eastern Tibet.

8 *Phyi ma'i rgyud*.



Good Health through Correct Presence and Awareness

The passage that follows is an excerpt from the book *Birth, Life and Death, According to Tibetan Medicine and the Dzogchen Teaching* by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The text was based on the Italian *Nascere e Vivere*, (published in English as *On Birth and Life*), in conjunction with the International Congress of Tibetan Medicine held in Venice, Italy, in 1983. Taking this text as a base, Rinpoche added another section on death and enlarged the two preceding sections, completing the revised edition in 2001.

The book has four sections. In the first part the author introduces the principles of Tibetan Medicine. The Birth section touches on numerous related topics ranging from conception to the behavior the pregnant woman should follow. In the Life section, from which this excerpt is taken, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu explains how each individual by cultivating a profound understanding of the three doors of the human organism can realize physical, mental and spiritual health. The last section, Death, considers the nature of death and is a kind of guide on the passage through the four intermediate states experienced after leaving the human body.

To have constant continuity of presence and awareness in every moment of life is the most important requisite concerning the behavior of the three doors (body, voice and mind) and all the factors which provoke an imbalance of the humours and organic components – lacks, excesses and conflicts – connected with them, which we have discussed so far.

In general the Tibetan term *trenpa* refers simply to the recollection of something that has not been forgotten and that is recalled when certain circumstances bring it to mind. In the same way the Tibetan term *shezhin* refers simply to the awareness of something we already know. These aspects are certainly part of ‘presence’ and of ‘awareness’, but they do not represent the complete meaning of the expression the ‘continuity of presence and awareness’ as intended here.

The true meaning of ‘presence’ is not only the memory of an important issue as an object of the mind but rather a vivid mental presence that does not let us forget matters of fundamental importance in any circumstance. For example, to have present in a vivid and constant manner that we live in time, without ever forgetting this, can bring many benefits such as ease in adapting to changes. As every aspect of the world in which we live is subject to time, all the world and its inhabitants will spontaneously reveal their impermanent nature to our perception. Consequently we can avoid futile waste of our brief life.

Similarly, true awareness is not limited to keeping in mind only some important issue, but rather refers to the awareness that knows precisely what is positive and what is negative, and is always present vivid and clear in mind above and beyond temporary factors or mental judgement. This awareness can develop a nature which immediately recognizes in any negative circumstance what to accept and what to avoid, without the need to enter into a mental judgement of the situation.

Any project conceived through mental judgement is based on various factors linked to the particular circumstances of the moment. Since circumstances change, it is difficult that these projects will always be in accord with daily developments—a situation which, in the course of time, compels us to continually modify our plans. All of us understand clearly that this is how things are, on the basis of direct experience. A stable continuity of presence and awareness that does not depend necessarily on mental judgement would bring us many benefits: our projects would not be hindered by circumstances and we would always be able to modify our plans easily and obtain what is required in various situations without too much difficulty.

The expression ‘continuity of presence and awareness’ refers to a state of permanent knowledge in which presence and awareness are indivisible in the mind of every individual, man or woman, young or old. Needless to say,



Rinpoche and Tibetan doctors on the opening day of the Conference on Tibetan Medicine held in Venice in April 1983. Left to right: Carlos Ramos, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Jigme Tsarong, Director of the Institute of Traditional Tibetan Medicine at Dharamsala, Dr. Trogawa Rinpoche, Dr. Ama Lobsang from Dharamsala and the general secretary of the Conference, Paolo Rosa Salva.

Photo: A. M. Humeres

anyone who has entered the Buddhist path, particularly the Dzogchen teaching, and has put it into practice must necessarily possess genuine and constant presence and awareness. In any case authentic presence and awareness are highly important requirements in the life of each human being independently of the practice of Dzogchen. In fact, beyond experiencing the suffering of birth, old age, illness and death that are natural aspects of our life, we continuously turn our back on awareness and, driven by the primary causes of attachment, anger and ignorance, we devote ourselves only to egotistic activities. Thus, through temporary secondary causes, the miserable situation occurs in which we make both ourselves and others unhappy and are compelled to undergo suffering, unable to remedy anything.

In these times most people are far from maintaining the continuity of presence and awareness in their behavior of body, voice and mind. We are used to considering a human being as a simple aggregate of flesh and blood and the environment as a simple object that appears to our individual senses; consequently we use most of our energy to satisfy our various material needs, and we consider this sufficient. This situation is before everybody’s eyes. On the contrary, human beings should be regarded as the totality of the ‘three doors’. It is not possible to consider only the door of the body; otherwise, no difference would exist between us and the imitations of a human being, the ‘robots’ created by modern technology.

The human body begins as an aggregate of humours and organic components based on the energy of the elements, while the ‘door’ of the voice, not having been formed by the humours and organic components, exists directly on the base of the energy of the elements. When the elements of the body are disturbed by temporary causes our condition becomes unhealthy and we have direct experience of the sufferings of illness, and so forth. An illness or some other problem that depends solely on the body is a condition that can be perceived directly by our senses; in this case it is easy to understand how the problem can be resolved and just as easy to find a method to resolve the problem immediately.

However, if we have a problem connected with the door of the voice, that is, with the condition of the elements or of energy, or also in particular with the door of the mind, the extremely hidden nature of the problem is such that it is difficult to understand how to confront the problem and even more difficult to find the appropriate manner to resolve it.

Examining the three doors of body, voice and mind, we see that the body is an aggregation of humours and organic components and is the physical support for the other two doors of voice and of mind which depend upon it; the three doors of body, voice and mind exist in a relationship of reciprocal dependence. In general, during human life problems linked to the door of the body can arise, but also problems connected with the doors of voice and mind can

manifest. Since the body is the base of the other doors, it follows that initially we must try to solve the problems by working on the door of the body. It is necessary to understand clearly that various problems can arise which are not strictly physical and that the problems of the voice, besides those of the body, are in turn connected with the door of the mind. If we lack a solid comprehension of this fact, it will prove difficult to succeed in freeing ourselves from such problems, and often the very absence of this understanding causes a negligible problem to become serious. For these reasons, we need to comprehend in depth the nature of the doors of the voice and of the mind so that we can come to acquire a stable and continuous awareness capable of creating the necessary conditions for their well-being. To gain possession of this awareness is extremely important and necessary for each one of us. For example, who suffers from a mental problem needs to know that the principal origin of this condition is a disturbance of the Wind humour. To eliminate the disturbance it is necessary above all to rely on the techniques of breath control that are linked to the door of the voice and then to have recourse to the pertinent diet, behavior, medicine and external therapies. This is the way to resolve a Wind disturbance. To ensure that our breath control is effective, we should train in the body postures and Yantra Yoga exercises that are linked to the door of the body. Thus it is necessary to be aware that the efficacy of breath control does not depend only on the voice but is also connected with the door of the body. Applying the various methods of breath control allows us to resolve temporarily the problems caused by the imbalances of this kind of disturbance. However, if we do not apply these methods regularly we may resolve the problem once or twice but we will have no guarantee that it will not recur. We live in circumstances always subject to time and environment and, besides this, we are so bound with the fetters of dualism that our life is completely conditioned. Hence, adverse circumstances, minor or severe, always occur, from which problems linked to disturbances of the energy of the elements continuously arise.

If we really want to free ourselves from these kinds of problems we must finally understand that the door of the mind is always dominated by dualism. This dualism is the fruit of strong selfishness, which manifests on one side as fixation on and attachment to ourselves, and on the other, as hatred and aggressivity towards others. At the same time, the door of the mind completely ignores the authentic nature of its own condition and therefore never dwells in that state. Since the mind is dominated solely by dualism, we experience, much to our regret, infinite problems and endless illnesses tied to our three doors. Thus we must understand this situation thoroughly and, on the basis of this understanding, ensure that we are guided by awareness always and in every circumstance. ❀

Mental Illness in Tibetan Medicine

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo
Transcribed and Edited from a Public Webcast
March 5, 2010

Tonight our topic is mental illness called *semkam* in Tibetan medicine. *Sem* means mind and *kam* means nature, so ‘the nature of the mind’. In Tibetan medicine we have a chapter on mental disturbances called *jungbu ngoshi*, which basically concerns people who become insane. But other than that, Tibetan medicine does not really clinically separate mental and physical diseases because it considers that the physical body and the mind work together as a team. There is an example of this from Buddhist philosophy in which the physical body is presented as a hotel and the consciousness is considered to be the hotel guest. This is called *namshe Gudrun kam*, ‘the guest house of the consciousness’. Once they are separated, they do not function well and for this reason we do not divide them clinically. Since your physical body and mind work together as a team, if one of them has a problem the other is affected. For example, if you have a small amount of pain even in your little finger, your mind will not be happy because you feel that pain. In the same way, if you feel stressful or unhappy, that gradually affects the body. These are examples of how the physical body and the mind work together.

The Five Elements

When we talk about how the body is conceived or formed, in Tibetan medicine we call it *trupulu*: *trupa* means form and *lu* means body, so when and how the body is formed. When the three factors of the father’s sperm, the mother’s egg and consciousness come together, at that time there is conception and the body is formed. How is it formed? The body is formed by the father’s sperm and the mother’s egg, which are both composed of the five elements. Consciousness is supported by the five elements, so for this reason, from the moment of conception, our body is made up of the five elements. This is called the ‘five element theory’ in Tibetan medicine. Whether we consider Tibetan medicine or Buddhism, they both agree that both the outer nature and inner being are composed of the five elements and there is no subject or object without the five elements.

The five elements are earth, water, fire, wind and space. The first four are material substances while the last one, space, is empty, and gives the possibility for the others to develop. The earth element is represented by all the heavy, solid aspects of our body like muscle and bone, the water element by our body’s fluids and soft and smooth aspects, the fire element by our determination, our bodies ability to mature and

the digestive heat and the wind element by our breathing and physical and mental activity. Consciousness is not really formed by these elements but supported by them because mind needs to be active, calm and working with circumstances, so the five elements are also present there.

When these 5 elements are balanced, we are healthy and happy, but when they are imbalanced, we are not. This is what Tibetan medicine calls *namba gyurwa* and *ma gyur ba*, the ‘changed’ or ‘unchanged’ condition. ‘Changed condition’ means there is change in the measure, nature, quality or quantity of the 5 elements and when they are unbalanced, we are ill. When these aspects of the 5 elements do not change, we are in a healthy state. These two conditions are also presented as water and ice: water will turn to ice if the temperature goes down but, at the same time, the nature of ice is water so for this reason a healthy or unhealthy person can be compared to water and ice. These are general concepts of our health.

The Seven Types of Personalities

Once we leave our mother’s womb we automatically enter into *samsara*, this world, and we have to integrate with it. Since we are composed of the 5 elements and the world is as well, when we enter it we adopt certain types of actions, which we call behavior. There is no particular type of diet or behavior that is good or bad according to Tibetan medicine, however these factors of diet and behavior affect individuals in different ways. In order to discover whether certain actions are good or bad for a person, we need to know your type of personality.

According to Tibetan medicine there are 7 types of personalities or constitutions: 3 single, 3 double and a single combination. When we consider the 5 elements and the 3 humors, the water and earth element represent the *peken* or phlegm humor, the fire element the *tripa* or bile humor, and the wind element the *lung* or wind humor. These 7 personalities depend on which element is predominant. It doesn’t mean that a person is missing a particular element because every individual is composed of five elements, but they are not present in the same measure. Someone may have more fire, or more earth or more wind. For this reason we have the 7 different personalities.

Food – the Six Tastes

When a person eats certain food, one personality type may be more aggravated by it than another type. For example, if ten people drink alcohol together, some of them may be fine while others will be quite ill according to



their personality types. In Tibetan medicine when we talk about food, there are six tastes called *ro drug* which are: sweet, sour, salty, hot, bitter and astringent. All types of food and drink have these 6 tastes. Some food and drink have one taste, others two or three, although it is not easy to find food with only one taste or all six. The sweet taste is composed of earth and water, sour by fire and earth, salty by water and fire, hot by fire and wind, bitter by water and earth and astringent by earth and wind. Each of these tastes has 2 elements and for that reason certain food may be good for one type of personality but not for another. An example of this is wine, which has a sour taste, a sweet one and a bitter one, with the sour predominant which means it has more of the fire element. For this reason, for example, wine is not good for the *tripa* personality that is already fire, while it may be a little better for a person with a *peken* personality.

So eating food with 6 tastes, interacting with the circumstances of the five elements, it is very easy to aggravate our original elements causing an imbalance. Once we become imbalanced, we may show physical and also mental disturbances. Tonight our topic is mental disturbances so we will discuss how diet, behavior or our life circumstances can cause mental disease.

Causes of Mental Disturbances

There are many causes of mental illness but in Tibetan medicine, they generally consider that there are four: diet, behavior, season and provocation, which are called *dus don zas chod kyen zhi*, or the four conditions. These four are the original cause of disturbance of our elements. Diet and behavior are easy to understand, but season and provocation are a little more difficult to understand. Whether we talk about diet, behavior or season, we consider there are three aspects called *lagba*, *membra*, and *logba* or excessive, deficient and reversed. For example, if we con-

sider winter which is normally cold, an excessive season would be an extremely cold winter; deficient means winter is not so cold; and reversed means that instead of being snowy and cold it is rainy or very hot. Each of these three conditions is naturally not healthy and can cause illness.

It is the same when you eat. If you eat too much of one of the six tastes or totally avoid a taste, it is not good. Or if you eat an excess of a food with the opposite element to your humor – for example, if you are a *tripa* personality with a fire problem and you eat too many things with a hot nature such as alcohol, chili pepper, lamb, oily food – then that is harmful for you. Once diet, behavior, season or provocation has caused harm, then one becomes ill.

But in order for disease to manifest, two things must happen: either your physical body such as heart organ becomes weak or the conditions of disease attack very strongly. These two factors are always present. For example, physically your heart is very weak and in addition you are grieving the loss of someone or something you are attached to, or you have been unhappy for a long time. Also you have been eating unsuitable food for a long time, for example, you are a wind personality eating food creating wind deficiency or excess. Those three factors are the main causes for mental illness.

Another cause of mental illness is provocation, which is more common. In Tibetan medicine it is called *don* which refers to the provocation and means ‘showing’ the characteristics of that provocation. When a doctor observes a patient, he cannot see the provocation, but by observing the changes in the patient’s actions, in complexion, etc., he can identify the type of provocation and understand how to deal with it.

