

THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

No. 107

November, December 2010



Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: M. Almici

2011

Due to recent health issues Rinpoche's program may be subject to change.

New Zealand

February 11–13

Auckland

Public talk & teaching

Australia

February 23–27

Caloundra retreat

March 11–13

Melbourne retreat

March 18–23

Namgyalgar retreat

Singapore

March 31–April 4

Mandarava teaching, Initiation and tsalung instructions

Taiwan

Taipei

April 7–11

Teaching on the Song of Vajra

Japan

April 15–19

Tokyo teaching

Russia

April 25–May 1

Moscow retreat

May 2–6

Kunsangar North

Teaching of Medicine Srothig, the root Terma text of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje

Ukraine

May 14–20

Crimea retreat

May 21–25

SMS Base Level exam

May 26–June 6

SMS First Level Training

Romania

June 10–16

Merigar East retreat

Italy

June 24–30

Merigar West retreat

July 15–18

Thirtieth Anniversary of Merigar West



The Master with members of the Peru Community discovers Mandarava inside the "retablo", their gift to him.

Photo: M. Carranza

Meeting the Master for the First Time

Claudia Velasco Mosto

There are many new members in the Dzogchen Community of Peru. Some of them met the Master for the first time during the retreat held on November 19th–23rd at Club de la Marina located in Ancon, a seaside resort in Lima. They share their first impressions with us.

It is said that those who follow the Dzogchen teachings do so due to a connection, consciously or not, with this knowledge. Some events happen in our life and suddenly, by "chance" or causality, we have the fortune to come across this ancient and invaluable self-liberation path.

At least that is what happened to Armando Marquina, an artist to whom the teachings really clicked while watching a Dzogchen practitioner talk about the Master and the upcoming retreat on a TV interview. He would later go to Norbuling to participate in a worldwide transmission.

"At that time, it seemed strange to me to watch the Master through the web, but when I saw him standing there for the first time during the retreat, I felt him very close to me", says Armando. He asked Rinpoche to write the Tibetan "A" on the back of an illustration of Garab Dorje. "When I made this request, he laughed", adds Armando.

Luis Medina explains that he learned about the teachings and the Master through the Internet. Although at first the Tibetan culture was not something that drew his attention, once he started reading books on Buddhism and listening to several retreats through the webcast, the teachings resonated with him.

"While listening to the Master explaining the teachings, it seemed he was answering my questions; he even appeared in my dreams", he adds. He finally met Rinpoche at the retreat and even walked along side him with his Vajra brothers and

sisters as Rinpoche headed to the conference room every day.

"One of those days, while we were accompanying Rinpoche, he was told it was my birthday. Contrary to what we were expecting, he didn't say a word about it. I took it as a teaching from the Master to not pay so much attention to our ego," states Luis in a pensive manner.

For others, such as Jose Eduardo Padron, the experience of meeting the Master included approaching him to ask a personal question. "While this was happening, my brother commented that we looked like friends and that is exactly the way I felt the Master's presence", he states.

And what can Susana Rodriguez, the Gekö, tell us about her experience of meeting Rinpoche for the first time and being around him during those days? "It was a unique and special experience that still

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Teaching



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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Longde Teaching

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Focus



Our Master's Masters

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Integrating the Sense of the Teaching

Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain
Day 1, October 11, 2010

For this retreat we have three days of teaching and in these three days I mainly want to communicate about how we should understand the sense of the teaching and how we can integrate. In this case, the first thing we need to understand is our condition, because there is a reason why people are interested in the teaching. When they do not have any problems and they are enjoying themselves then they have no need for teaching or practice. But life is not like that, especially in the human condition.

The human condition

Buddha said that we continually have four types of suffering in the human condition. That is the natural condition of any type of human being. First of all there is birth. But it is not that birth takes place just in a morning or an afternoon. We know very well that we are in our mother's womb for nine months and finally we come out. This is called "birth," and it is related to suffering. We do not remember how it was in our mother's womb or how our birth took place.

Then, when we are living in society, the opposite of that is becoming old. When people are young they don't have much idea about this but some people who work with the public gradually notice that they are getting old. Then they are not happy because they want to be young forever. This is not possible. Everybody exists in time, time is passing and people are getting old. This is another type of suffering. This is not the type of suffering that is produced in a particular way but is more general and true for everybody.

Then the third suffering is different kinds of illness because we have a physical body. When there is a physical body these kinds of problems are inevitable. Sometimes people are unable to overcome their illnesses and they die. Other times it takes a long time to overcome an illness and it takes time and sacrifice and suffering. This is the third suffering.

The fourth is dying. When there is birth, there is death. [Birth, aging, sickness, and death] are called *skye*, *ga*, *na*, *chi*, the four conditions of human beings from the beginning. This is our dimension. So we should know how our real condition is. It is not very good if we live in fantasy. Many people say that they don't want to think about getting old or dying. You can forget about this today or tomorrow but it doesn't help you and one day you will have a surprise. It is much better that you know how the situation is and accept your real condition. Many people don't accept the way the situation is and fight and struggle [against it] every day. But this is not the solution. There is no possibility for us to win and overcome only by struggling.

The cause of suffering

In the sutra teaching, when Buddha Sakyamuni started to teach his teaching, he taught that famous teaching called the Four Noble Truths. What is the first Noble Truth? The Noble Truth of suffering. It doesn't mean that suffering is noble but that the knowledge of suffering is valuable and it is indispensable that everyone has this knowledge. Buddha knew that in our samsaric dimension, there is nothing that exists without suffering. When he asked people if they liked suffering, nobody said they liked it or wanted it. But when he asked them what they did in order not to have that problem [of suffering] then most people believed, thought and said they wanted to struggle against it. And we are still doing this today.

Most people, when they say there is a problem, [assume that] the solution is to struggle. But Buddha taught that teaching in very ancient times. He said it was not the solution. Nobody can overcome that problem by struggling. Instead of struggling, you should discover that there is a cause of this suffering. When there is a problem, it is the effect of a cause. So when we recognize that effect we can

learn and discover what the cause is. Once we have discovered the cause, what can we do? We can stop, we can change, we can modify [our behavior]. In this case we do not produce the effect, the fruit of that cause. Buddha said this was the only solution and he taught that way.

Firstly, he explained the kinds of suffering that we have. When we know that we don't like suffering, we don't struggle against it because it is the effect and we can never win. But the effect is valuable in helping us discover the cause. Just like when we go to a doctor. If we have some medical problem, some illness, and we ourselves are not very expert in this sense, we decide to go to a doctor to discover which kind of illness we have. The doctor checks and asks all kinds of information to discover what the cause of the illness is. Once the doctor has discovered the cause then he can give advice to the patient. Then the doctor can give medicine and therapy to cure the illness.

In the same way Buddha gave his teachings for us to overcome that problem. This is the main point, so we must really discover what the source of the problem is.

Understanding our condition

But that is something we can only realize if we are concrete [and realistic]. Most people are not very realistic. Most people live too much in fantasy. They have a very nice idea and then they invent everything and that does not correspond to the real condition. Even if nothing is realized concretely, time passes. In the end we discover we have not realized any conclusion. This is called fantasy. We should not go after fantasy and should walk on the earth; touching our two feet on the earth knowing our situation concretely. We don't need fantasy to discover and know how our real condition is. This is something very important.

When we are concretely aware of our condition, first of all we must understand our relative condition a little. Not immediately jumping to a higher level. Not saying, "Oh someone is speaking of the nature of mind, I like that because it is very deep." But what is the nature of mind? We do not even have sufficient knowledge of our relative mind – how can we understand nature of mind? Already that is a fantasy. We must not go that way.

First of all we have a physical body. That is concrete in our material world. You can understand what the physical body needs every day. For example, we need to eat or drink at least three times a day. Otherwise we cannot live and we do not feel well. Also when there is cold weather we need more clothing, and when it is a little hot we say it is too hot and we remove our clothes. There is not only eating and dressing; we are related to everything in the material world. We are living with this dimension of the material world. So the material world is limited, our physical body is limited, we are full of limitations. To maintain our physical body we must work with all these limitations or we could not live. So this is called the material world or physical body. We all have this concretely.

Our energy level

But our existence, our real condition, is not only our material body. We also have our energy level; we live our life continually inhaling and exhaling. If you have exhaled and you have no capacity to inhale you have no life. Life is finished. So life is breathing. Breathing is connected to our vital energy. The five elements and the material world also maintain our material body and allow it to continue. For example if we have some problem with the physical level, we can see, touch, check and somehow discover that. When we have some problems with our energy level, even many doctors do not understand.

Some people may say, "I always feel ill and have had this problem for a long time." And they go to a doctor and say, "Please check me well." The doctor checks and says, "You have no problem, you are perfect." That means you are perfect in your more material aspect because they check our material aspect in a limited way. It is not easy for them to go beyond that material level. So the doctors consider that that person is healthy but that person continues to feel that illness or problem. So you see the energy level is more complicated than the physical level.

For example on the physical level when you are seeing someone you immediately recognize who that person is because you see and have direct contact. But if that person has no physical body and that person's energy level is present in front of you, how can you see and recognize that person? That is an example and it is a different condition. But we have both the physical and energy level, and they have all kinds of limitations. When we do not have knowledge of how to control them and how to resolve problems when they arise, the problems can become very serious, because it is not so easy to cure them with medicine, or some therapy.

Our mental level

It is still more complicated with our mental level. We have three existences: body, energy level, and mind. A very simple way to explain what mind is to say it is what we are thinking. For example, I am thinking, "Now Fabio is getting up." I saw this and he is getting up so there is not much reason to question it. Many other people can also see him get up. But on a mental level, when Fabio is getting up, he may be thinking, "Oh I should get up and do this or that." We can't understand what Fabio is thinking. That is an example of the more complicated aspect.

But we all have these three existences. The point is not simply that we have them; what is important is having knowledge about them. In the Buddhist tradition in general, and particularly in the Vajrayana tradition, as well as in Dzogchen teaching, we consider knowledge of the three existences of an individual to be indispensable. This is why in the teachings, the first thing we should learn is the condition of our three existences: body, energy level, and mind, or body, speech, and mind.

Transcribed and edited by Susan Schwarz



Photo: L. Gajdos

Excerpt from Day 1 of Longde Teaching of Khyentse Yeshe

November 7-23, 2010
Tsegylgar West, Baja Mexico

Teaching in general, whether it is from sutra, tantra or Atiyoga or Dzogchen, always relates with the cause and the cause is the transmission. That means that once there was Buddha Shakyamuni, and before Buddha Shakyamuni there were other teachers and those teachers had different kinds of forms. Some had more like the manifestation form, which we consider the Sambhogakaya form. This is a manifestation that is not human for us, but can be an ordinary manifestation in the dimension, the condition, where the teaching is transmitted, but is not conceivable for us.

In this field we can always have this cause. Just like an object you throw into space, this object, forever, without finding an obstacle, will move because there is nothing to stop it. If you throw an object in space, because of this action, the object goes forever until there is a cause for stopping. In the same way, once the teaching is created, this cause leads to enlightenment and continues.

The way it is manifesting depends on the way it was initially transmitted. So we have a lot of manifestations, many types of forms. For example, some form is related more to the life of the teacher. Some forms are more related with some aspect and then obviously that teaching is presented for that function. So if we want to solve a problem, for example, we pray or we do a practice related with Tara. For wisdom we use Manjushri. We have all possible forms, all possible actions, related with the interest in the life of that teacher, that form, that manifestation.

In sutra, when we say karmic vision, that always relates with our capacity. So it means with a lower capacity we don't have understanding, even of our self. Lower capacity means someone who is satisfied by blessing, by praying and so on. They are satisfied with some kind of ritual activity and feel that this is important, because they understand this external aspect.

If someone is more interested in receiving a Vajrayana initiation, when an initiation is given in a correct way there is all understanding. Nothing is missing in that initiation, from the external factor to the real meaning, until what is called nature of mind or our real condition. So it means everything is contained and then leads to the possibility of enlightenment.