So all of these factors or even one of them can be the cause of mental problems. First it may affect the physical level and then

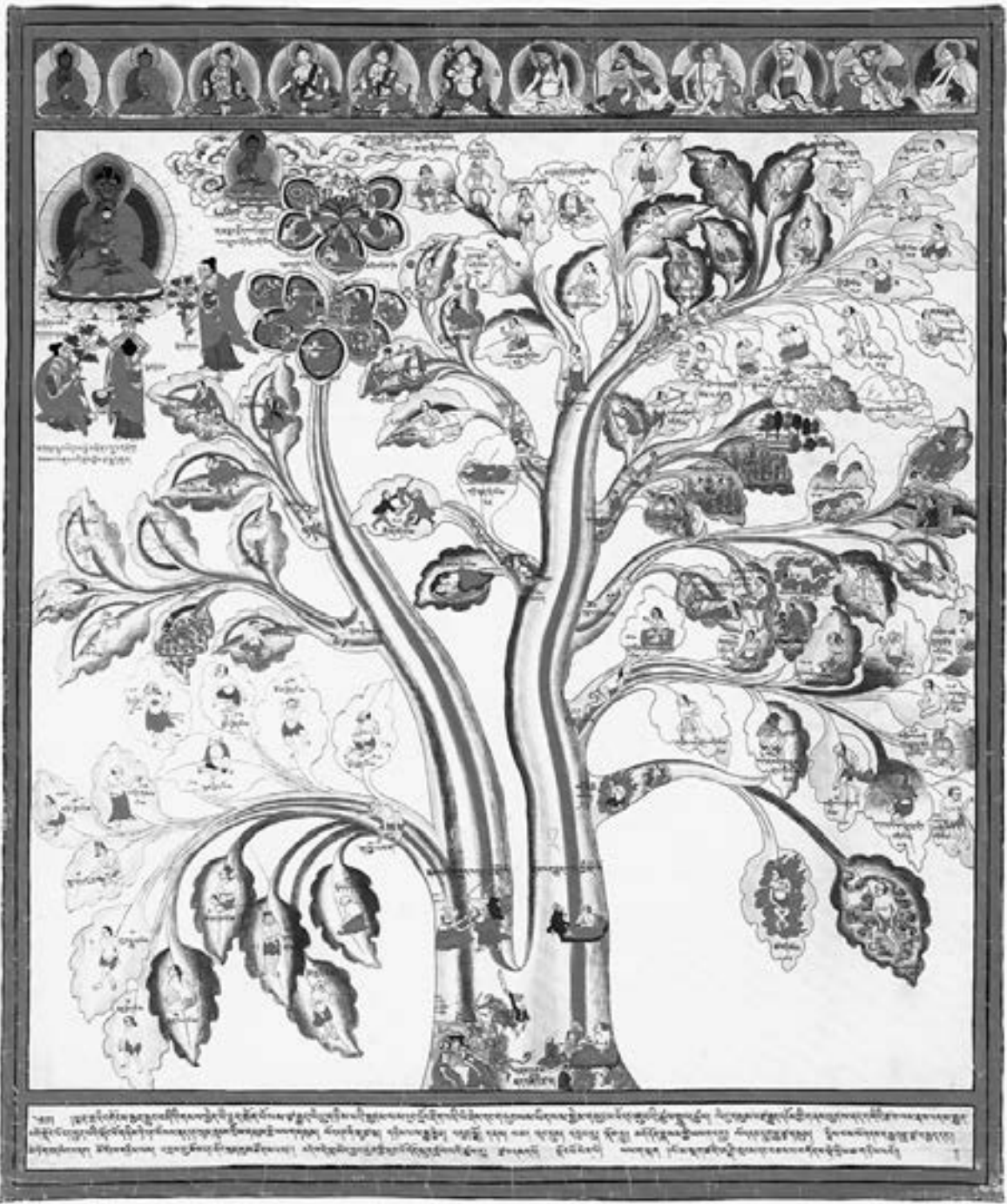
go to the mental level or it may be vice versa because these two levels have an interdependent relationship. Once the physical body no longer moves, breathing stops, then the mind goes. Once the mind is gone, the doctor pronounces death. So these two levels are related – if one is missing then the other doesn’t work any more.

For physical or mental illness to arise, it needs the condition. Once we have the condition, we already have the cause in our physical body: the five elements and the three humors of our material body. When we eat, drink, do actions, we receive the secondary cause or conditions, which means we can manifest disease, either at the physical level or mental level. Once we have the cause and the condition it means that we become ill.

Symptoms of Disease

Once we are ill then there are many different symptoms, especially for mental disturbances. Today in mental institutions, many people end up taking the same medicine, but if you observe them individually, one may be continuously laughing, another crying, or talking or silent; they all have a mental problem, but with differences. Why are there these differences in symptoms? In Tibetan medicine we consider that there are two factors: one is the more dominant humor (*lung*, *tripa* or *peken*), and secondly, provocations or *don*, which show the characteristics of the provocation.

When we work with mentally disturbed people, it is very important to ‘read’ their actions. This is the main point. Today, unfortunately, many people take medicine. While the medicine keeps them safe, it means that we cannot treat the root of the illness because, under the continuous effect of the medicine, the person is always quiet and calm and does not really behave according to the nature of their disease. So we don’t know how they would behave without this medicine.



We don't use heavy medicine like this in Tibetan medicine. Basically we use herbs and some ritual practice. Herbs are prescribed because the disease is created by the five elements that are disturbed in the material body, and the elements are brought into balance by the herbs. We use ritual practices because the five elements are not only unbalanced

by food, but also by provocations. So these are our main treatments. But before treating the disease we need to know which category it belongs to. There are different ways to determine this: observation of the patient's condition, observation of their symptoms, observation based on diagnostics such as pulse diagnosis and observation of what makes the

symptoms better or worse. These are four ways we can observe the disease. If, for example, we are dealing with a patient with mental illness, firstly we observe the person's condition: for example, their physical aspect, recent history such any serious long term sadness or loss of job, life circumstances that are very stressful mentally, whether the person

takes time to eat, rest, care for themselves, or if he/she eats unhealthy food.

Excess Lung Disturbances

All these aspects, for example, are conditions of an excess lung (wind) disorder. Why? When we look at the lung humor, it has 6 characteristics: rough, light, mobile, cool, hard and subtle. If a person predominantly consumes food/drink of a nature that increases any of these characteristics, it creates an excess of lung. For example, if you drink a lot of coffee to keep awake, coffee has a bitter taste, which is the water and wind element, which is less nutritious but it has a cool nature. If you drink it long term, it increases your lung, which is not beneficial.

What are the symptoms of excess lung (wind)? The first symptom is insomnia, the second is difficulty in concentrating, then loss of appetite, difficulty to digest, moving pain, gradual loss of weight and unhappiness, which then leads to other mental disturbances. This case started from bad diet or behavior that aggravated the lung (wind) humor, causing your body to show symptoms not only of physical but mental disturbance. Along with mental disturbances you may have anxiety, depression that comes and goes, fear and a sensation of insecurity. You may feel everyone is attacking you and nobody is helping you. In this case it sometimes seems to be true because once you have excess lung (wind) your personality becomes more difficult. You already have a difficult type of personality, like a monkey, never sitting down, always active and since your character is already like this it is not so easy for you to deal with people and you become more disturbed – it is easier for you to get angry which then causes people to distance themselves and you accord-

ingly feel lonelier, more insecure. So this is an interdependent relationship and these two aspects are automatically combined and you feel more and more insecure and fearful.

Mental disturbances sometimes seem like a very distant problem, but they are quite close: a mistake in diet, in behavior and then in our actions cause a mental disturbance to occur.

When these kinds of symptoms appear, the doctor who is observing a patient with these symptoms and listening to the conditions of his/her disease, begins to think that it may be a mental disturbance caused by an excess of lung. Then he checks the pulse, urine, tongue, eyes, complexion, hair, nails – in Tibetan medicine we have thirty-eight methods of diagnostics that can be summed up in three methods: checking the pulse, observing the urine and question/answer. When the doctor examines the pulse, urine, tongue and eyes, he gets a better idea of the problem. For example if the pulse is floating, empty and irregular he can confirm that it is a wind problem.

If the doctor still doesn't know whether depression is based on lung, tripa or peken, then he observes the effect of the patient's habits. He can, for example, give medicine, or suggest a change of diet since wind has certain qualities and prescribe an antidote to them, like warm heavy medicine to help with the wind problem. If that doesn't help it means that the disturbance does not belong to the wind variety and he will have to conduct further investigation. ©

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The Shang Shung Institute at Merigar West organizes a

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After attending all the seminars and passing the final examination, students will have the possibility to become Ku Nye operators. No further levels are contemplated but there is the possibility to follow various specialization courses.

The intensive residential course (A) includes two periods of seven days each, with an interval of 4/5

months in between. The first period is dedicated to the practice of massage, namely KU (application of oil, joints movement and giving heat) and NYE (using several techniques on skin, muscles, tendons and channels), while the second seminar is more focused on digitopressure points and external channels. After 4/5 months there will be a further seminar of 5 days during which, after reviewing and deepening both theory and practice, students aspiring to become operators will have the opportunity to take theoretical and practical tests.

The course based on week-end seminars (B) consists of nine week-ends on a monthly basis. Intervals in between seminars may be planned in order to give students the possibility to assimilate what they have been learning and time to practice it. In this case as well, there will be two further week-ends, one to revise and deepen what has been learnt and one dedicated to students who intend to take the final examina-

tion, consisting in theoretical and practical tests.

Daily schedule: three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon, with a ten-minute break in the middle. At times students may be requested to stay one hour longer to revise what has been explained during the day and to practice together.

Students who have attained the Shang Shung Institute diploma, will have the possibility to attend further revision courses either with an instructor or with Tibetan doctors to learn additional techniques to increase and deepen their knowledge. ©

For any information, please contact:
Tel.: +39 0564 966940
courses@istitutoshangshung.org

TibetanCalendar
2010-2011
Metal Tiger Year
2137



Astrological Indications
and Special Practice Days



**Tibetan Calendar
Metal Tiger
(2010-2011)**
Shang Shung Edizioni
12 euro

Pocket diary for the Metal Tiger year, starting February 14, 2010 up to May 3, 2011, containing concise indications of the practices recommended by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for special days, positive and negative days for the Naga Practice, astrological data of the Tibetan Calendar and the individual aspects for those born between 1918 and 2010. Indispensable for finding out favourable and unfavourable days for daily activities and to remember special practice days. This year's diary has a hard cover, a handy page saver band for finding the current week quickly and a new layout with more space for your notes.

You can order it online at:
<http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org>

Words of Advice from Rinpoche

At the Election of the New Gakyil of Tashigar South

April 2010

“It is important that the position on the Gakyil does not become something personal. The Gakyil is just like the aspects of body, speech and mind so if you are not collaborating problems arise later. You do not need to stay in your assigned color; you should always communicate. Sometimes we are missing communication and then problems arise. It is also very important that everyone on the Gakyil knows they are doing a service for Dzogchen Community and the people of the Community.

The Gakyil is a service for the teaching, for the Community and for everybody. Some people serve on the Gakyil and immediately feel they have a position. We must know that this is very bad for a Dzogchen practitioner. It is important that we seriously collaborate. It is important not to become identified with a title like Director or Vice Director like in a hierarchy; we need to use these titles because we live in society,

but in the Dzogchen Community the Community is number one and we should not be interested in positions and hierarchies.

What is Dzogchen? Dzogchen is our real nature and how we can discover this transmission. We must not forget that, otherwise we become like any other political organization. For example, in Merigar they have the most experience, but even there those kinds of political problems arise.

I am always saying we need to respect the local laws and rules of society, but as Dzogchen practitioners not to be conditioned by society and work inside the Community in that way – not becoming established in positions, titles or hierarchies. Rules exist, nations exist, and we must work with society. That is part of our awareness.

When you have a Gakyil meeting you are remembering Guruyoga, but also it is good to sing the Song of the Vajra, it is not so difficult. This helps to be more connected with the teaching and



Rinpoche with the new Gakyil of Tashigar South – Blue: Soledad Suarez, Ramiro Fernandez, Claudio Bruno; Yellow: Paula De Raedemaeker, Marisa Alonso, Griselda Olivera; Red: Ricky Sued, Sergio Oliva, Luis Olivera; Geko: Luis Alberto Leon Bacigalupo.

not with politics. You must know that political systems and rules are always secondary. The main point is that we are going to the final goal of Dzogchen. Everyone is working for that.

It is very good to work and do service in the Gakyil. Sometimes people are very critical inside and from outside, of the Gakyil. That is not good. You cannot satisfy everyone. Even if someone is to-

tally realized they cannot please and make everyone happy. So we do our best with awareness. We don't cultivate dualism, even if we are discussing we feel a deeper connection. We must cultivate patience, one of the six paramitas of Buddha. It is very important that the people of the Gakyil are communicating with patience.

People get stuck in discussing and dualistic vision. Most im-

portant is to always check how things correspond to the teaching. Even when I give advice, I always check how this advice corresponds to the teaching, and even then people still criticize, but it is not important. Slowly, after some time in the Community, people learn that is not the correct way. We should work with circumstances. Then everything goes well. You do your best.” ✽



The authorized candidates with Rinpoche after their authorization presentations. Carolina Mingolla for 2nd level Yantra Yoga, Jimena Piedra Miranda for 1st Level Yantra Yoga and Rosa Altamirano for First Level Vajra Dance with presenters Fabio Andrico for Yantra Yoga and Adriana dal Borgo for Vajra Dance. Photo: N. Zeitz



Santi Maha Sangha Level 1 Training with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Tashigar South, Argentina from April 12–22, 2010.

Photo: N. Zeitz



Kurukulle Dakini by Glen Eddy

Glen Eddy painted Kurukulle Dakini in 1974 and Sky Walker Publications printed a poster of it year that same year. It is 18"x22" with text on the back as well as mention of Glen Eddy as the Artist. The prints are being offered for sale at \$100.00 each to students and practitioners of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. It is being offered as a representative work of art by someone much loved in the Dzogchen Community. Please contact Terri Parkin at terripar kin1@gmail.com for pictures and more information.

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The New Ling near the Ural Mountains

Igor Kopanov

On March 30 Rinpoche gave the name Sherabling to the land situated in the European part of Russia, close to the foothills of the Ural Mountains. “Sherabling” (Tib. shes rab gling) means the Ling of Supreme Understanding.

This land is an open, very picturesque place in the Suksun area of the Perm region. It is located directly on the Sylva River, near pine forests and hills, which are chains of the Ural Mountains. Special attractions here are the stream that is never covered by ice in the winter because of the hot underground springs, and a beautiful hanging wooden bridge over the river (the only similar one we’ve seen was in Nepal).

In the future there will be a Gonpa with a Vajra Dance Mandala, a house for dark retreats with two cabins, and also living space for practitioners and instructors.

The idea to create a ling in the Ural region came in 2009, during the Igor Berkhin’s visit to Perm, where he was leading a retreat on the Base level of Santi Maha Sangha. We thought that a Ling was needed here to unite practitioners from such a big cities as Ekaterinburg, Perm, Chelyabinsk, Ufa. Also it would create a possibility to do retreats in the countryside not only on “days off”, but also for a few days or even weeks.

The place for the ling was chosen almost spontaneously by Igor Berkhin, during a trip from Perm to Ekaterinburg on the federal highway. The terrain in the Suksun area (next to the land of the ling) is outstanding for its beauty and special landscape.

We prepared a short description of the place with pictures, a link to a satellite map, and our vision of building and funding. We also described the situation in the Communities in surrounding regions. Then in Singapore, during the retreat, this description was presented to Rinpoche. He looked at the project for a short period and said that he needed time to examine all the informa-



Photo: S. Averyanov

tion. The next day the Master kindly replied that it was a good idea. He wished us a speedy carrying out of the project, and gave us a small stupa with the words: “This is for your Ling”. That same evening, after the Ganapuja, Fabio came and gave another gift for the future ling from Rinpoche – a beautiful Tibetan curtain.

Recently, we won an auction for the purchase of the land and signed a sales contract, which is now being registered. We will receive the documents of ownership in one month, and then we will coordinate all building projects with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Yeshe Silvano Namkhai.

We have also invited Yeshe to Sherabling, and hope that he will include this new place in his busy schedule if not this, then next year.

For any questions you may contact the Dzogchen Community of Perm, which also received the name Sherabling: **dzogchencommunityperm@gmail.com**

Making the Mandala, We Learned to Collaborate

Palphelling, the New Ling in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine

Alexander Balyura

One more new ling has appeared, also in Ukraine. On 24th of February Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave the name Palphelling to the Dnepropetrovsk Dzogchen Community. It means “increasing auspiciousness”.