In the same way, when we have this recognition, we spontaneously gain or develop this interest. Through this interest we have ideas, we have recognition in our mind that this is a teaching and we are interested in it. So we always discover interest, not only

by being positive, but also being negative. Because in the same way we have contact and connection with teaching, we have contact and connection with karma – in exactly the same way.

We are not escaping the law of karma, the principle of the Four Noble Truths. Whatever, with our mind or our intention, when we are following Atiyoga, Dzogchen teaching and we are convinced that we are on a higher path, this higher path doesn't take us on a different road. The road is the same as sutra. It doesn't change the aspect, the material aspect of having a physical body and everything works in this three dimensional reality with cause and effect. This will not change anyway, even if we have the highest understanding with our mind in terms of knowledge, in terms of teaching of Buddha, it doesn't change the fact that we are walking with our legs.

If we are in the condition of life and death, it means that we are still in the condition of the principle of cause and effect.

To receive teaching we need cause. To have cause we need connection. If we don't have connection we need to accumulate merits. And even after we have received the teaching, we need to accumulate merits. Because when we say the path of Buddhism, the path related with the knowledge and in general with the condition, the discovery of one's own condition through observing one's own mind, this is also called the path of wisdom. So it means that first we accumulate merit, we purify our condition and then we have the opportunity of discovering what knowledge is. And wisdom is not something that comes from outside but is something related with our knowledge. That means that we have recognition of what knowledge is. If we had recognition before of what tension is, interest, then this interest after a while becomes knowledge.

Then the same words, the same text, the same teaching heard different times, feels completely different. It has a different flavor, different taste, different experience, and the reason is that it relates to knowledge. Knowledge is changing and we are changing. Usually when we are listening to a teaching, when someone is teaching and saying the same things, more or less always the same thing, we listen a different way because our condition is changing. Because we are more in the aspect of our energy or in the aspect of our mind and then we discover what knowledge really is.

So first knowledge is external, like an object that we trust, an object that we need, an object that we want to own. For example, our

initial approach with the dharma is that we are interested to have a vajra and bell, a thanka, books, something like this, something external, that if we own, that if we have objects like this in our house and it looks like a Zen center, then maybe we are more near this knowledge. We feel this.

After a while we understand that this is called support; support should be connected with the cause. If the cause, for example outer tantras like kriya, ubhaya, and yoga tantra, use this support and this support activates a function, it makes sense, and then we see this function. The first time we see this function, we have this precise experience, we understand, ah this sound, this mantra, this word I am saying, this activity I am doing with the mind, relates with this experience and now it makes sense and it's connected in my mind. Then next time we see this object we don't believe that we need all possible objects. We don't think that we should look for the best thanka because we understand with this I have a connection, I have this experience and now I have this knowledge; this was the knowledge, the final goal.

So if I am willing, for example, to follow another method, to apply another method, I know I need this support, this application, it takes this time, and that I should do this and that. So I know the function more precisely; how it works. I am not anymore in doubt. I am not searching and looking at everything that is outside, but I know that I am confident with this and that, and this relates with my possibility. Going more and more in the Tantras, we find this qualification.

Not only do we discover that there is not so much to search outside, but this qualification that we are developing as knowledge of our own potentiality becomes something that gives us

satisfaction. So it is not anymore external support but it's a completely internal support. Support is a symbol. Before it was an object, a circumstance, a context, after, in Vajrayana, with for example with Mahayoga, it becomes our own condition, the condition that is a symbol. It becomes the symbol, for example, of our own potentiality like a mandala, mandala, deities and so on. All this becomes our own aspect, and then remains always inside us.

With the discovery or the understanding of our three root passions, it means working with the aspects of emptiness, clarity and energy. Then through these three aspects that manifest like three root emotions, at this point we understand what is meant by wisdom, like self-arising wisdom. And then wisdom becomes a quality; the quality of our knowledge, not something different from knowledge, like we are gaining or getting wisdom, it is just a qualification of our knowledge.

So if there is a qualification of knowledge that is related with simple understanding, then when this simple understanding interconnects in different events and situations, we have the feeling to know how our condition is, how reality is, how things work and then we start to say, "Ah, this is wisdom." In a real sense, simply, it's a qualification or just a different expansion of this knowledge.

Going higher and higher or wider and wider, in general we discover what function means. We have a clear understanding and we are expecting that any aspect of our condition always has a function. So whether the essence is completely unreal, like emptiness, it always has its own function, this emptiness, because it appears and manifests in time and space. This is the principle of sutra.

When we are saying or we are reading the "Heart Sutra" or "Prajnaparamita," we are saying emptiness is form and form is emptiness. That means that when we see this form, its own essence is emptiness, but now it is form. So it means it is in time and space. Only this, nothing complicated. This time and space that we see is unreal. First of all because it's impermanent, it will not last very long. Secondly, because we see through our eyes and our mind. Third because it's an appearance and we can see it because we give a meaning, otherwise we would not even notice this form. We see things because we are interested in seeing these things and why are we interested? Fourth, because there is a cause, if there was not a cause like karma, we would not see.

So when we have this understanding and are fine with this, we become relaxed, not that there is something to accept, but we understand exactly how it appears outside of us and we are becoming this appearance, just like our self has the same value, importance, perception, interest, and feeling of anything that is appearing outside. This means that already, at least, the aspect of the teaching of sutra is clear. It becomes a ground, a base for development of the teaching of tantra. So it means that at least the aspect of emptiness is something we really understand. With the aspect of emptiness, there will never be any more doubt. If I am expecting that emptiness in any phenomena manifests as a function, I don't have any problem, because I know there is a function. I am not worried if this form, real or unreal, if this form is mine or someone else's, if this form is here or there, if this form makes sense or is useless. I know that a form has a function.

Khyentse Yeshe

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Khyentse Yeshe
Schedule 2011

January 14–29
Russia, Kunphenling (Moscow)
Retreat on Kunjed Gyalpo
(Kulayaraja Tantra)

April 21–25
Italy, Merigar West
Retreat on Upadesha of Equal
Taste

April 29–May 1
Italy, Merigar West
Teaching on The little Song for
bringing down the blessings of
the Mahamudra

May 2
Italy, Grosseto/Siena University
Three Paths to Liberation

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Form means it has a function. And how do we perceive this function? It's inseparable from our energy. Every form will give us a feeling. Form by itself gives a feeling. So when we are trying, for example, to do more than meditation, like Hindu meditation, more than Buddhist meditation, we are pretending that form is not disturbing, it doesn't make sense, it's not the principle. We are not saying this form, for example, when we do meditation like a calm state, shine/ lhagtong, for example, and we are trying to engage knowledge of how our state is calm, or how contemplation is, our real nature, and when form manifests we have thought, we have a vision of reality and so on. And then for example the teacher says, "Now you try and gaze in empty space, like one palm, two palm, one meter from your nose for example like this", this is something we will do in next days, and in this moment try and observe how you feel when there is no form. Before, for example, you were concentrating on a letter, a statue, an image, and now there is emptiness; empty, empty space.

So how do you feel? How much are you searching with your eyes for a form? How much is mind looking for an action?

How much are you projecting thoughts into the need of movement? So this doesn't mean that the teacher is trying to say form is negative. You should not do this or that. But it means this is form, this is the aspect of our natural condition. Our natural condition is movement. How real is movement, the essence of movement, the nature of movement? It's this function, understanding that all forms have their own function.

When we discover and understand this function it is called clarity, which means that we have an understanding of the nature of things. If we have an understanding of the nature of things, things are inseparable in our mind from the mind itself, and it cannot be that we don't understand what the nature of mind is.

This is one of the main principles when we are going to a higher level in the teaching of sutra, when we say dharmata, dharma-datu, etc. All these things relate with the aspect of observing oneself. If we are in this knowledge, which means we are keeping our presence in every instant, in the perception, in the phenomena, in the appearances and so on, then from this first attitude derives the opportunity for discovering all this.

What is driving distraction? Going after thought is always interesting. We are not so easily driven by something negative. We are always driven by something positive, what we call interest. Negative things, for example, we can say are attachments, or conditioning factors of society and so on, but behind they always hold some interest for us. We can say, for example, that money is very negative, it's the base of all our society, behavior and this and that. And then you can obviously read and see it also relates to the principle in the tripitaka, you can find the explanation, how important it is to have the correct aspect of understanding, like point of view, correct aspect of the application, just like our behavior, our intentions or our actions and so on. For example we say the eightfold path and so on. All this, anyway, relates with the aspect of observing oneself. We are paying attention to this because there is consequence. If we are not paying attention we create a cause and with this cause we have a problem. So it means we are not in the recognition of the cause. If we are not in the recognition of the cause, it means we are lacking clarity.

Transcribed and edited by Nicki Elliot
Final editing Naomi Zeitz

>> Meeting continued from page 1
keeps me happy all the time. I enjoyed the Master's sense of humor, his daily comments, his smiles and warmth, walking hand-in-hand before the teachings... All this day by day simplicity

Health Update of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

January 1, 2011

As most of you know, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was hospitalized in Brazil on November 29, 2010 in Sao Paolo Brazil. Rinpoche received treatments for basically three ailments, all quite challenging. As was announced by his son, Khyentse Yeshe on the Norbunet email list, Rinpoche was treated for a spinal infection with antibiotics, an aneurism in the mesenteric artery with 3 stents and a tumor in the kidney with non-invasive surgery. All of these treatments were very successful.

Rinpoche received excellent care at the Albert Einstein Hospital in Sao Paolo and continued to receive very good follow up care at home. Rinpoche left the hospital on December 16 and was resting and receiving treatments 3 times a day by nurses from the hospital with constant supervision from Dr. Alexandre Marra, the attending physician. After leaving the hospital, Rinpoche had been eating well, walking daily and regaining strength.

On December 30 Rinpoche was admitted once again to the Albert Einstein Hospital after not feeling well during the night. He was taken to intensive care, received a blood transfusion and a procedure was performed to 2 aneurisms in the right kidney to stop bleeding. Rinpoche said he was feeling much better after this surgery. As of December 31, he was moved out of intensive care and is now resting comfortably.

The morning of December 30, his daughter, Yuchen Namkhai arrived from the USA for her second visit since Rinpoche has been ill. Yeshe Namkhai arrived very soon after the first hospitalization and stayed for some time. Rosa Namkhai and Fabio Andrico have been the constant, tireless and devoted companions in Rinpoche's recovery.

Thanks to everyone for the continued support, practice and communication to the Master and his family. Please continue to hold Rinpoche in your prayers, practice and good thoughts and know that with all of the love and care of the doctors, Rinpoche's family and the Dzogchen Community, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is on his way to a complete recovery and perfect health.

The Mirror

ASIA Calendar 2011

At 7.40 on Wednesday, April 14, 2010, the entire Prefecture of Yushu was devastated by a violent earthquake. Yushu is a nomadic region located on the Tibetan plateau, at an altitude of about 4000 metres.

ASIA was able to provide relief for this tragic emergency thanks to the support of its numerous friends who, despite the silence of the media, have actively responded to the request of the population of Yushu for aid.



This calendar is a collection of photos taken by our assistants during the distribution of basic necessities. We have chosen not to show you photos of this catastrophe, but rather the positive side through the smiles and hopeful looks of a population worn out by hunger, cold and difficulty.

ASIA has devoted itself to bringing immediate support to the population and to working side by side with them in reconstruction. We will be involved in this work for the next 3-5 years and will need help from everybody.

By buying this calendar you will be contributing concretely to supporting the population of Yushu as profits from its sale will be used for the next distributions of basic necessities.

If you would like to do something more, you could make a donation or sponsor a child in Yushu so that he/she would be able to receive an education respectful of his culture, would eat every day, would be protected from the cold. In this way you would be indirectly helping his/her family and the entire community.

You can order the ASIA calendar with a minimum donation of 10 Euro!
Visit our website www.asia-ngo.org, fill in the form and learn how to donate or write an email to comunicazione@asia-onlus.org



Jigme and Sherab are friends and go to the Yushu primary school where ASIA has distributed. Because of this the children can stay at the school for lunch instead of having to make long journeys home through the dangerous rubble of the city.