Dnepropetrovsk is one of the biggest cities in Ukraine. It is situated on 7 hills, in the center of the country. Some of our practitioners have been following Dzogchen Teaching since 1999. After Rinpoche’s retreat in Crimea in 2005 many new people manifested, and we organized a Community and started following webcasts and retreats of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu together.

During those retreats some of us learned the Vajra Dance, but we had no Mandala so, in 2008, after studying all the necessary technology, we made a Mandala with our own hands. The majority of practitioners took part in its creation with happiness and devotion. During those two weeks we had a wonderful possibility to discover what collaboration means. It was something concrete in which almost everybody was involved. After making the Mandala, we continued to meet together. Every Sunday we had regular Vajra Dance practice, and besides that enjoyed communication and tea-time together.

During the following year we had four retreats on Vajra Dance with teachers Ruslan Kim and Uliana Sokolova to learn the Dance of the Six Spaces and the Dance of the Three Vajras,

Regular and Irregular. For a few months we only knew the Dance of the Three Vajras, which we would dance for three hours, enjoying these experiences.

In May 2009 during the Moscow Retreat our community met with Yeshe Silvano Namkhai who gave us very key and clear advice about how we could all be one family. Then we renewed

what they meant, Rinpoche replied “It is something very very sweet”.

In November 2009 we found a very suitable place to rent in the center of the city. It was an office on the 3rd floor in a building where we can be present for 24 hours a day and also has internet for webcasts and worldwide transmissions. We rented this apartment, made all that was needed: shelves, a library – it became alive very quickly with the participation of all practitioners.

The first retreat we had there was Santi Maha Sangha with Igor Berkhin, then a Yantra Yoga retreat for beginners and 1st level



Santi Maha Sangha retreat with Igor Berkhin, November 2009.

our gakyil, which now consists of 3 members. The new Gakyil planned to find a stable apartment for group practices and to organize retreats on Santi Maha Sangha and Yantra Yoga. For many months we looked for a place. We also came to Rinpoche and expressed our intention to find a stable Gonpa to rent and to become a ling. Our Master wrote some Tibetan words for our future Gonpa. When we asked him

with Victor Krachkovskiy. Each of those teachers held a public talk in a big hall in the center of the city. After those retreats many new people came to our Gonpa. We also organized webcasts there. Of course, now we had a space to enjoy time together – we celebrated New Year, dancing, making divination and so on...

During the Drubchen of Mandarava and Vajrapani we came to Rinpoche and told him that

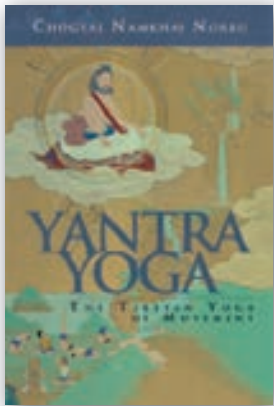
now Dnepropetrovsk has a stable place. We also wrote a letter with photo of the place and our Teacher replied to that letter saying that now we are Palphelling!

So, now the new-founded ling has more than 40 members, 8 of them live in Kriviy Rog, a big city, 150 km from us. Also 6 practitioners practice the 1st level of Santi Maha Sangha, and the majority of them participate in karma-yoga including “making the Mandala of the Vajra Dance”. ©

For further information about Palphelling contact: **dnepr.dzogchen@gmail.com**

Gakyil of Palphelling:
Yellow: Elena Stanishevskaya **leiena.st@gmail.com**
Red: Alexander Balyura **balyura@gmail.com**
Blue: Nataliya Romashchenko **ronamed.com@gmail.com**

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


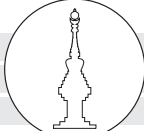


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Calendar of Events 2010

- May

May 21-23

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

25 Spaces of Samantabhadra Retreat

Webcast from the Canaries
- 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 Costantino Albini
- May 29-June 1

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Webcast from London

- June

June 11-13

SMS First Level

With Jakob Winkler
- June 11-15

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Webcast from Moscow
- June 18-20

Yantra Yoga course for advanced students

With Laura Evangelisti
- June 18-20

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Webcast from St. Petersburg
- June 18-20

Om A Hum Dance for Children

With Prima Mai and Rita Renzi
- June 26-27

Dance of the Six Spaces

With Maurizio Mingotti

- June 28-July 4

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Webcast from Crimea
- July

July 3-4

Course of Dance of the Three Vajras

With Maurizio Mingotti
- July 9-16

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Webcast from Merigar East
- July 9-11

Intensive Practice of Jnana Dakini

With Rita Renzi
- July 16-18

Namkha course – weekend 1

With Liane Gräf
- July 18 11 am

Kumar Kumari for children

With Jacobella Gaetani and Tiziana Gottardi

- July 20-25

Residential course of Yantra Yoga

With Laura Evangelisti
- July 24-25

Namkha course – weekend 2

With Liane Gräf
- July 31-August 5

Explanation and practice of Guru Jnanadakini Gomadevi

With Enzo Terzano
- July 25 11 am

Kumar Kumari for children

With Jacobella Gaetani & Tiziana Gottardi
- August

August 4-12

Vajra Dance Teacher Training 2nd Level

With Adriana Dal Borgo and Prima Mai
- August 13-20

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

- August 21-22

Training course for teachers of Kumar Kumari

With Laura Evangelisti
- August 23-29

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Teachers Training

SMS Base & 1st Levels

Vajra Dance & Yantra Yoga

1st & 2nd Levels
- September

September 5-6

Course on natural complete breathing

Open to everyone

With Fabio Andrico
- September 14-16

Course on Kumbhaka

With Fabio Andrico
- September 17-19

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Xitro Retreat

What’s Going On

Springtime seems to have finally arrived at Merigar. With the more clement weather, some of the building projects have been able to start up and work on caring for the green spaces is also beginning under the care of the Red Gakyil. The Blue Gakyil is laying the foundations for the Community to come into closer contact with the local population with a number of incentives, while the Yellow Gakyil is going ahead with its work of improving financial administration.

In this issue of The Mirror, the Gakyil would like to report on their activities over the last few months in order to let members know how the situation at Merigar West is evolving.

Blue Gakyil

This year the Gakyil has considered it important for the Dzogchen Community to integrate into the local social situation through contact with local associations. The associations operating in the Amiata area represent the most lively and active part of the local population as they organize courses and events.

Together with the associations, the Merigar Community and its organizations could share spaces and, most importantly, interact with local people so that they could get closer to the ancient wisdom of the teaching through activities that are open to all, with a view to receiving benefits in terms of well-being

and harmony, without getting into trying to convert people.

In April we are starting courses of Kumar Kumari (Yantra Yoga for children) in some of the schools, which have been favourably received by the Head Teacher, the teachers and the parents. On May 22 there will be a public presentation at the Arcidosso Castle by the Community on the activities that we do at Merigar. There will also be space for some local associations to introduce themselves and let people know about them. After this, everyone will be invited to Merigar to visit the whole area and there will also be a demonstration of Kumar Kumari on the part of the children who have participated in the course. Finally there will be other activities that the associations would like to present on this occasion.

In this way we hope to be able to introduce ourselves to local people not so much as a foreign group on their territory but as a cultural reference point and, if the causes are favourable for someone, also a spiritual one.

Over the last few weeks many different courses have been organized at Merigar West including Dance of the Vajra, Yantra Yoga, Chod, SMS Base and First Level, Gomadevi, Kumar Kumari, Mandarava and Sang and Serkyem.

Then there will be a new course offered for children – June 18–20 there will a Vajra Dance course of the OM A HUM Dance for children on a Mandala that has been specially adapted for them. There will also be another similar course held in July or August of

this year, depending on the availability of the teachers.

Red Gakyil

At the moment construction work on enlarging Gadeling, the Master’s residence, is still in full swing. When this is finished Migmar plans to create a garden just outside the fence surrounding the swimming pool. Because of the damage from wild boars digging up plants and roots in the winter months, there will be red strips throughout the garden that are meant to discourage the hungry boars from entering.

The Gonpa is also another focal point for the work of the red gakyil. On the stone wall leading up to the Gonpa there are several large clayvases which are usually full of flowers in the summer months. However, the severe winters of the last years have cracked and broken several of these vases, so in their place, the red gakyil plans to construct their own flower vases of local stone, just like the flower vases that have been created at Gadeling.

Another important ongoing job at the Gonpa is an investigation to find the most efficient way to create ventilation inside the building in order to preserve the paintings there in the best possible way. At the moment the gakyil is considering either a ventilation system or the creation of small windows.

Around the large stupa and in the wood at Gadeling, the red gakyil has found an abundance of a species called the ‘pine processionary’ which is a major forest pest living communally in pine trees and which march in single

files (hence the name). They feed on the trees and dry them out and several trees in these two areas will have to be cut in order not to become a danger.

One of the first jobs planned with the new mini excavator will be the re-creation of walking paths from the large stupa to the Gonpa and from the large stupa to Serkhang. These will be paths for pedestrians and will be bordered by local fruit trees and bushes, such as dog-roses, wild cherry, laurel, lavender, etc.

Our resident Tibetan, Migmar, brought back a quantity of Tibetan orzo seeds from his recent trip to Tibet. He has planted these at Merigar West and hopes to be able to harvest the resulting seeds at the end of the growing season. If his experiment works out, in the future he plans to replant the seeds the following season with the idea of possibly producing *tsampa* and even Tibetan *chang* when production gets going.

Yellow Gakyil

The Gakyil has recently bought a mini excavator that will be used for different types of work at Merigar: gardening, clearing the ditches, the roads and in conjunction with different building projects. This machinery will also mean considerable savings (in the past we had to rent one every time we needed it) and will be continually at our disposal.

We have also been considering the problem of how to guarantee a continual and efficient service for the kitchen and the gardening. With no additional costs, the kitchen will remain open all year round for courses, karma yoga and those working at Merigar and will contribute to making Merigar more operational and pleasant. The gardening work has been entrusted to a person for the whole year thus guaranteeing the continuity that is required to have the gardens more attractive and well tended. ©



Construction at Gadeling. Photo: R. Piro

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.

Narag Tongtrug Teachings with Khyentse Yeshe Silvano Namkhai

Giada Villahermosa

Thursday the first of April at four in the afternoon in the gompas of Merigar West the adventure starts: following the teachings of Khyentse Yeshe Silvano Namkhai is quite an experience. We think we know what refuge, *bodhicitta*, the accumulation of merit and wisdom, visualization, radiation and re-absorption, *kyerim* and *dzogrim* and all the parts of the practices we usually do in the community are: but no, we are in for a surprise. Yeshe opens up knowledge like hitting an atom of hydrogen (our narrow understanding) and creating an atomic reaction giving us new and multiple understandings. He tells us that our imagination has infinite potentialities so why just imagine a divinity with three arms when we can imagine millions of arms and that is what he does with understanding. Every aspect is rigorously considered according to *sutra*, outer and inner *tantra*, *anu* and *ati* yoga.



Photo: L. Gräf

We realise that under every aspect of the teaching there is a world of meaning and that everything is related in ways we have never thought of. Our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has warned us not to become ‘seasoned’ practitioners but listening to Yeshe’s waterfall of teachings one feels just like that: dry and seasoned and needing just that flow of wisdom. And indeed he tells us that in every practice, the process is

essentially the same: as in a waterfall we always experience an equal essence of light, a manifestation of our potentiality, of our clarity; the last day after having explained the different phases of the practice of Narag Tongtrug he again likens the last phase of the practice, the dissolving of the visions and syllables, to a waterfall that we integrate in ourselves being aware of every single drop: a second is sufficient for everything and if we are not carried away by mind constructions and details, looking into ourselves we can discover wisdom. We have to get out of time sequences and ordinary concepts of space. He prompts us to open a communication with a vastness like the sky above and around the limited vision we usually dwell in, to feel its existence and to discover it for ourselves. “It is evident, it is simple, it is clear...” he keeps on telling us: once he has stated it, it becomes such, but nothing was evident before we heard it through his voice. He likens the practice to an equation and his teaching feels just like that: an elegant opening of parenthesis, that are finally and orderly closed one by one. The adventure is finished. It’s up to us now to experience it, again and again. Thank you Yeshe.

Austria

Yeselling



Yantra – Coordination of Energy
Precise instructions on breathing as a preparation for the practice of Yantra Yoga Seminar with Oliver Leick, April 17–18

12 fortunate people took the opportunity and participated in the first course ever held on Yantra – Coordination of energy. Based on the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the authorized instructor of Yantra Yoga in Austria and student of Rinpoche since 1977, Oliver Leick, explained precisely and in detail the benefits of controlled and relaxed breathing. All participants gained direct experience of the different kinds of inhalation and exhalation and some forms of holding

the breath, performed controlled and yet relaxed movements in unification with inhalation and exhalation, and experienced the state of relaxation of their mind. This kind of seminar is a special introduction and preparation for the practice of Yantra Yoga and everybody interested in Yoga, breathing, health, Tibetan wisdom, and Tibetan culture can participate. During the three sessions, in which Oliver explained the Base, Path and Fruit of the practice, people could deepen their understanding, gain new perspectives about the function of the breathing and its influence on the body and mind, and directly experience the fruit of the practice – that state of presence and relaxation.©

France

Santi Maha Sangha in Paris

On Friday February 26 in the afternoon we went to the North station in Paris to welcome Jakob Winkler from Germany who had come to help a small group in the French community have more understanding of the precious teaching from our Master, the Santi Maha Sangha, a teaching full of guidelines and clarity to lead practitioners to understand their own condition in the most precious way. Jakob Winkler is well known practitioner in the Community, an expert Tibetologist and an official teacher for Santi Maha Sangha. As his train was delayed we rushed from the station to the seminar place but arrived exactly on time. Jakob was welcomed by a group of nearly 20 students. Each one was then invited to present and explain his motivations, his different experiences: some being very new in the study of Santi Maha Sangha, and several having more experiences in different traditions. Then Jakob presented ‘The Precious Vase’, giving some advice and keys to go through the book and be able to understand the teaching from Rinpoche. He introduced the general structure of the book and its topics, the different quotations and their sources etc. We were supposed to study chapter 5, according to the program although we never felt that we were doing limited intellectual study since the different points of view always brought us back to our experience and to understanding better our condition as the view of Dzogchen: our real state. On the 27th, in the afternoon, new practitioners interested in receiving the transmission from Rinpoche the following night on the occasion of the anniversary of Garab Dorje came to join the group, so these fortunate people had the



SMS Base with Jakob Winkler in Paris from February 26 to March 1, 2010.

opportunity to listen to a precise, complete explanation from Jakob about the transmission and Guru Yoga. Then Jakob invited all of them to join the seminar the following day; actually, most of them came with pleasure the next morning. This day then was mainly dedicated to the practices: the practices of the *semzins* in the morning that we did together; and in the afternoon Jakob seriously reviewed all the practices for the base level, explaining how to realise them in a profitable way and not to get lost. At the end

he reminded us again about our *samaya*. During the days of his visit there was a strong storm on France – the wind roared under the roofs but we were safe and had a dynamic happy week-end, thanks to our good teacher, the participation of the students and also the kind and efficient collaboration of all. We are looking forward to repeating the experience soon at a new seminar with Jakob in May at Dejamling. Long Life and Homage to the Master ©

Passages

Died: We announce, deeply touched, the passing away of Jean-François Daireaoux, on the morning of March 24, at 6 o’clock in hospital. We will always remember Jean-François in all his ways: as a dedicated, passionate Pawo committed to the teaching of the Dance of the Vajra and contributing in any way possible to our Dzogchen Community, out of his devotion to our Teacher. In France he helped manifesting our Vajra Dance Tent and many other works at Dejamling. We wish him all presence in the light of the Dzogchen Mandala. On behalf of all the Pamo and Pawo in the Dzogchen Community. ©



Photo by Ines Dosen taken on the Mandala in Reillanne.