**ADOPT
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TIBET**

Jigme e Sherab sono amici, frequentano la scuola elementare di Yushu in cui ASIA ha distribuito farina di orzo tostato e burro di yak. I bambini possono così fermarsi a scuola per il pranzo evitando lunghi tragitti tra le macerie insicure della città.



ASIA

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TIBET: EMERGENCY YUSHU
THE EARTHQUAKE AND COLD
RUN THE RISK OF DESTROYING
A PEOPLE
WE CAN SAVE THEM.

Dear friends,

I am writing to bring you up to date on the emergency that has devastated the lives of the Tibetan people this year, striking one of the poorest and, at the same time, most sacred areas of Tibet, the Autonomous Tibetan Prefecture of Yushu.

I was there in person in the camps for displaced people from Yushu at the end of August to monitor ASIA's intervention and to verify the situation and the needs of the population.

What I found there went well beyond anything I could have imagined! Eight months after the earthquake, the living conditions of the population in the tent camps are still dramatic.

The Khampa nomad families, which are very numerous, are living in overcrowded tents, crammed between furniture and other objects that have been saved from their ruined homes and the rubble. Conditions of hygiene are extremely serious, there is no water and there are no toilet facilities. Breeding grounds for tuberculosis are endangering the health of thousands of people.

In this period there is a real emergency within the emergency: the freezing winter has brought the lives of these people to the limits of survival. At Yushu the winter lasts almost all year and in these months, the temperature goes down to minus 30°.

In addition to the emergency there is also a loss of work and of sources of traditional income.

The politicians have started to encourage and sustain the immigration of the Han population to the earthquake areas, providing incentives for them to start up economic and commercial activities. The nomadic herdsmen, who are forced to give up their grazing lands to facilitate the construction of businesses of the new immigrants, will be obliged to sell their livestock and hence deprive themselves of their only source of income.

Besides this, the children and the young Tibetans of Yushu will be moved away from their families and transferred to Chinese schools in other prefectures. In this way they will lose their cultural roots and will no longer be able to read and write in their own language.

And so the vicious circle of poverty, social ostracism and loss of cultural identity that is leading to the disappearance of the Tibetan community of Yushu has started.

For these reasons it is not very realistic to think that a mere emergency intervention will be able to give concrete hope for the future to this population.

In particular I am thinking about the future of the children for whom it is essential to have distance sponsorship over

a long period of time if we want to guarantee them the possibility to attend school while remaining close to their families.

Therefore ASIA's plan of intervention provides for three lines of action that are indispensable in order to really help the Tibetan community of Yushu:

provide for basic necessities for the population to shelter them from the cold and feed them each day;
help local businesses to restart in order to create short term sources of autonomous support for families;
support the children in their growing period over the next 5 – 10 years (schools, health, nutrition).

Until now, thanks to the help of a great number of friends, we have managed to support the lives of 13,000 people, including the children and the teachers of some schools (follow what is happening on our website: www.asia-ngo.org). But we have to do a lot more.

FOR THIS I ASK YOU TO ADD A FAMILY OF YUSHU TO YOUR LIST OF CHRISTMAS GIFTS THIS YEAR.

You can support the people of Yushu in three ways:
A one-time donation for the Emergency Intervention

with 45 euro you give a person **one meal a day for three months**
with 100 euro **5 blankets**
with 270 euro you can donate a **tent-home** (which is like a house for the nomads) to shelter them from the cold.

An amount to promote restarting a business
With 500 euro you can **support the starting up of a business** and promote the self-sufficiency of a family.

Sponsor a child at distance
If you have not set up a distance sponsorship with ASIA yet, it is a very precious gift that you can make to a family in Yushu: **with 25 euro a month you can distance sponsor a child, guaranteeing him or her a meal every day, clothes, medical help and school attendance.**

You can give these gifts:
by credit card on the website www.asia-ngo.org/en
by bank transfer in the name of ASIA Onlus
IBAN: IT 27 M 01030 72160 000000389350
BIC/SWIFT: PASCITMMXXX

For more information visit the website www.asia-ngo.org/en

A heartfelt thanks from all of us at ASIA

Andrea dell'Angelo
Director





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Unified Membership

Dzogchen Community
and Shang Shung Institute

Dear Members of the Dzogchen Community,

In October 2010 in Tenerife Rinpoche authorized the International Shang Shung Institute to include its membership as an optional package alongside membership in the Dzogchen Community.

From January 2011 on it will be possible for the first time to become a unified member, this means a member of the Dzogchen Community and simultaneously also of the Shang Shung Institute.

The motivation for this Unified Membership is to raise awareness of the Institute's work and to raise funds for the many projects and initiatives that the SSI is developing.

Moreover, in recent years the Dzogchen Community and the Institute have become more closely connected, helping each other and providing services to practitioners (such as webcasts, membership, publications, course coordination, The Mirror, the Archive, and much more).

Of course the possibility to also become a member of the Shang Shung Institute when renewing Community membership, is totally voluntary.

Besides the Unified Membership the Shang Shung Institute also offers the Single Membership.

Benefits for unified members

Becoming a unified member brings new benefits:

Reduced Unified Members 2011 (RUM)

Each reduced unified member can chose one project of the Shang Shung Institute that he or she wants to support with his or her membership fee (Archive, Translation Projects, Tibetan Medicine, etc.). In that way every member becomes an active part of the various activities of the Shang Shung Institute.

- Each reduced unified member gets
- a free online-version of The Mirror (if DC membership at his/her Gar doesn't include it)
- a 20% discount on one online study course offered by the SSI (i. e. Tibetan language courses, Tibetan Medicine courses, etc.),
- a 5% discount on all courses offered by the SSI when attending in person
- free access to the online-shops of the SSI.

Ordinary Unified Members 2011 (OUM)

Each ordinary unified member can chose one project of the Shang Shung Institute that he or she wants to support with his or her membership fee (Archive, Translation Projects, Tibetan Medicine, etc.). In that way every member becomes an active part of the various activities of the Shang Shung Institute.

- Each ordinary unified member gets
- a free online-version of The Mirror (if DC membership at his/her Gar doesn't include it)
- a 20% discount on one online study course offered by the SSI (i. e. Tibetan language courses, Tibetan Medicine courses, etc.),
- a 10% discount on all courses offered by the SSI when attending in person
- a 10% discount on Tibetan "ritual objects" (herbal medicines, massage oil, ...)
- a free copy of the new Merigar calendar.

Sustaining Unified Members 2011 (SUM)

Each sustaining unified member can chose one project of the Shang Shung Institute that he or she wants to support with his or her membership fee (Archive, Translation Projects, Tibetan Medicine, etc.). In that way every member becomes an active part of the various activities of the Shang Shung Institute.

- Each sustaining unified member gets
- a free online-version and/or printed version of The Mirror (if DC membership at his/her Gar doesn't include it)
- free access to one online study course offered by the SSI (i. e. Tibetan language courses, Tibetan Medicine courses, etc. – excluded the 4yr TM program)
- a 20% discount on all courses offered by the SSI when attending in person
- a 10% discount on Tibetan "ritual objects" (herbal medicines, massage oil, ...),
- a free copy of the new Merigar calendar.

Meritorious Unified Members 2011 (MUM)

Each meritorious unified member can chose one project of the Shang Shung Institute that he or she wants to support with his or her membership fee (Archive, Translation Projects, Tibetan Medicine, etc.). In that way every member becomes an active part of the various activities of the Shang Shung Institute.

- Each meritorious unified member gets
- a free online-version and/or printed version of The Mirror

(if DC membership at his/her Gar does already include it, then you'll get the possibility to have a second subscription or give it as a gift to someone)

- free access to two online study courses offered by the SSI (i. e. Tibetan language courses, Tibetan Medicine courses, etc. – excluded the 4 Year Study Program of Tibetan Medicine)
- a 25% discount on all courses offered by the SSI when attending in person
- a 10% discount on all public books in printed and in digital version available at the SSI web-shops,
- a 10% discount on Tibetan "ritual objects" (herbal medicines, massage oil, ...),
- a free copy of the new Merigar calendar.

Single Membership in the International Shang Shung Institute

Besides Unified Membership the Shang Shung Institute also offers Single Membership just for the Shang Shung Institute.

Each membership lasts from your first purchase until the 31st of December of the same year and it is not renewed automatically.

Preliminary SSI Membership 2011: 5 Euro

Preliminary membership is limited, and no commitments regarding the Shang Shung Institute are undertaken through membership at this level. This kind of membership is a mandatory requirement to purchase any of the products offered by the Shang Shung Institute in one of our online-shops. Current members of the international Dzogchen Community do not need to purchase this preliminary membership. Access to the web shop of the Shang Shung Institute is a free service to all current members of the International Dzogchen Community.

Ordinary SSI Membership 2011: 50 Euro

- Each ordinary member gets
- a crystal with the logo of the Shang Shung Institute printed inside or the "Merigar Calendar" for 2011/2012;
- a luxury ballpoint pen from the SSI;
- full access to our web shop.

Sustaining SSI Membership 2011: 108 Euro

- Each sustaining member gets
- a crystal with the logo of the Shang Shung Institute printed inside or the "Merigar Calendar" for 2011/2012;
- a CD or a DVD (produced by the SSI) from our website of your choice for free;

- a luxury ballpoint pen from the SSI;
- free mailing of these gifts to anywhere in the world;
- full access to our web shop.

Meritorious SSI Membership 2011: 360 Euro

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

Luigi Ottaviani & Oliver Leick,
International Shang Shung
Institute:
www.shangshunginstitute.org

Unified Membership

Dzogchen Community and Shang Shung Institute
Membership-fees for the year 2011

Merigar West and East:	
Reduced unified membership:	50€ DC + 25€ SSI = 75€
Ordinary unified membership:	129€ DC + 36€ SSI = 165€
Sustaining unified membership:	500€ DC + 85€ SSI = 585€
Meritorious unified membership:	1500€ DC + 165€ SSI = 1665€

Tsegyalgar East and West:	
RUM:	70 US\$ DC + 35 US\$ SSI = 105 US\$
OUM:	180 US\$ DC + 50 US\$ SSI = 230 US\$
SUM:	684 US\$ DC + 116 US\$ SSI = 800 US\$
MUM:	2040 US\$ DC + 185 US\$ SSI = 2225 US\$

Namgyalgar:	
RUM:	165 AU\$ DC + 85 AU\$ SSI = 250 AU\$
OUM:	396 AU\$ DC + 110 AU\$ SSI = 506 AU\$
SUM:	960 AU\$ DC + 165 AU\$ SSI = 1125 AU\$
MUM:	2500 AU\$ DC + 225 AU\$ SSI = 2725 AU\$

Kunsangar South:	
RUM:	35€ DC + 17€ SSI = 52€
OUM:	75€ DC + 21€ SSI = 96€
SUM:	300€ DC + 50€ SSI = 350€
MUM:	1400€ DC + 125€ SSI = 1525€

Tashigar Norte:	
RUM:	650 BSF DC + 325 BSF SSI = 975 BSF
OUM:	1250 BSF DC + 390 BSF SSI = 1640 BSF
SUM:	3100 BSF DC + 530 BSF SSI = 3630 BSF
MUM:	11700 BSF DC + 1050 BSF SSI = 12750 BSF

Tashigar Sur:	
RUM:	55 US\$ DC + 27 US\$ SSI = 82 US\$
OUM:	110 US\$ DC + 35 US\$ SSI = 145 US\$
SUM:	320 US\$ DC + 60 US\$ SSI = 380 US\$
MUM:	1070 US\$ DC + 115 US\$ SSI = 1185 US\$

SSI New Webstore

The Shang Shung Institute in Italy is pleased to announce to its members and members of the Dzogchen Community that its new shop is now online.

At www.shangshungstore.org you will find the complete catalogue of our articles (books, CDs, DVDs, video journal and other things).

The new shop was created in order to improve managing orders, to allow members to see the status of their orders, to change their details and receive information on the latest news (projects, books, practice supports).

The new website requires new registration.

If you register as a Ling or a Gakyil please contact us (info@shangshunginstitute.org) so that you can receive the discounts that were offered in the previous web-shop.

By buying our products, becoming a member and donating you can support and promote Tibetan culture throughout the world.