Final course of Ku-nye at Karmaling with Aldo Oneto in which 10 people received their diplomas.

Germany Passages

Died: Helmut Smrcek passed away on the afternoon of March 30 at his home in Schwaig, Nürnberg in Germany. His wife and his three younger children were with him. Helmut had been a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since the early 90s and was studying the 3rd level of Santi Maha Sangha. He was much loved by his Vajra brothers and sisters who remember his natural amicability towards everybody, his quiet behaviour and his German “Gemuetlichkeit”, warm friendliness. His 60th birthday at the end of February was also the occasion for a farewell party with him, and many practitioners, family, neighbours and old friends came to celebrate with him, knowing without doubt that it would be the last time for him. He had been gradually letting go for more than a year due to a brain tumour: he slowly lost his capacities to coordi-



nate his movements, to walk, to move at all, apparently to think complex things and in the end to speak. Never complaining about his situation, he used every single moment, appreciating also the unpleasant ones as an opportunity in his life to deepen his understanding, applying the teachings on any occasion. Everyday friends came, even from far away, to express their feelings, to >> continued on the following page

Germany continued
>> continued from previous page
say goodbye and to assist and to help the family with jobs around the house.
Although the reason for these gatherings were very sad for everybody, thanks to the generosity of Nane, his wife, Helmut's last months turned out to be the occasion of many people meeting, having dinner together and spending time cheerfully and harmoniously around him.
He never lost his presence completely. We could all feel it every now and then and also non-practitioners felt how special it was to be around him.
He died quietly: he exhaled and didn't inhale anymore. ©

- Upcoming YY courses**
Yantra Yoga Tsandul Course
with Elke Glander
May 28–30 in Munich *
- Yantra Yoga – Introductory Course**
with Saadet Arslan
September 3–5 in Cologne, Dargyaling *
- Repeating and Refreshing the 1st Level**
Yantra Yoga Intensive-Weekend
with Saadet Arslan
October 8–10 in Cologne, Dargyaling *
- Yantra Yoga: 3. & 4. Series**
with Laura Evangelisti
Oct. 29–Nov. 1 in Cologne, Dargyaling *
- Yantra Yoga and Kumbaka course**
with Laura Evangelisti
November 5–7 in Hamburg

- Registration: Christian Pogoda
phone 0208-376 29 10
christian.pogoda@dzogchen.de *
- Summer in Germany**
Jnana-Dakini Practice and Vajra-Dance
with Karin Heinemann
June 4–9 in Höfen
Info and Registration: Evelyne Kleinmayer
Tel.: +49 170-4321170
evelyn.kleinmayer@dzogchen.de *
- Annual general membership meeting**
of the German Dzogchen Community
June 12–13 in Dargyaling Cologne *
- Introduction to the Practice of Contemplation**
with Costantino Albini
July 9–11 in Cologne, Dargyaling
Info and Registration: Jil Self,
Tel. +49 221-4210911
jil.self@dzogchen.de *
- Beginners Course Vajra Dance of the three Vajras (OM AH HUM)**
with Karin Heinemann
July 9–11 in Munich
Info and Registration: Evelyne Kleinmayer
Tel.: +49 170-4321170
evelyn.kleinmayer@dzogchen.de *
- 25 Thigles of Samanthabadra-practice**
with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants
October 8–10 in Höfen
Info and Registration: Christian Pogoda,
Tel. 0208/3762910
christian.pogoda@dzogchen.de *



Participants at the “The Seven Lojong with Focus on the 7th Lojong” course with Jakob Winkler in Dargyaeling/Cologne April 9–11.

- Introduction to Ku Nye, Traditional Tibetan massage**
with Aldo Oneto
October 16–17 in Cologne, Dargyaling
Info and Registration: Jil Self
Tel. +49 221-4210911
jil.self@dzogchen.de *
- Santi Maha Sangha Base**
with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants
November 12–14 in Höfen
Info and Registration: Jil Self
Tel. +49 221-4210911
jil.self@dzogchen.de



Chöd Weekend at Kunsalling
Emanuela Citton
With “An old teaching for an old place,” Khyentse Yeshe Silvano Namkhai started the introductory session to the weekend of teachings given at Kunsalling, a retreat place in Valvestina in the Alto Garda Nature Park in the north of Italy.
An “old teaching”, the Chod, one of the first that Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu transmitted in 1981 at the retreat in Subiaco.
An “old place”, Kunsalling, one of the first sites found and offered by practitioners of the

Community, situated in the mountains, in a wild looking place, where the perception of other beings that populate our dimension is more alive. So over this weekend at the end of February, Yeshe Silvano Namkhai chose to explain this teaching, ancient from the historical point of view, since traces can be found even in the original Bon teaching. He presented it in his own personal style free from the constraints of the traditional descriptive norms and according to the most elevated point of view of Ati Yoga, explaining the four demons as recurring ideas that fill our minds, like the deep convictions in which we believe, that are rooted within us and which govern our behavior. At the same time refer-

ences to the traditional explanation of the Chod were not lacking which as Yeshe Namkhai pointed out, in the practice text that we use contains the principles of all the paths, from Sutra to Ati. At the end of his precious instructions, Yeshe Namkhai clarified with examples the way in which karmic debts arise in daily life and what we can do to pay them using awareness.
On Sunday evening, with a great feeling of thankfulness, the group of practitioners disbanded in many different directions. Our gratitude to the Masters, but also to the practitioners of Brescia for having given us this opportunity and for their capacity to make things comfortable and cozy in a tough place.



Passages
Born: David Ruiz Loridan, Sarah Theiss and Tara Theiss are happy to announce the birth of their son and brother, Kiran Dawa on February 22.

Greece
New Gakyil of the Hellenic Dzogchen Community
Yellow Gakyil Ram Paridis – dorje024@yahoo.de
Red Gakyil Liakos Evangelopoulos – liakosaaa@in.gr
Blue Gakyil Panagiotis Stambolis – panstambolis@yahoo.com



Naples
Namdeling Namkha Course
Irene Forza, Red Gakyil
The new lunar cycle arrived with the waxing moon! We were waiting for this so that we could start making a Namkha for Luca who wasn't able to take part in the course that Aurora and I had followed at Namdeling at the end of last month.
On April 26 Liane Gräf came to Naples and guided a small group of practitioners in making – some people for themselves, some people for others – a Namkha. The work began with some calculations, proportions and cutting the wooden rods. You start from the point where the two main rods meet which represents the Life element and is the centre from which the elements of the Body, the Fortune and the Capacity develop. The Namkha is made using five colours of thread that represent the energy of the five elements. The threads are tied together and harmonized and represent the continuity of the energy of the different elements.
Liane guided us in the practical part with patience and determination – a bit ‘German’ style – introducing the theoretical part on Friday and then integrating it into the weekend course with further explanations as we gradually went ahead. ©

We had a great weekend spent with charts, little wood saws and balls of thread, some of it spent sitting in the sun in the yard of the Ling, or on the cushions on the Mandala concentrating in order to do our best to construct our Namkhas perfectly and without mistakes according to Liane's instructions. She has been doing these types of courses for years following the indications of our Master. The course concluded with an authentication during the Ganapuja on the full moon of March 30 with the Master in webcast.
The beautiful sunny days in Naples gave us an opportunity to enjoy the city and its different pizzas and cream puffs. ©



Passages
On April 13 Catia Ciccone and Paolo Ferraro adopted little Vinh, a Vietnamese boy born on February 27, 2009 who fills each day with joy and happiness for them.

UK
Kunselling Dzogchen Community
Program of events 2010–11
Khyentse Yeshi
Silvano Namkhai
‘Dzogchen Today’
Public Talk
May 15, London, 5.30–7.30 pm
Soas, Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre,
London, WC1
to book: www.dzogchencommunity.org

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teachings
May 28–June 1, London
at Camden Centre, Euston Road,
London, WC1
to book: www.dzogchencommunity.org

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Book Presentation:
‘Light of Kailash’
June 2 6–8 pm, London
at SOAS, Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre,
London, WC1
to book: www.dzogchencommunity.org

Personal Retreat Time
June 4–17, Kunselling
to book, please contact Nick Segust,
tel: 029 2065 2866,
kunsellingbookings@yahoo.co.uk

Yantra Yoga for beginners
with John Renshaw
June 12–13, London
Kailash Centre, 7 Newport Street, NW8
to book, please contact John Renshaw
tel: 07939 090412,
john@yogamed.orangehome.co.uk

Garab Dorje and contemplation practice
with Des Barry
June 18–20, Kunselling
to book, please contact Mike Beddard
tel: 078 1529 9976, mike.beddard@dzogchencommunity.org

Namkha making weekend
with Sally Field
June 26–27, Kunselling
to book, please contact Mike Beddard
tel: 078 1529 9976, mike.beddard@dzogchencommunity.org

Dance of the Three Vajra
with Cindy Faulkner
July 2–4, London
at the Buddhist Arts Centre, Bullards
Place, London E2 OPT
to book, please contact Rowan Wylie
tel: 01223 473 528,
rowanwylie@hotmail.com

Yantra Yoga for Beginners
with John Renshaw
July 3–4, London
Kailash Centre, 7 Newport Street, NW8
to book, please contact John Renshaw
tel: 07939 090412,
john@yogamed.orangehome.co.uk

Karma Yoga with Shitro practice
July 17–23, Kunselling
to book, please contact Mike Beddard
tel: 078 1529 9976, mike.beddard@dzogchencommunity.org

Retreat of the Dance of Song of the Vajra
July 24–31, Kunselling
to book, please contact rowan wylie
tel: 01223 473 528,
rowanwylie@hotmail.com

Bank holiday – Kunselling dance practice weekend
27th–30th august
(open to all dancers)
to book, please contact Rowan Wylie
tel: 01223 473 528,
rowanwylie@hotmail.com

Benefit for Troru Monastary
Writing workshop with Des Barry
September 11–12, London
at Aja, 7 Eton Avenue, London NW3
to book, please contact Helen Williams
tel: 02920 378566,
trongola@hotmail.com

AGM
September 18, London
Vajra Dance 2–4 pm, AGM 4–6 pm
at St Saviours Church Hall, Eton Road,
London, NW3

Karma Yoga with Guru Yoga practice
September 20–26, Kunselling
to book, please contact Mike Beddard
tel: 078 1529 9976, mike.beddard@dzogchencommunity.org

Khyentse Yeshi
Silvano Namkhai
Dzogchen Teachings
October 2–3, London
At Hampstead Town Hall, Haverstock
Hill, London, NW3
to book: www.dzogchencommunity.org

Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
with Cindy Faulkner
October 22–24, London
at the Buddhist Arts Centre, Bullards
Place, London, E2 OPT
to book, please contact Rowan Wylie
tel: 01223 473 528,
rowanwylie@hotmail.com

Long Life Practice of Mandarava
with Judy Allan
November 13–21, Kunselling
to book, please contact Mike Beddard
tel: 078 1529 9976, mike.beddard@dzogchencommunity.org

Tara practice to celebrate Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s birthday
with Julia Lawless
December 4–5, London
to book, please contact Mike Beddard
tel: 078 1529 9976, mike.beddard@dzogchencommunity.org

Open period (including families) for
Christmas and new year celebrations
December 24–January 2, Kunselling
to book, please contact Nick Segust
tel: 02920 652 866,
kunsellingbookings@yahoo.co.uk
nuitable for beginners & members of the
public

Personal retreat time
January 3–23, Kunselling
to book, please contact Nick Segust
tel: 02920 652 866,
kunsellingbookings@yahoo.co.uk

Chod practice combined with Rushen
with Judy Allan
February 25–March 3, Kunselling
to book, please contact Judy Allan
tel: 020 586 7372,
allanjudith@googlemail.com

Losar weekend celebration of the Tibetan new year
including Sang practice and
authentication of prayer flags
March 4–6, Kunselling
to book, please contact Mike Beddard
tel: 078 1529 9976, mike.beddard@dzogchencommunity.org

Find out all the latest news about activities
across the UK at:
www.dzogchencommunity.org

MerigarEast



Merigar East

Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen

23 August 907005

Constanta

Romania

phone: 0040 746 26 08 61

office@dzogchen.ro

www.dzogchen.ro

One Gar, One Love
Let’s come together and do it all right!!!

Dear Everyone Everywhere,
We are more than happy to cordially invite you for the retreat with our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, “The Base, the Path and the Fruit of Ati Dzogchen” – the terma of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje which will take place from 9th to 16th of July 2010.

We would be very happy to cooperate with all of you who are eager to take part in preparations as well as organization of this special and unique event at our new developing Gar. There is still a chance for you to become a team leader – a person who is responsible for organizing his or her team, starting from long distance preparation and acting directly on the spot. Karmayogis are more than welcome. We would appreciate your presence at the July retreat as well. Any form of participation will be very valuable for us – all according to your capacities and possibilities. The ME Gakyil are your Vajra sisters and brothers who really want to cooperate with you in order to create and develop the Gar, where everyone feels at home. Let’s come together and do it all right. Let’s come together to feel all right.

Below we present the actual prices for the priceless retreat with our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:
Non-members – 220 euro
Ordinary members – 175 euro
Sustaining members (Merigar) – 45 euro

Sustaining members (non Merigar) – 130 euro
Reduced members – 110 euro
Pensioners and students that are non-members of DC – 110 euro
Per day – 30 euro with usual discounts for members

This year we have got a special offer for frequent retreat goers. If you take part in two retreats – one of the Russian retreats (in Moscow or Crimea) and the Merigar East retreat you are offered a package price:
Non-members – 270 euro
Ordinary members – 220 euro

Sustaining members
(non Merigar) – 150 euro
Reduced members – 130 euro
If you want us to assist you with anything contact the ME Office:
office@dzogchen.ro
We need your cooperation in order to plan the organisation of our retreat infrastructure well. Merigar East is still a “baby” Gar therefore our facilities are still quite limited. When we know how many of you are coming it will make it easier for us to plan it well and more comfortably for you. Please, pre-registation will really help us to ...get together and do it all right...
In order to make your registration for the retreat easier, please follow the links:
in English www.dzogchen.cz/retreat/
in Romanian www.dzogchen.cz/retreat/index/ro
in Russian www.dzogchen.cz/retreat/index/ru
Your Gakyil of Merigar East ©

New Gakyil and Gekö

Time is passing by quickly and in July of 2010 a new Gakyil for Merigar East has to be elected again. The present Gakyil has established the legal, human and material base of the Gar, therefore the duty of the next Gakyil will be to continue this process.

The main tasks of the next Gakyil would be as follows:
· to continue construction works on the land (such as Gonpa, stupas, Vajra Dance mandalas) according to the vision of Yeshi Namkhai;
· to run the local office and supervise the membership tasks;
· to plan and organize events promoting the aims of the International Dzogchen Community in Romania and Bulgaria;
· to keep close contact and collaborate with the Gakyil of Merigar West.

It is a big job and consequently great devotion and sacrifice are required. The conditions are special, but the chances are as well.