The SSI staff

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Enrollment Procedure for Santi Maha Sangha Examinations

To register for a Santi Maha Sangha exam (including the Base), you must be a member of the Dzogchen Community. For the Base Level exam the membership fee must have been paid at least one year before the examination; for the next levels it should have been paid continuously since the year of the Base examination.

Instructions for the Candidate

The candidate must complete the official form, including the admission request and a record of his/her Karma Yoga collaboration, in the period two months to one month before the examination date.

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, obligatory for entrance to all SMS examinations, must have begun at least a year prior to the Base exam (if the exam is scheduled for 2011, the Karma Yoga must have started no later than 2010). In subsequent years, you must be able to demonstrate a continuous history of Karma Yoga between one level of SMS exam and the next. Any suitable work offered for the benefit of the Dzogchen Community is valid as Karma Yoga, provided that it is done upon request of, or agreement with, the Dzogchen Community Gakyils and related associations (Shang Shung Insti-

tute or Edizioni, A.S.I.A.). Therefore Karma Yoga should always be arranged through the Gakyils, Shang Shung Institute/Edizioni and A.S.I.A.

The 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

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

Instructions for the Local Gakyils

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

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

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Examination Enrollment Procedure for Santi Maha Sangha Teacher Candidates

1. The candidate must have successfully taken the SMS exam at the corresponding level.
2. The candidate should address the request for admission to the Gakyil of his or her own Gar. The Gakyil, having verified that the candidate is up to date in payment of membership dues and that Karma Yoga collaboration has been satisfactory, must also express an opinion on the candidate's capacity to relate positively to Vajra brothers and sisters.

3. The Gakyil should forward the candidate's request for acceptance, together with its own reflections on the candidacy, to the SMS Coordination Center. The Center in turn will send the application to the Master and to the Gakyil of the Gar where the exam will take place. One month before the examination, the Gar should present the complete list of candidates to the Master.

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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rainbow Body

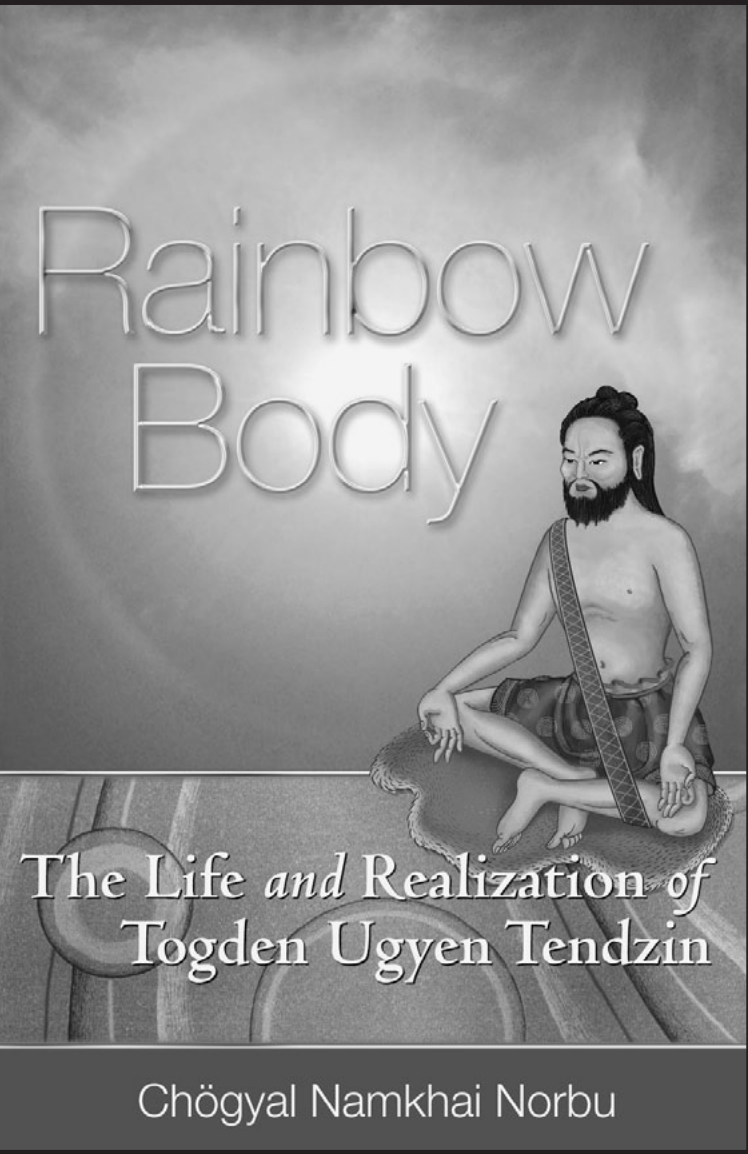
The Life and Realization of Togden Ugyen Tendzin

Translation from Tibetan by Adriano Clemente
Shang Shung Publications, 2010.
123 Pages. Price 11 Euro

One of the highest attainments of Dzogchen, an ancient spiritual path recognized as the supreme vehicle of Tibetan Buddhism, the rainbow body is the transmutation of the physical constituents of the body into the essence of the five elements.

This book traces the life story of a twentieth century Tibetan yogin, Togden Ugyen Tendzin (1888-1962), whose amazing realization of the rainbow body at his death was witnessed in Eastern Tibet not only by his countrymen, but also, to their confusion and dismay, by the Chinese officers who were responsible for his continuing imprisonment. The author of this fascinating biography is Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (b. 1938), one of the great living masters of Dzogchen, and nephew, on the paternal side, of the Togden, a title which means "endowed with realization," an expression accorded to highly realized yogins in Tibet. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who received profound teachings from his uncle, based his book on extensive notes he took while with Togden in 1954 in Derge, and on information given to him by Sala Kama Samten (1919-1993), also a disciple and nephew of the yogin. Togden's master was Adzom Drugpa, Drodul Pawo Dorje (1842-1924), one of the greatest Dzogchen masters of the last century, renowned for the depth and clarity of his teachings. A short biography of this master is here included, together with a biography of the yogini Lhundrub Tso (1864-1946), also a close student of Adzom Drugpa and grandmother of the Author.