Those members of the International Dzogchen Community who meet the criteria listed below are kindly invited to consider the possibility of voluntary work for the sake of our Precious Master. The 9 candidates (3 for each colour) for the position of new Gakyil members, should meet the following general criteria:

· have been a member of DC for minimum of 3 years with an up-to-date (if it is possible Merigar East) membership;

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- be willing and able to offer their spare-time for the Community and to bear hardships such as long distance travel on a regular basis;
 - be present in Merigar East for the Gakyil meetings at least once a month and during the summer retreats;
 - be able to work either individually or in a team;
 - have internet access and PC operating skills;
 - speak, read and write English.

In the meanwhile the position of Gekö has to be filled as well.

Due to the specific circumstances of the location (Merigar East is situated in the southern part of Rumania, at the Black Sea shore, where there is no other significant Community activity yet) and based on the past years experience it would be practical if the Gekö activities could be covered by a couple. In addition, since the Gakyil members do not live permanently on the spot, the Gekö might fill in at the same time the position of a Gakyil member as well, in order to facilitate the process of decisions and administration.

All the positions above are to be filled at the beginning of August 2010.

We are looking forward for your applications and kindly invite those who are interested to send them to us.
With warm greetings,
Gakyil of Merigar East
office@dzogchen.ro

Vajra Dance 1st Level Teacher's Training

July 17–22, 2010

As you know, it is very important for the continuation of the Teaching that more and more local instructors appear in the Dzogchen Community. For this purpose Merigar East is organizing a Vajra Dance 1st Level Teacher's Training that will take place in the period July 17–22, 2010.

Practitioners who know well the Pawo and Pamo parts of the two dances 'The Dance of the Three Vajras' and the 'Six Spaces of Samantabhadra' and who are thinking of becoming an instructor are very welcome. It is rare opportunity to participate in such a training, so don't miss it.

Participation fee is 250 euro, for instructors and people who are repeating the training the fee is 200 euro.
To register please contact:
office@dzogchen.ro

Merigar East SMS 1st Level Examinations

17–22 of July 2010 (more precise dates will be announced later).

Enrollment Procedure for SMS Examinations
To register for a Santi Maha Sangha exam, you must be a member of the Dzogchen Community. For the 1st level, your membership fee should have been paid continuously since the year of the Base examination.

Instructions for the Candidate
Three months before the examination date (in this case till July 10), the candidate must complete the official form,



The construction of the Gonpa at Merigar East started on May 3.

Photo: G. Ladra

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 confirmation that his/her admission request has been approved by the examiners.

The Karma Yoga service to the Community is obligatory for entrance to all SMS examinations and should always be arranged through the Gakyils, Shang Shung Institute/Edizioni and A.S.I.A.

The completed form should be sent by the candidate to his/her local Gakyil. The necessary form can be downloaded

from the webpage: www.dzogchen.it/dzogchen/teachings/santi-maha-sangha
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 co-ordinator of the Gar. The

form completed in this way should be sent to the SMS Co-ordinating 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
With warm wishes from Merigar East

Czech Republic

Upcoming retreats and courses
Course of Om A Hum Vajra Dance
(regular and irregular)
with Margit Martinu
June 5–8, Dobrichovice

SMS Base retreat

with Jim Valby
September 29–October 5, Phendeling

Contact: blue@dzogchen.cz
Karmayoga in Phendeling:
red@dzogchen.cz



The Ling.



Mandarava Retreat in Phendeling, Czech Republic

During the last weekend in March, a Mandarava retreat with 22 participants was organized at Phendeling. This was another important step forward in the project of developing the Czech Ling. After a lot of reconstruction it is now possible to use the downstairs Gonpa again (capacity for 40 people) where retreats can be organized and which also serves as a base for karma yogis.

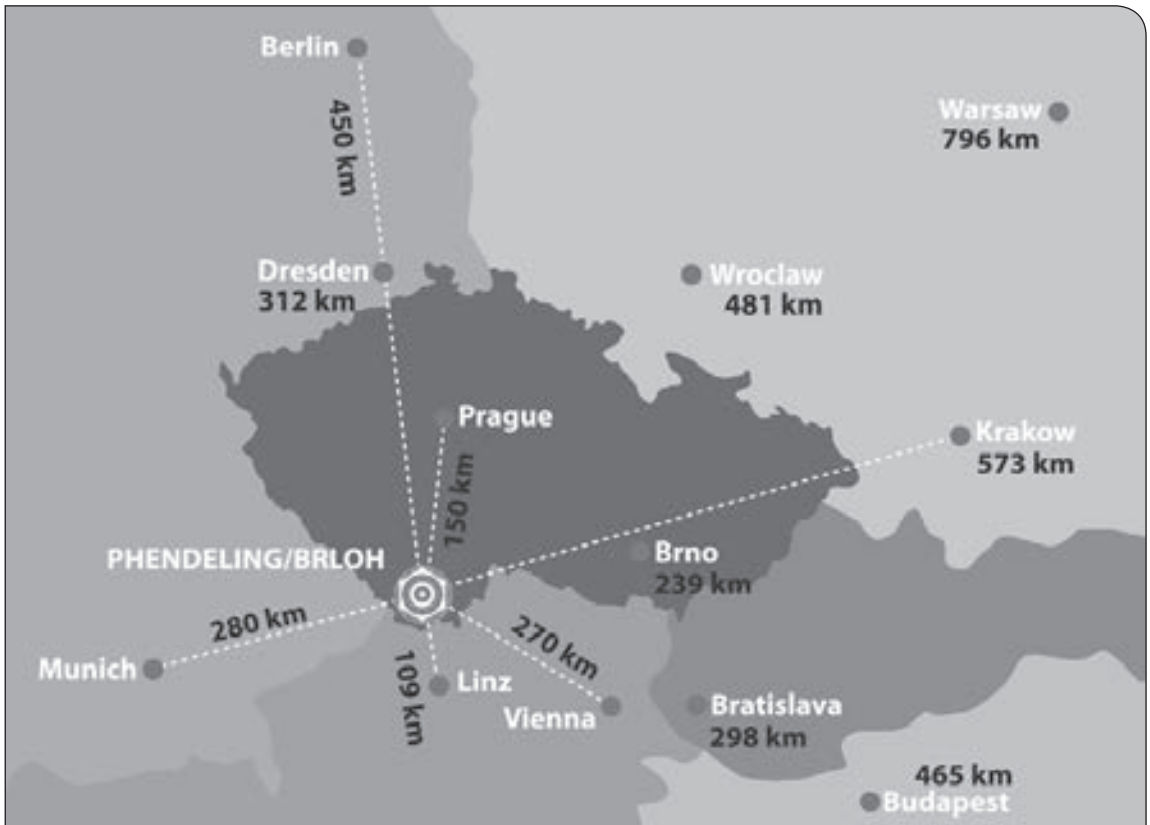
More info www.phendeling.cz/en

Looking forward to welcome you at our Ling
Czech Community



Yantra Yoga Level 1 Supervision of Fijalka Yurzikova and Jiri Mravec with Laura Evangelisti in Prague February 16–21.

Photo: B. Tomasova



Map position of Phendeling.

Romania

Body Mind Spirit Festival in Bucharest

by Greg Ladra

Spreading information and letting people know that we are here is one of the most important tasks of the Gakyil of Merigar East, the second European Gar, situated in Romania, where besides the geko couple and “long travellers” as the Gakyil is called, there are only a few practitioners.

Nevertheless, it certainly doesn’t mean that people are not interested in our activities! The evidence of this was plenty of visitors at the “Invatatura Dzogchen” stand (in Romanian – Dzogchen Teaching) during the Body Mind Spirit Festival in Bucharest this spring at the end of March. The aim of this event was to promote a wide range of activities connected with healthy living, food and certainly with spiritual aspects of our existence (meditation, yoga and relaxation techniques).

The colourful stand of the Dzogchen Community attracted people who wanted to know where they could learn how to work with their 3 existences. Many of them were surprised to learn that Merigar East is in Romania, that our Precious Master has been coming here every year for the last 3 years and will come this year as well!

People had the possibility to buy some books (The Crystal and the Way of Light, Dream Yoga) or DVDs of “General introduction to Dzogchen”, and could also watch a Vajra Dance presentation by DVD on the screen. Over 60 people took a part in the Yantra Yoga presentation prepared by authorized instructor Zsolt Somogyvri from Hungary. Many of them took our retreat flyers home.

For all questions, cheerful staff, Bea, Juliana, Mira and Greg, were always on the spot, ready to give information.

All in all, we turned this presentation for “deepening interest in” into “connecting with”!

The Merigar East retreat is coming soon!



Juliana, Bea, Mira, Greg on the Dzogchen Community stand. Photo: G. Ladra

Oradea, Romania

Six Spaces of Samantabhadra Vajra Dance

By Beatrix Csete

In the period February 19–21, the Gakyil of Merigar East organised the first Vajra Dance Course for beginners in Oradea, Romania. The course on the Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra was guided by the instructor Rita Renzi from Italy.

For the first two days the venue for the course was a beautiful catholic chapel in a cultural centre called Posticum, while the last day of the course was held at the Cultural Palace of Trade Unions in Oradea. Despite the wide range of the course participants – local community members, newcomers from other

towns of Romania and even from Hungary – due to the devoted work of our instructor, we were all able to perform this beautiful dance at the end of the course. Ever since then, thanks to the constant help of the Merigar East Gakyil, a small group of six practitioners from Oradea have managed to rent a place and to practice this dance weekly. We are very happy about this priceless opportunity. We express our gratitude towards our precious Master, our wonderful instructor and the ME Gakyil for their support. May our practice be fortunate for all sentient beings.



Photo: A. Paizs

Russian Speaking Countries



The map depicting the Russian-speaking Lings in Europe. Unfortunately we couldn’t fit all the Russian-speaking Lings on the map (the distance from Tashiling in Kiev to Kunsanling in Vladivostok is over 7200 km). The Asia part will be covered in the next issues of The Mirror.

Upcoming courses:
Basics of Tibetan Medicine and Ku Nye Massage
With Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo
June 1–10, 2010, Moscow
Pre-registration is required, the dates are approximate, for registration and information contact moscow.ling@gmail.com

Six Spaces of Samantabhadra Vajra Dance, Open Supervision
The course is led by Anna Neyman under kind supervision of the international Vajra Dance instructor Adriana Dal Borgo
May 29 to June 1, St. Petersburg
You don’t need transmission to take part in this event, everybody is welcome!
Address: Drugoi Mir Center, Bumazhnaya str. 17, (Narvskaya metro station), St. Petersburg.
Schedule: On weekend (May 29) 15.30–18.00, 19.30–21.30; (May 30) 16.00–18.00, 19.30–21.30; on weekdays (May 31, June 1) 19.00–21.30
Price: Non-members R 3000; Ordinary members R 2500; Sustaining and reduced members R 1500
Register at:
Irina Ivanova irinafinn7@gmail.com
Elena Proshina ozerchenma@gmail.com

Russian Speaking Countries continued

Russian-speaking countries gakjil is happy to announce the upcoming retreats in Russia and Ukraine

Khyentse Yeshi Silvano Namkhai
teaching Chod

May 28–30 in Kunsangar South, Crimea, Ukraine

Yantra Yoga Teacher’s Training

June 22–28 in Kunsangar South, Crimea, Ukraine

Contact emails are:

margarita.supe@gmail.com for Moscow

registratziya.retrit@gmail.com for Petersburg

kunsangar.assistance for Crimea

More details you can get on <http://en.2010.dzogchencommunity.ru/>

This website would be dedicated to the three retreats with Rinpoche and you will find all info on travel, lodging and accomodation and all the other details.

Welcome! RSCG

Breaking Through the Dust Cloud: Khyentse Yeshi Silvano Namkhai Teaching in Ukraine

Igor Berkhin

When a volcano erupted in Iceland, our main concern was if Yeshi could fly out of France. It looked like an obstacle for the Teaching coming from where no one would have expected. But according to the Teaching, problems are just visions of problems, so when European air companies discovered that the cloud was not a problem, it became clear that the panic about flying was just vision but nothing concrete. We could just relax and let things happen. So the very first flight allowed from Charles de Gaulle to Kiev was exactly the flight we were waiting for.

Yeshi taught for two days in Kiev. First he visited the Gonpa of Tashiling and met the Kiev Community. About one hundred and fifty people gathered in the evening for the public talk and about eighty attended the two sessions the next day on Mahamudra. Yeshi went step by step first according to the traditional approach of the Kagyu lineage, with the Four Yogas and then connected it not only with the Four Contemplations of Dzogchen Semde, but

also with the classic twelve links of interdependence, so it became very clear that the way we enter samsara is exactly the way we liberate; provided that we remain in the knowledge of our real condition, of course.

Then we arrived in Donetsk. Spring finally came after a long time of cold; the city was all in green with a lot of space everywhere. We had our retreat in the conference hall of a modern hotel where Yeshi was also staying, next to the brand new football arena, which already became one of the most visited places in the city. One day we went to see this wonder of high-tech engineering, joking how nice it would be to have a retreat in such a place that looks like a giant UFO glowing with blue light at night.

The morning after his arrival, Yeshi started by visiting the Gonpa of Phuntsokling (a Place of Perfect Conditions) where we planned an informal meeting with the Donetsk Community, tea and cakes, but unexpectedly Yeshi gave a teaching for almost two hours. Then in the afternoon

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:

Dzogchen: The Statements of Seven Main Points

(Tib. zhal-chems gzer-bu bdun-pa) of Shri Sengha. Open webcast

June 11–16 in Moscow

Dzogchen: The Statements of the Four States of Relaxation

(Tib. bzhag-thabs bzhi) of Janasutra. Open webcast

June 18–20 in Saint Petersburg

**Ati Yoga teaching of Vimalamitra:
The Essential Light of Dharmata**

(Tib. sems-nyid bsdus-pa’l sgron-ma) of Janasutra. Open webcast

June 28–July 4 in Kunsangar South, Crimea, Ukraine



Khyentse Yeshi Silvano Namkhai in Kiev.

Photo: E. Zatolokina

there was a public talk for almost two hundred people. Yeshi gave a general introduction to what the mind is and then answered some questions from the audience.

In the following three days we had four sessions of retreat where about one hundred forty people were present, not only from Donetsk and neighboring cities but also from quite remote regions of Ukraine and Russia. First he taught dream yoga and natural light according to a famous book by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and then commented on Do-la Ser-zhun, a famous text by Manjushrimitra translated and

with commentary by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as Primordial Experience. It was surprising that even though the text was extremely complicated, during every session the whole audience listened for two hours without moving, reaching in the end a state similar to rushen when the mind is no longer able to dualistically grasp the meaning and has nothing to do but rest in its natural presence and clarity. By the end of each session the demon of intellectual mind would be completely satisfied with this exquisite offering, eventually giving space for the primordial experience to manifest.

Complete Breathing and 8 Movements of Yantra Yoga open course with the international instructor Fabio Andrico

June 4–8, St. Petersburg

This unique course is aimed at a broad spectrum of people including those who can’t do Yantra Yoga in full measure due to lack of physical training or other conditions, but who are interested in complete breathing which serves as the base for kumbhaka. This unique course is also useful for those who wish to harmonize their energy, improve health or discover a calm, relaxed and conscious state of mind which is the base for deeper self-understanding.

You don’t need transmission for participating in this event, everybody regardless of age and level of physical training is welcome!

Address: Drugoi Mir Center, Bumazhnaya str, 17, (Narvskaya metro station), St. Petersburg

Schedule: On weekdays (June 4, 7, 8)

19.00–21.30; on weekend (June 5, 6)

10.00–12.30, 15.00–17.00

Price: Non-members R 3000; Ordinary members R 2500; Sustaining and Reduced member R 1500

Register at:

Marina Kuznetsova sirel@yandex.ru

Elena Proshina ozerchenma@gmail.com

The retreat was over but not the Teaching. Many people left for their homes happy and inspired. Then in the evening we returned to the Gonpa where everything started and after the Ganapuja with fifty people (now we know precisely how many can fit into the Gonpa) Yeshi answered questions. And since all the questions related to practical experiences, as a final bonus we received extremely precise and deep instructions on how to work with presence, dreams, prana, and visions.

During the whole retreat we never had a single problem with people, organization, or weather. Everything manifested perfectly. We came to the airport to say farewell to Yeshi who was leaving to go back home for just a couple of days to see his family before leaving on another journey. The sky over Europe was clear and radiant blue. ©

Moxibustion in Kunpenling, Moscow with Elio Guarisco

March 2-10, 2010

Song Park

From March 2nd through March 11th Tibetan Moxibustion course was held in Kunpenling–Dzogchen Community Center in Moscow, Russia. There were forty-two participants from different parts of Russia. This was very special and precious opportunity for us, as we had the possibility to study a comprehensive course of Tibetan Moxibustion along with excerpts of the terma teaching of Changchub Dorje in regards to moxibustion.

Elio Guarisco very gracefully introduced us to the points of moxibustion, along with the gen-

eral theory of Tibetan Medicine and Medical astrology. He had also shared with us many stories and case studies that he had experienced through his many years of study and assistance in medical practice of Tibetan doctors. Elio also shared with us his deep knowledge in various points of Tibetan medicine, as well as different recipes and recommendations that were suitable to studied materials.

In nine days we succeeded in learning about the locations of five hundred moxibustion points of the trunk, head and extremi-

ties and their applications and indications. Beside this study, Elio taught us how to do cupping and Mongolian Horne compresses. Every day was filled with both theory and practice, accompanied with a lot of smoke from moxa cones. Everybody got to learn how to hand-roll moxa

cones and how to apply them on different points in accordance with personal indications of participants.

On the last day Elio kindly agreed to demonstrate the golden needle technique, and two of participants had an exclusive opportunity to experience directly this

legendary technique. All of us felt very blessed with this wonderful teaching of our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who like the kindest parent gives us – his students – not only the highest teachings for total realization, but also such practical and useful knowledge for everyday needs. ©



Ukraine

Kunsangar South Starts Building Gonpa!

Gakyil of Russian Speaking Countries

We are glad to tell you that we have started building the gonpa of Kunsangar South. During recent years we had this project of buying some land in Crimea. We had several possible locations, but somehow because of various reasons we couldn't buy any until last December, when we found and bought a piece of land near Sevastopol. It was important to find some land so that we would be able to have a retreat with Rinpoche in June–July 2010 at the new Gar.

The Dzogchen communities of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Latvia cover a large territory and in total have around 1500 members. A lot of retreats are organized here, but always renting hotels and halls is not easy, which is why it was very important for us to have a Gar, so that we had grounds and conditions for growth and for maintaining the teachings.

This Gar is named Kunsangar South, which implies that there are going to be other Kunsangars – North or maybe also East... in 2008 Rinpoche told us that we should have at least two Gars for such a big territory as we have.

So, when we bought the land we didn't have any understanding about how it should be developed. But later, with the help of Yeshe Namkhai we were able to clarify that if we wanted to have our home, we must start building it, so that by the time Chögyal Namkhai Norbu comes to us, we would already have some material foundation.

As a base we took the original project of the Merigar East gonpa by Giovanni Boni and Romanian architects. So this would be a 200 sq.m. octagonal building with local sandstone walls, though in the future we will be able to change the walls into glass ones (if we have



The model of the future gonpa of Kunsangar South (by Tanya Maksimenkova).

possibility to provide the appropriate heating).

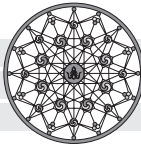

By the time of the retreat in June we expect to have built the concrete foundation and columns, which will be used to support a big tent resembling the shape of the future roof of the gonpa. Later when the roof is finished, we will still be able to use this tent around the gonpa for big retreats in summer. So this is our primary task. Then after the retreat we are going to proceed with the roof and maybe start building the office-gecko's house-canteen and Rinpoche's house.

Otherwise you can rent a cottage in the village of Orlinoe (10 km, bus every half hour). If you want to stay at the seaside, then Laspi is the magic word – there are hotels and camping sites at the sea, but one might need a car to get to the Gar. And there is always the possibility to camp near the Gar – we have the agreement with the forest patrol. EU, USA and many other citizens don't need visas to come to Ukraine, you can fly cheaply from many cities in Europe via Kiev by wizzair.com, so you are welcome to come.

Also June 22–28 we are having the Yantra Yoga Teacher's Training with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti for about 30 participants who may later become teachers. So you see, the schedule is quite intense.

Certainly this is only the beginning. A little has been done and a lot more needs to be done. So any kind help – know-how, karma-yoga, financial – is surely welcome. We don't have a gecko yet, so if by chance you can speak at least basic Russian or Ukrainian and can dedicate your time to this work-welcome!

Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



Namgyalgar Dzogchen Community in Australia

PO Box 214 Central Tilba NSW 2546 Phone/Fax: 61 02 4473 7668

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

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Australia & Asia Pacific Tour

New Zealand
Weekend Teaching: January 28–30
For further Information go to NZ Dzogchen Community Website: www.dzogchen.org.nz

Australia
Namgyalgar Retreat: February 4–8
Caloundra Retreat: February 21–25
Melbourne Teaching: March 11–13
Namgyalgar Retreat: March 18–23
For further Information go to Namgyalgar Website: www.dzogchen.org.au

Asia
Singapore Retreat: March 31–April 4
Taipei Teaching Retreat: April 8–11
Tokyo Teaching Retreat: April 15–19

Upcoming Programs Namgyalgar 2010
Santi Maha Sangha Program with Elise Stutchbury, authorized SMS Base teacher
Further information about the program of SMS teaching on the Base and a Level One Study group is available from contact the Namgyalgar: secretary@dzogchen.org.au

Karma Yoga Weekend
June 12–14
Traditionally the long weekend in June is dedicated to Karma Yoga so that Vajra Sangha can come together and share in the care and maintenance of Namgyalgar.
Help is needed with weeding, collecting stick litter, cleaning, repairs, road up-keep, preparing meals, and so on. There will also be time to do some collective practice, catch up with Vajra brothers and sisters and generally enjoy the Gar.
As Saturday is New Moon there will be a Ganapuja in the evening. It is also

the Anniversary of Nyagla Padma Dundul so a time for doing the practices of U.P.E. and Guru Yoga of the White A.
For information contact the Namgyalgar secretary: secretary@dzogchen.org.au

The Essence of Practice: Taking Refuge & Developing Buddha Mind
A Weekend Retreat with Elise Stutchbury in Sydney May 15/16, 2010
Registrations: sydneyred@dzogchen.org.au

Course in the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
with Cosimo Dimaggio in Brisbane, Qld.
May 29/30, 2010
Inquiries: Joanna Giblin
Tel: 07.37160340-0409 809 196
joanna.giblin@bigpond.com

New Gaykil

Red: Dean Wickenden; Anna Marsich
Yellow: Kattia Wong
Supported by Richard Clarke

Blue: Slavica Voglar;
Annette Facer: International contact;
Gabrielle Kearney



Chöd Retreat at Namgyalgar April 10

The Chöd retreat held at Namgyalgar over the Easter holiday period was attended by around 40 people who enjoyed a stirring and powerful experience.

The retreat was led by SMS Base teacher, Angie Gilbert, who gave clear and concise instructions on each nuance of the Chöd verses, the detail taking nothing away from the huge energy of this practice. Each teaching session included an explanation about the practice as well as its application, enabling retreatants to familiarise themselves well with the Chöd, which was practised several times over the 5 days of the retreat.

Angie also demonstrated how to use the Chöd drum and vajra bell which many practitioners used during the practice, along with a thigh bone trum-

pet, actively utilising sound and energy as part of the method for overcoming dualism and detaching from the demon of the ego.

Throughout the duration of the retreat, those seeking further clarifications about aspects of the Chöd practice were most grateful for Angie's patient and thorough answers to their questions.

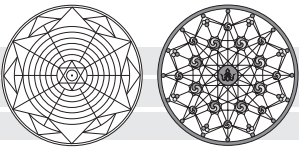
During the retreat the Annual General Meeting of the Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar was held which was followed by a large Ganapuja attended by those at the retreat as well as local practitioners.

Overall it was a most beneficial retreat enjoyed by all who attended including a number of new people. Many thanks to Angie for her great effort and guidance, and to all who helped facilitate the organisation and running of the retreat, including Rabgyi, Lisa, Viki, Catherine, Barbara and Chris. ©



Yantra Yoga course at Wellpark Campus in Auckland, New Zealand from April 2–5, 2010 with Emily Coleing.

TsegyalgarEast

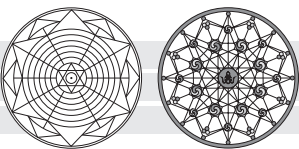


Yantra Yoga Advanced and Teacher Training at Tsegyalgar East with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico, April 1–10, 2010. Photo: A. Wai



30 Words of Advice of Longchenpa from April 16–17, 2010 with Elio Guarisco in Toronto, Canada.

TsegyalgarWest



Tsegyalgar West
Baja California Sur, Mexico
tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com
<http://tsegyalgarwest.org>

News

Things have been blooming in the West. The Dream Yoga/External Rushen Practice retreat with Michael Katz at the Gar in April was warm, friendly and heavy on practice. (See photo)

This is always one of our most popular and well-attended retreats – year after year. As we look forward to summer, our focus shifts to personal retreats (for those who can handle the heat). Please contact us to book yours. We have the most wonderful staff at the Gar right now: Tania, Igor, and the “little Buddha” Max from Russia, Vanessa from Mexico who lived for many years in Japanese monasteries, and Inbal – a joyous lady from Israel (twestoffice@gmail.com). Many hours of karma yoga are being put into developing the veg-

etable garden so that we can provide a significant portion of our own food. The casitas are very close to being finished, with electricity being installed as we speak.

One of the most wonderful developments at Tsegyalgar West is the kind collaboration of our friends from Pelzom Ling in Mexico City (pelzomling@hotmail.com) who have offered to spearhead an upgrade to our kitchen facilities. If you would like to donate to this very important project, just contact our new Secretary Marina de Paula (tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com) and specify exactly what you would like your gift to go toward – refrigerator, solar panels, etc.

The many Lings and groups associated with Tsegyalgar West are busy with activity. Please contact them or see their websites to see what’s happening right now!

Dondrub Ling (www.dzogchencommunitywest.org), Seattle (www.dzogchenseattle.org), Portland (www.oregondzogchen.com), San Diego (www.tsegyalgarwest.org/San_Diego).

You can access them all through tsegyalgar.org

Joel Crisp, Blue Gakyil

.....

Dondrubling, Berkeley
Yantra Yoga
with Paula Barry
Open course for Beginners
June 11–13

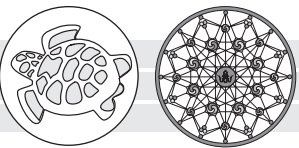
*

Intermediate course for those with transmission
1st and 2nd group with pranayamas
June 18–20
Contact:
aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org
or logan.mikyo@gmail.com



Dream Yoga and External Rushen Retreat with Michael Katz in Baja March 30–April 3, 2010.

TashigarNorte



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

Great News

The great news from Tashigar North is that the local authorities accepted the new status of the land. After three years of very hard work, Maria Angelica Gomez succeeded in arranging the new conditions of Tashigar North, which will allow much more flexibility to develop as a proper Gar.

Three years ago Rinpoche held a meeting at his house in Tashigar North and explained that he wished to see that the three aspects that make up the whole project (the village, the Gar, and the farm) be unified and that the activities of the Gar legalized. As the land at Tashigar is located in an agricultural valley, the initial project was developed under the umbrella of a farming company (Agricola Tashigar) activity, which consisted mainly in growing aloe vera and producing aloe vera gel.

But the main activity of the Gar, centered on the retreats of Rinpoche, was not fully recognized by the authorities



and as a result the Gar felt pressured to maintain the aloe. In order to resolve this issue, Rinpoche asked Maria Angelica to meet with the local authorities to see what could be done to make our Gar less dependent upon the agricul-

tural umbrella and open the possibilities for using the land in other ways. Ultimately, she succeeded and the Gakyil of Tashigar North celebrated her success here recently with French Champagne, caviar, and raw smoked salmon [see

photo]. They also presented her with a thank of Goma Devi and a one-year meritorious membership.

Under the rules governing the new project, our activities as retreat center for the teachings of Rinpoche is recognized. Furthermore, the government acknowledges the positive effect that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has had upon Isla Margarita in attracting many people from around the world and this influx of tourists reaps monetary benefits to a socially and economically depressed part of the island. Also, in the new project, the village and the Gar will be able to double the number of people staying here. In fact, eight new lots have been added to the project, along with the possibility for a large dormitory, therapy center, a home for the aged, retreat cabins, the universal mandala and three churatas.

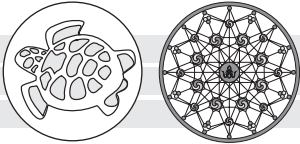
Although it is still required that we continue with some agricultural activities, the scale is much smaller and we will be able to include existing fruit trees and other plants already planted. The future projects at TN will include the possibility

of starting small vegetable gardens and an increase in the number of fruit trees. The Gar will be looking for people interested in spending at least one year here to develop these small scale-farming projects that could produce fruits and vegetables such as watermelon and tomatoes for the Community and the surrounding villages. People responsible for this could probably make a living this way; and it is likely the Gar could make an initial loan to cover the start up costs. Other options include starting a nursery and labeling the existing botanical plants that are already established throughout the Gar.

Everyone is very pleased with this project and the future activities that it will provide.

Tashigar North Gakyil

Tashigar Norte



Tashigar North /Finca Tashigar

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Winter on the Gar

Lauri Denyer

The sea is calm and blue and the sky is too.
The palm trees toss and the birds twitter on in Tashigar North. Rinpoche is not here, but he will come back soon.
It is beautiful. Many practitioners have come, from all over the world, and are attending webcasts, doing practices, formal and informal, organizing courses, doing karma yoga, and going to the beach. It's a perfect place in so many ways. Maybe it's the best place in

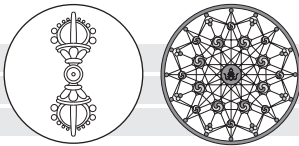
the world for the practice of the Vajra Dance. The mandala in the Gonpa is smooth and almost liquid, the colors softening with each year and the imprint of feet marking the rounds of the dance step by step. Practice continues under the canopy of the decorated Gonpa, the delicate bracts of the bougainvillea blowing across the mandala, in the same space where so many marvelous teachings have been given for the first time.
Early in the morning, even before it is light, the gardeners are watering the plants, and taking care of the grounds.
There is good will between people, maybe because impermanence is felt

in a very real way. People do not take offense easily, and things go well.
The houses are full. It is a living thing, our gar, that wants to go on living. That is the spirit of the people that are there, who want to continue in this place, despite any obstacles.
In early April we heard that Rinpoche will come back for two weeks in November. Also that projects long in the works have born fruit. And so our wishes come true, and it rains a little, and the plants are a little less thirsty now, in the light of the sun that always shines so brightly.



Alix de Fermor works in the garden at Tashigar North.

Tashigarsur



Tashigar South
Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar
Calle pública S/N

Tanti 5155
Pcia. de Córdoba
Argentina
Phone & Fax: 0054 - 3541 - 498 356
tashigarsur@gmail.com



Advanced Level 1 Vajra Dance Course in April with Adriana dal Borgo.



Rinpoche, Rosa and friends on a tour of Tashigar South to decide future projects.

Photo: D. Simonelli



Complete Breathing Course with Fabio Andrico from April 24-27, 2010 at Norbuling, Lima, Peru.



Passages

Born: Gabriel was born on December 29, 2009 at 10:35 am in São Paulo, Brazil to Otavio Lilla and Marta Zaidan Lilla. He is very healthy and active and already quite bossy for his age. One of the very first things he heard when he was born was the Song of the Vajra!

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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

Ornament of the State of Samantabhadra – Commentary on the All-Creating King Pure Perfect Presence Great Perfection of All Phenomena

Written by Khenpo Zhenphen Oser and translated by Jim Valby

Andy Lukianowicz

In the late 70s and early 80s at teachings Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche would often mention an important Tantra for the Dzogchen Semde series of teachings, the Kunjed Gyalpo. Interested scholarly types found out from an Eva Dargye article that it expressed a Nyingma version of the god creator myth (!) and from Samten Karmay that according to tenth century rulers of Guge (West Tibet) that it was a dangerous text that should be banned. Rinpoche would often teach the six vajra lines of the Cuckoo of Presence (Rigpai Khujug) that epitomised the Dzogchen teachings, explaining that all five early translations done by the great Tibetan Dzogchen master and translator Vairocana, were subsumed in the Kunjyed Gyalpo (rather as the last chapter of the Avatamsaka Sutra is the self-standing Gandavyuha Sutra, so clearly partially trans-

lated, analysed and commented by D.T. Suzuki in the third series of his Essays in Zen Buddhism), that was the most important tantra of the Dzogchn Semde series of teachings.

Then in 1999 Rinpoche and Adriano Clemente compiled, edited, annotated and translated into Italian selected passages from the Kunjyed Gyalpo (which I translated into English for publication by Snow Lion); the first half of the book consisted in an historical and contextual overview of the text and its place in the Dzogchen teachings.

At the time Jim made available some passages he had translated of the text, which only whetted the appetite for the whole translation, and at last we have it in our hands! And, the final result is greater and better. A glance at the table of contents shows the scope of Jim’s labour (and great



achievement). The text of the tantra is enriched with an interlineal early twentieth century commentary (started by Khenpo Thubten Pema Rabgye and completed after his death by his student Khenpo Zhenphen Öser, both of). The total translation will comprise five volumes, and a further two volumes will contain Jim’s translation of Longchenpa’s important special commentary Kunjed Düdön and a critical edition of the Tibetan text.

Just the contents of Vol. 2 (chapters 11–29) – which I am reviewing – are amazing in scope. Chapters 11–20 treat of the definitive state, in particular the essence of the all-creator as the root of all phenomena; the way presence is the root of all; the purposes and definitions of the

principles of presence; the need for secrecy (and non-secrecy) of atiyoga; a long chapter on direct manifestations (with important explanations of how to teach others, the principle of non-striving, mistakes of the eight lower vehicles, how presence in Dzogchen supersedes the views of the eight lower vehicles; the real condition; a chapter on relics; all is just-that-ness; self-perfected qualifications; presence as the birthplace of everything (and how the perfections, kayas, teachers and retinues all arise from presence). Chapter 21–29 treat the transcendence of cause and effect, in particular the principles of explanation; objectless non-abiding; presence is beyond struggle and achievement and beyond cause and effect; phenomena are just-that-ness (with a detailed explanation on the way the five elements are presence); an important chapter on perfection beyond action in terms of path, meditation, action and fruit; naturally presence is naturally pure space with no path or enlightenment and samsara is not be rejected; presence is unchanging essence, with explanation of the defects of the views of the eight lower vehicles; total relaxation and the natural state. Throughout the text rings Jim’s direct, uncomplicated and sonorous translation of the poetic, clear and un-

compromising Dzogchen teachings, always getting back to what is fundamental and most fruitful: presence, presence, presence.

Certainly in terms of ongoing translation projects into English, alongside Adriano Clemente’s translation of the Santi Maha Sangha and longsal teachings of Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, Richard Barron’s translation of the seven treasures of Longchenpa, Elio Guarisco and the Kalu Rinpoche Translation Group’s translation of the universal Buddhist encyclopaedia of Jamgon Kongtrul, John Reynolds’ translations from the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud, and Robert Svoboda’s extraordinary trilogy on the teachings of Aghori Vimalananda, Jim’s work stands an important and comprehensive addition to the presentation of major works pertaining to teachings of individual masters or textual cycles. This is essential reading for all those interested in the view, theory and philosophy of Dzogchen and especially students of Santi Maha Sangha (of which Jim is a base course teacher). Thank you, Jim, for all your work. ©

The book costs \$30 and is available at the bookstore of the Shang Shung Institute USA, and can purchased at the SSI website www.shangshung.org/store.

A Poem for Rinpoche

Charo Veràstegui

Charo Veràstegui from Peru read this poem to Rinpoche at the opening of the Mandarava Retreat recently held in Tashigar South.

The miracle has begun. The sky roars, the Queen of the Single Eye observes, and allows.

We are all gathered again, around our beloved Master, in his small crystal cave, that shelters thousands of practitioners all over the world at the same time like the miracle of the horn of Milarepa.

What gathers us now?

Gifts from heaven... treasures of your precious mind... a princess of Zahor, perfect beauty, fresh laughter. Mandarava is her name. How is it that you know her? How does she come to you? Aren’t you Mandarava yourself?

From your immense smile emerges thousands of Mandaravas, arriving floating like mist, like petals, like fine rain, and each one of them, opens in us, the miracle of the awakening.

“If it is good for me, then it is good for you,” told us in Margarita. “Look how I was; look how I am now.”

Master, I have known you for so many years, and I have never seen you so beautiful, so strong, like an oak or, as you say:” I am like a pine, always green”.

How many surprises you bring, how you take care of us, your tribe, your creation!

Mandarava is the secret of the secrets, heart essence of hundreds of thousands of Dakinis, she brought you back to us from sickness. How can we thank her? How can we be so fortunate?

Maestro, my small understanding cannot conceive this unique alchemy.

Something is happening, something in us is liberating, and it happens so fast.

Jewel of Heaven, please I beg you, see us always with compassion, clean our mind from ignorance, dispel hindrances, open the force within us, with your inconceivable generosity, your free Heruka laughter, your light in the darkness.

The sacred chudlen pills open unknown spaces, clean channels, dispel suffering, melt our mind with yours.

What are you preparing us for, Master?



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Drinking Sogtig, inhaling heaven, infinite space, we are transforming our bodies, prolonging life, we are preparing to travel with you, to travel all together to the Land of Kechara, the pure dimension of Vajrayogini.

Glowing Lotus,

Light of Dharma,

At your feet we bow,

Dharmaraja Namkhai Norbu,

Marvelous Vajra Mandarava!

b o d h i
THE VOICE OF VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM

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>> *Interview continued from page 7*
resources, accounting, secretarial staff, logistics etc.

There are three crucial points that we have to face. One is good editing, the second is the graphics which have developed a lot both for external and internal books (like the new Thun Book for example), and the third point is marketing, how to sell the product, which is not very well developed at this point. We are trying to do many things in this direction but it requires a lot of work, especially for public books. We do not have our own distribution so we have contacted distributors like Amazon, Snow Lion, Wisdom Books and these kinds of publishers and distributors.

Now we are in the process of developing a publishing house that can cope with all these aspects and with the new projects, especially public books, and we are also working together with the Ka Ter project for this. The Ka Ter, managed by Oliver Leick, is a project of Shang Shung Institute that is devoted to translating the original tantras of the Dzogchen teaching.

There are some books that need particular care and are very expensive. They are also not books for a big market, but appeal to a limited market. For example we recently have published the first volume of the *The Light of Kailash*. It is a fantastic book written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu about the history of Tibet, but it is a very specialized book. This text, translated by Donatella Rossi, required a lot of editing, graphics and also a good presentation, printing and binding, etc. In cases like this we need sponsorship. We are also working on a book about the Merigar West Gonpa, very rich with photos and drawings, etc.

We are looking for qualified editors but in general the principle when working for the Community is not money. We cannot pay professional people a lot of money—it is not only that we don't have the money, but also that is not the style of the Community. As practitioners we have to support the Dzogchen Community not vice versa. We should always remember this basic principle. For example, most of our graphics until now, as in the case of the new Thun Book, were done for free by Fulvio Ferrari and Paolo Fasoli. They are very professional people but they offered their work

>> *continued from page 1*
at least a small attainment. As Rinpoche has said many times, our whole life is not enough to realize what we receive in just one of his retreats.

The Master explained that these practices of *tsalung* are aimed at developing inner heat, and that this is very important to attain bliss. He is the tertön of these teachings. That is to say, Rinpoche is the one who received them for the first time in this world and from him straight to us, that is why this practice becomes so powerful, since there is

very generously for long time. In general it is hard to find someone with the right skill, time and availability for little money or for free. This is a long process that we are following now, we already have about four or five new editors working, but it is difficult to find someone who has the same style and skill as Nancy Simmons, for example. Nancy has a particular capacity that we cannot duplicate. But we would like to go in this direction: to find people who have a deep knowledge of the teachings, who have been following for many years, who are available and can work for not a lot of money. These are the conditions that we have to respect for finding new collaborators.

M: So you need more sponsorship?

IG: For sure we need sponsorship for certain books because the public books require a lot of care. Also we need money for bettering the quality by hiring more editors. Usually in the Community we have a good response when we ask for help, so we just have to continue to explain what we are doing and why we need money: to better the condition of Shang Shung Edizioni in order to publish better and more books.

M: Is it true that sometimes certain groups within the Dzogchen Community sponsor particular books?

IG: It does happen, but not so much. We have an example of a book from a retreat done in Austria, in this case the Austrian Community paid for the publication and the printing. In general there is not so much group sponsorship, it is more like individual sponsorship, donors. But of course the group sponsorship can be greatly developed and we are moving in this direction.

M: Are we still printing books 'in house'?

IG: We are still printing many internal books by ourselves, but some of them and all the public books are printed by an external printer. We are doing more and more printing outside the Community and this increases costs considerably. We also considered but we did not decide yet about printing on demand, because this is also something that is an interesting new trend. Especially for internal books, usually we

not a long lineage where we could find any break in the samaya.

Always, in each retreat, I go to our Master to thank him for being with us and giving us his teachings, but each time I think about it, there is nothing, no words or acts that we in our human condition could do, that would be enough to thank him. I hope Mandarava gives him many more years for us to enjoy his presence and in this presence, the one of all enlightened beings, will continue to teach for the benefit of all sentient beings without exception. ©

don't print a lot of copies because sometimes the books are changing over time, Rinpoche is saying new things, we have to update and add new practices, so usually we print five hundred copies of one internal book and then later we do a new edition, and in this case professional printers are very expensive because the less numbers you print the more it costs.

M: Can you tell us about the process of a book, from its inception to completion?

IG: The first step is that in the beginning the editorial staff tries to choose the books that should be published. The decision is based on the advice of the Tibetan translators, along with the staff that we already have, and we decide which retreat and teaching we are interested to publish. We do a kind of list of possible books. Of course we always submit our proposals to Rinpoche to get his approval.

Then the real work starts of the transcribers and translators. Sometimes both, because recently Rinpoche is giving many teachings based on Tibetan texts. So there is a new trend of books where there is a transcription but also a Tibetan text. Transcriptions are not difficult because many people are ready to transcribe, but rough transcriptions are very far from the final text. Adriano Clemente, Elio Guarisco and Jim Valby are doing most of the translation work from the Tibetan. As I already said, now other translators are collaborating, but the main translators must review all the work of the new translators.

Then after the final translation and/or transcription arrives at SSE, we have to edit the books, again, design the style, and then there are the graphics, how the books should be, the layout, the cover, etc. Now with the help of Dan Zegunis we are trying to have good layouts with public books, and have some new editions that have a better presentation.

It is very difficult to predict how long each book takes because we are depending on the translators and transcribers. But when the manuscript arrives at SSE it is more or less one year before the books can be printed.

M: Does Rinpoche ever ask for something to be printed?

IG: In general Rinpoche is promoting all our publications giving the Tibetan texts to the translators, helping the editors, giving advice and directions, backing all the projects. For books like *The Light of Kailash*, for example, he was very involved and cared very much. Usually we have many ideas regarding his oral teachings and we present our proposals to Rinpoche and ask if we can do them, and then if he agrees, the issue is producing them.

M: Are there any particular titles that Shang Shung Edizioni would like to produce in the future and for which you need sponsorship?

IG: I have a list of external projected books for 2010. There are two

books about each of Rinpoche's uncles, Togden Ugyen Tendzin and Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug, that are in process and have drawings and illustrations, and these books are quite expensive to produce. There is the Moxibustion book that Rinpoche wrote and has many drawings for the moxa points, etc. There is one called *The Temple of Great Liberation* regarding the Merigar Gonpa, then the second and third volumes of *The Light of Kailash*, then there is a new book of Yantra Yoga for the general public, this should be a book and DVD; the DVD, edited by Fabio Andrico, is ready now but there are a lot of expenses linked to it for printing all the movements through pictures, and writing a new text from the beginning is a big job. We also have the idea to publish a book that Rinpoche wrote on astrology – Rinpoche has many books that still need to be translated – then a very great work is *Dorje Sempa Namkha Che, The Total Space of Vajrasattva*. There will be a new edition with the original text and a commentary by Vairochana.

Some other projects of Adriano Clemente are the publication of Rinpoche's poems, advice to students, and these are very interesting books.

Then there are some public books, like the famous Dzogchen tantra *Mejung*, which is almost complete.

The internal books are: A book on Namkha by Rinpoche that should be translated because now we have published the oral teaching on Namkha, then the original text on Vajra Dance and we probably need one year more to finish it, there are more things to clarify with the Dance teachers and with Rinpoche, then there are several commentaries written by Rinpoche on his Longsal teachings, on the Tregchö, on the Ati Gongpa Ngotrö, a commentary on the Longsal Longde, the Vajra Bridge.

Then we worked for many years on the explanation of our Thuns because until now there is not one complete explanation or book on the Thuns. Elio Guarisco is working on it and we are trying to publish it soon, but it is also very demanding regarding the graphics for mudras, deity images, layout of practices etc. We already did the Gomadevi book in Italian and now there will be the English version, also it's almost ready a book on Jñāna-dhakinī Thugthig, different from Gomadevi. There is a book on the Three Paths of Liberation, a teaching that Rinpoche transmitted in Margarita, already on the way to be finished, there is a new book on the practice of Green Tara including the twenty-one praises transmitted by Rinpoche in Merigar and different places, there is a transcription of a retreat on Green Tara given by Yuchen Namkhai and Costantino Albini coupled with a CD containing a very precise explanation of the right melodies for mantras and invocations, and there is also a

book containing a more in depth explanation of Gomadevi.

Some works in process are based on retreats that Rinpoche gave recently like the Nyingthig Yangti teachings, a *terma* by Changchub Dorje he transmitted in Namgyalgar, and we have to publish the Lhalung Sangdag, a *terma* teaching of his uncle Khyentse he gave in Margarita, then the original text of Kumar Kumari that is the Yantra Yoga for children, there will be new editions of Santi Maha Sangha 2nd and 3rd Levels, and for most of these books we have to do both Italian and English editions and then we have to oversee the translation of the books in other languages. All the books of SSE are made in both Italian and English. Presently 90 % of the first editions are in English. We had two exceptions of recent books written first in Italian and one was the biography of Rinpoche's uncle Khyentse translated into Italian by Enrico Dell'Angelo, and the other is the book on the practice of Gomadevi edited by Enzo Terzano. These are very rare until now.

Shang Shung Edizioni and Shang Shung Institute also have the responsibility of the copyright of all this texts, so we have to make contracts with people who want to translate the books in different languages.

M: Are you finding that there are any other big distributing houses besides Dharma houses that are interested to distribute our books?

IG: Amazon is interested because they distribute everything, whatever we propose they accept. Other than that, no. As I said in the beginning, one of our weak points is the marketing. We do a lot of the publishing and preparation of the books, so up until now we did not have enough possibility to also work on the marketing aspect. It is a huge field. Not only external books, but also our internal books can be distributed in a better way when Rinpoche is going somewhere to do retreats all over the world, etc. We had some improvement in time but this is still a challenge for us. This is a lot of work and it is difficult to find people who are expert in this field and ready to dedicate their time to it. So we need to find a solution to this kind of marketing, but anyway all of our books are available on our web site <http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org/>.

M: In closing, can you sum up the most important needs of Shang Shung Edizioni?

IG: Finally, the truth is that we have a lot of people willing to work, to do karma yoga, and sponsorship sometimes. It is important that people buy our books and sponsor our activity offering their time and money.

M: Thank you Igor for your work and for your time to do this interview. ©



The Story of Gyamtsholing, The New Ling in Venice, Italy

The first practitioners in Venice and the Veneto Region participated in the retreat at Monte Faito, one of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's first retreats in Italy, in April of 1980 and afterwards met at the retreat in Volpago near Montebelluna, the first teaching that the Master gave on Venetian soil, in July of the same year.

Luciano Rizzeto, one of Rinpoche's first students in the area, said that at one of the earlier retreats, Rinpoche had said he would like to do a retreat near Yugoslavia and so Guido Innocente (who has since passed away), Luciano and Ivan Bonesso who lived in Montebelluna, the area closest to there, got together with other practitioners to organize the retreat.

The retreat had been planned for the summer of 1979 but the Master got ill and so the retreat was postponed until the following summer. The teaching at the retreat was on the Bardo. People said that during the retreat it rained the whole time and following Rinpoche's advice they lit incense and practiced Serkyem to ward off the bad weather, and got some improvement, although the water element was always present.

the sister of the Dalai Lama and her husband participated. At the time he was the director of the Medical Institute of Dharamsala. The well-known doctor, Trogawa Rinpoche, also participated and a great number of other Tibetan doctors.

In 1985 the Master came back to Venice and gave a cycle of Teachings at the Ateneo S. Basso in Saint Mark's Square and, once again, at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia. At that time Adriana Dal Borgo who is one of the teachers of the Vajra Dance today and Venetian by birth, was already active in the community. Between 1990 and 1992 a group of practitioners from the mainland found a place in Treviso called 'The Circle of Gold' where we could do practices and Yantra Yoga and sometimes the group from Venice also went there. It seemed that this was definitely going to be 'the place' and we even asked the Master to give it a name, but then everything fizzled out – perhaps the time hadn't matured yet.

In 1998 the Associazione Culturale Comunita Dzogchen, Venice branch, was founded. At that time Ana Maria was teaching Yantra Yoga to a lot of new young practitioners and also for



Group photo at the Montebelluna retreat in 1980.

Photo: Oliver Leick

gio set up weekly courses of Yantra Yoga open both to people outside the Community and to practitioners only. Nina Robinson has visited twice to teach and go into many aspects of the Mandarava long-life practice more deeply. Adriana Dal Borgo has held courses on the Dance of the Six Spaces and the Dance of the Song of the Vajra for new dancers who have come to the Mandala. With an introductory course to contemplation in May 2009 in which many participated both old and new, Fabio Risolo opened the door to weekly meetings to practice shiné.

Finally in September 2009, as if to authenticate this new rhythm of the Venetian Dzogchen Community, Yeshe Silvano Namkhai came to give teachings on the Tibetan Book of the Dead. A hundred or so participants followed his teachings over a few days that were made crisp and clear by the cold north-east wind that welcomed him to Venice. And thanks to Yeshe Namkhai and his suggestions, the gakyil, which had grown from three to six members, was able to make the possibility of a Ling become concrete, right at the Sant'Alvise Sports Centre where Yeshe had given his teachings and where, at his suggestion, the Venice Dzogchen Community has organized its main activities.

This year's Losar was celebrated at this Centre together with the participation of associations of different spiritual traditions, including non-Buddhist, to the great joy of all. Shortly after, on March 13 of this year, our precious master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, gave the place the name "Gyamtsholing", the "Ling of the Ocean". The new Ling includes not only the area of Venice and Veneto but also Friuli and the city of Trieste. We celebrated our new name with a Naggon practice and an invocation to Rahula, which Rinpoche was fortunately transmitting by webcast at the same time.

More recently, over the weekend of April 25–26 of this year, Fabio once again led a course on contemplation and an introduc-

tion to the study of Santi Maha Sangha in which about 30 people participated, including several new people and in May we will have Adriana Dal Borgo with us again for a new course on the Dance of the Six Spaces.

We have many ideas for the future: courses in Tibetan with Fabian Sanders (who lives and teaches in Venice), greater collaboration with the Shang Shung Institute for presentation of books and sponsoring their publication (as we have already done for the biography of Togden Ugyen Tendzin), for Tibetan medicine (Dr. Namdol Lhamo will be back in Venice September 14–18), a Kunye massage course with Aldo Oneto and a SMS study group.

There are many new practitioners who come to listen to the webcasts or to participate in the practices. We hope that all the practitioners of the area will become more and more active along with the gakyil to make Gyamtsholing a strong and solid place of practice that will be able to welcome those who are truly interested in the precious Dzogchen Teaching. We are sure that with the help of our precious and compassionate Masters that this wish will be fulfilled well and soon.

The Gyamtsholing Community

Gyamtsholing is located on the upper floor of the Sant'Alvise Sports Centre situated right on the lagoon in the S. Alvise area and easy to get to on foot or by ferry. There is space there for Yantra Yoga and collective practices and when there is need for more space for bigger retreats and for practicing the Vajra Dance, it is possible to rent rooms in the Sports Centre on the lower floor.

There is a beautiful park close to the Centre with a playground for children and a small theatre and when the weather is good we have great picnics under the trees there. If you would like to come to Venice to participate in some of our events, we have some special deals with the small hotels in the city.

We hope to have our website up and running soon and in the meantime, our contact person is Lorenza Citton, email: gyamtsholing@yahoo.it



A ganapuja at Anna Lessana's house with practitioners from the whole area.

In the autumn of 1981 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu came to Venice for the first time, hosted by Ana Maria Humeres and Carlos Ramos and gave Teachings at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia, a well-known cultural centre with a large library and museum in the heart of Venice, thanks to Giorgio Busetto who was the director at that time.

Ana Maria and Carlos opened up their home to the practitioners in Venice and we started to practice Yantra Yoga and do collective practices there for several years and many people were able to meet the Master thanks to them. In 1983 on the initiative of Carlos and Ana Maria, the Venetian community managed to organize the first international Conference on Tibetan Medicine on S. Giorgio Island in Venice in which, besides Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,

a certain period there were collective retreats and practices for the Santi Maha Sangha Base level at Carlos and Ana Maria's.

From that time on the Venetian Dzogchen Community has undertaken a lot of activities. In particular in the early years of 2000 the Vajra Dance was developed through courses with both Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo and we bought a Dance Mandala that was made in Lithuania. Ganapujas were held for at least ten years at the home of Anna Lessana, a dedicated eighty-year-old practitioner and our senior member.

In the last three years, the number of courses and retreats organized by the local gakyil with the participation of old and new practitioners has grown and, in addition, the group has been advantaged by having Marco Baseg-



How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dorothea Franck

Black A – White A

That I found my way to the Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu I owe to a large extent to my father, even though my father never met a Tibetan teacher.

I was an anxiety ridden oversensitive child with delicate health, sometimes seeing beings that others did not see, not happy to be born into this confusing world, yet overly eager to learn and understand the mysterious ways of the adults around me. It was post-war Germany and most people were deeply traumatized and mentally broken with loss, guilt or denial. It seemed obvious: life was doomed to be a tragedy.

I was a child philosopher, not running but thinking for my life. And I was fascinated by language and its secrets. The most beautiful and consoling moments of my childhood I experienced in the studio of my father, a pensive, sensitive and melancholic artist. I think he was secretly a bit of a mystic. When I was able to sneak in (we children had strict orders not to disturb) we got involved in deep conversations. Sadly enough I remember hardly any of these dialogues except for one, because we had an unusual and thorough disagreement. We had been talking about the correspondences between vowels and colors, a normal theme for children and poets but obviously also for my father. While we agreed more or less on most of the vowels and their colors, to my great surprise we disagreed totally on the letter A (pronounced like Italian or Tibetan A). It seemed more than obvious to me that A was black, - A was also the vowel of the German word for black: schwarz. I was really shocked to hear that my father associated A with white! What surprised me even more was that my father did not, as he often did in other conversations, give in good-humoredly to my arguments but in all seriousness stuck to the whiteness of the A. I was profoundly puzzled that the same sound could be experienced in such different ways.

We were brought up Catholic. Initially I was a religious child, enjoying the songs and even the sermons in church, but when I was getting a bit older I became deeply disappointed by the dogmatic rigidity of the priest of our parish. I remember how sad I was on the festive day of first communion. I had taken the preparatory instructions so seriously that I was really expecting miracles and ecstatic experiences when I was eating the sacred host. For a moment indeed I was filled with an intense sense of presence and union, which I tried to intensify by holding my breath in a particular way, something that I recognized some forty years later as an intuitive attempt of kumbhaka. But I could not help noticing that the other girls minded mainly their pretty white dresses and the expected gifts, and for the priest it seemed a formal act where a perfect choreography mattered most. I felt cheated somehow, but could not explain to anybody why and what exactly I found missing.

As soon as I came of age I left the church in anger and disappointment. As a student, I was part of the revolting student generation, smart but ignorant, full of good will and enthusiasm, expecting to better the world by substituting tradition by left-

ist ideals. When the most extreme ones among the students, the German RAF, turned to terror and violence, the dream of changing the world by political activism ended too.

I threw myself into academic studies, linguistics, literature and communication, got a wonderful scholarship, studied with pleasure, and after getting my masters degree I found a charming husband in Holland and a bit later a job at the university of Amsterdam. Life seemed to steer into a cheerful future, but just when I had reached all the conditions that should guarantee a good life: a loving husband, a PhD and tenure university job, travels throughout the world and a house at a beautiful Amsterdam canal – my life took a radical turn.

My father died of cancer. He waited to die for my arrival from the other side of the globe, and just before rushing to the hospital where I would see him for the last time a strange thing happened. It was early summer, a beautiful day, and the large garden in full bloom. Looking into the garden where he had spent so many hours painting, for a moment a kind of pure vision was shown to me: everything was a beautiful translucent display of colors and lights. Somehow I knew that I saw it through his eyes. From then on I sensed another reality behind the solid surface of things, and the connection of the experience of beauty and of transcendence was engraved in my heart.

I was totally broken by this loss, but in the first weeks after his death I was often taken by surprise because instead of pain and despair I felt such a strong comforting and loving presence around me that made me feel closer to my father than I ever felt during his life. It completely shook up my rationalistic assumptions about death and life after death. From that moment on my life was turned upside down.

All of a sudden I felt claustrophobic in my comfortable and predictable life, I got into a deep crisis, got a divorce, quit part of my job, left most of my possessions behind, stayed abroad for a while and, back in Amsterdam, started a new life. Poetry, music, art, new circles of friends came into my life – and I started to live the creative part of me that I had rather neglected until now. I lived and worked with a performance artist, started to write poetry and participate with my texts in a band. Wild and confusing years followed, living in the middle of artistic experiment and aspiration, but also constantly on the edge of exhaustion, depression and profound confusion – the old structures and limitations having loosened up with no new protection and orientation in place yet. I also started studying religions and mythologies from all around the globe; many of them feeling surprisingly familiar and inspiring, but it remained book-knowledge.

At some point I went on a trip to Egypt, which overwhelmed me with many strange experiences, one of them in a Coptic monastery in the middle of the desert. It felt like a special place where a residue of true spiritual life was tangible. We were received by a monk with tea and biscuits in the visitor's room with plush sofas and a smell of camphor. The velvet voice of the monk who introduced us to the history of the desert monks, stirred me in a strange way,



but what struck me most was the sound of the “Ah“ when he hesitated or got stuck in his story. It was as if he communicated some secret meaning with this spontaneous meaningless sound.

Amsterdam had a hot cultural scene in the seventies and eighties, featuring beat poets, underground musicians, new theatre and improvised dance – and plenty of drugs. Amsterdam was also a new-age pioneering scene opening up to all kinds of spiritual ventures. In the middle of this artistic and spiritual laboratory and the now legendary One-World-Poetry scene I befriended Louise, Babeth and Christie, a poet, a film-maker and a dancer, who all happened to be students of some Tibetan teacher Norbu, living in Italy. By then I knew I needed a teacher but I was hesitant: following some eastern guru still was a bridge too far. Yet, one day Louise showed me a black and white picture of this man, and I knew: I have to see him. Although there was not the least physical resemblance, I had a feeling of meeting my father. And there it was: the central symbol in his teachings was the white A! It dawned on me: my father was right!

It was only through a series of miracles and moments of complete surrender that I managed to get to and through the first retreats, in Italy, France and Argentina. The very first retreat in 1989 I had to trick and cheat myself into. In that period

I was doing research on the poetic aspect of language and the meaning of sound, in close contact with a research group in Italy headed by Umberto Eco. I convinced myself that I had to talk to this Professor Namkhai Norbu to find out whether he would be willing to participate in a conference and talk about the special quality of sacred language. When I approached Rinpoche with this question at the beginning of this retreat, he smiled and answered with one word: dopo (later). This was my first conversation with him. At the end of the retreat I was hooked and knew that I needed to be with this Teacher for other reasons than academic projects.

Nevertheless, the connection between language, poetry and the Dzogchen path remained intriguing for me. There was the language of the dakinis, the mysterious power of mantra and the beauty of their sound, seed-syllables at the core of manifestations, the natural sound of the universe in the Song of the Vajra and the poetic power of the language of the root texts. But I got also a new appreciation of my own heritage. The Dzogchen view turned out to be far from exotic. So many things I had read and pondered about all of a sudden made complete sense. Certain lines of the German romantic poets and idealist philosophers, in particular my favorite Hölderlin, and mystics like Eckhart, Böhme and many others, opened up with a new kind of evidence, including parts of the Bible and Christian ritual. Moments of oneness with the world around me, instants of integration with sound or space, birds flying through me... things I had secretly experienced, assuming that this was just my personal spleen, now seemed to be a view to share and a practice to develop! I was not crazy but actually on a path which was not a deviation but a path to complete realization! The white A was the anchor that Rinpoche had thrown me in a moment of complete despair. And eventually I understood: the white A is more than an outer symbol: the white A is me! ©

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