Available from the new SSI web-shop:
www.shangshungstore.org



Focus on Our Master’s Masters

8

Focus on Our Master’s Masters

In this issue of The Mirror, our Focus is on the lives of some of the most important Masters from whom Chögyal Namkhai Norbu received teachings. We offer sketches of these Masters, some reproduced from existing publications, others based on unpublished accounts and one (the sketch of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje) drawn almost entirely from transcriptions of Rinpoche’s teachings.

To place them in a meaningful time-frame, we touch on a very brief biography of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu mentioning just some of the Masters he received teachings from. The sketches that follow are in chronological order.

Our Master was born in the district of Derge in East Tibet in the Earth Tiger year (1938) and recognized at the age of two as the reincarnation of Adzom Drugpa. While he was still a child he received teachings from his maternal uncle, **Khyentse Chökyi Wanchug** and his paternal uncle, **Togden Ugyen Tendzin**, as well as receiving many initiations and listening to many explanations from non-sectarian masters of east Tibet.

Between the ages of eight and twelve he attended the college at Derge Gönphe monastery where studied with and received initiations and transmissions from **Khyenrab Öser**. In the same period he also received teachings from other masters including the illustrious Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche Chökyi Lodrö.

Then in a meditation cave at Sengchen Namdrag, “Great Lion Sky Cliff” residence of Togden Ugyen Tendzin, he made a retreat with his uncle for the practices of Vajrapani, Simhamukha and White Tara. At that time the son of Adzom Drugpa, **Gyurme Dorje**, on his way back from central Tibet, stayed with them and gave teachings.

When he was fourteen years old after receiving the initiations for Vajrayogini, his tutor advised him to seek out a woman master called **A-yu Khadro** in order to receive transmission from her. At the time she was 113 and had been in dark retreat for 56 years.

In 1954 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was invited to visit the People’s Republic of China as a representative of Tibetan youth and became an instructor in Tibetan language at the University in Chengdu, Sichuan. While he was living in China, he met the famous **Gangkar Rinpoche** and received many teachings from him.

When he was seventeen years old, he returned to Tibet and following a vision received in a dream, he met his Root Master, **Rigdzin Changchub Dorje**, who was living in a remote valley to the east of Derge. Changchub Dorje, who was a physician, headed a community called Nyagla Gar,

Togden Ugyen Tendzin and Khyentse Chökyi Wanchug

From ‘The Crystal and the Way of Light’ Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Compiled and Edited by John Shane
Reprinted courtesy of Snow Lion Publications
www.snowlionpub.com

I personally received transmission not only from my principal master, but also from many others including my two uncles. My uncle Togden was a great yogi, a practitioner of Dzogchen. Like Changchub Dorje, he did not have an intellectual education involving study, and was not attached to any school. In Togden’s case this was because his parents had decided when he was very young that he should be a silversmith, and so his whole education was aimed at preparing him for his work as a craftsman. But at a certain point he became seriously mentally disturbed, and none of the doctors could cure him. Finally, he was taken to see a Dzogchen master of that time, Adzam Drugpa, and as a result of contact with this master, he not only recovered from his illness but became a serious practitioner, a yogi who spent all his time in solitary retreats in isolated caves high in the mountains, where jaguars and leopards roamed.

I was sometimes allowed to stay with him as a child, and I remember that the leopards were particularly fond of butter, and that at night they would try to creep stealthily into the cave in which Togden stored his food to lick it up. I first learned Yantra Yoga in those high caves, as a very young boy, just copying Togden’s movements. I first stayed with him when I was three years old, and I can remember my uncle practicing Yantra for hours stark naked, while I amused myself as children of that age will, occasionally playfully slapping or kicking my uncle’s bare back, as part of my games, as he continued his practice unper-

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also known as Khamdo Gar, and from him Norbu Rinpoche was introduced directly to the experience of Dzogchen. He remained there for almost a year. He also received transmissions from the master’s son, **Gyurme Dorje**.

As the political situation gradually deteriorated in Tibet, Norbu Rinpoche fled first towards Central Tibet and finally arrived in Sikkim where he worked for two years as an author and editor of Tibetan textbooks for the Government of Sikkim. In 1960, he went to Italy at the invitation of Prof. Giuseppe Tucci.

The paintings are from the Temple of Great Liberation at Merigar West.



turbed. When I was a little older, I learned the meaning of what he was doing.

Togden wore his hair long and had a big bushy beard, so that when I later saw pictures of Karl Marx I thought he bore a striking resemblance to my uncle, except that my uncle didn’t wear glasses. He was an example of the kind of practitioner who becomes recognized as a master through the qualities he or she manifests as a result of practice, rather than being recognized as the reincarnation of a previous master. When he was first sent to Adzam Drugpa he was so disturbed that he could hardly comprehend any of the teachings that were being given at the master’s annual summer teaching retreat that was always held on the high plateau pasturelands. The teachings would take place surrounded by a village of tents, like a nomad encampment, that would arise for the duration of the retreat and then disappear again afterwards. By the time the retreat was over that summer, Togden had, with the help of Adzam Drugpa, been able to overcome his problem sufficiently to be ready to do some practice.

The master suggested that he make a solitary retreat, but because my uncle hadn’t been able to follow the teachings, he didn’t know what to do in such a retreat. This is how Adzam Drugpa resolved the difficulty: he sent my uncle to a cave about four days’ journey away, telling him to stay there and practice until he sent for him, and he sent another disciple to show him the way to the cave. This other disciple had been following Adzam Drugpa for many years and was a serious practitioner. He was a simple man, not an intellectual, and he personally concentrated a great deal on the practice of the Chöd. This is a practice in which one works to overcome attachment and ego-clinging by making a mentally visualized offering

of one’s own physical body. The practice was developed by a great Tibetan lady practitioner, Machig Labdrön (1055-1149), who came from a Bönpo family and who combined elements from the Bönpo traditions with the teachings of the Prajnaparamita Sutra, of the tantras, and of the Dzogchen traditions that she received from her two root maters, Pha Tamba Sangye and Tragpa Ngönshe respectively, to produce a characteristically Tibetan form of practice which is a complete path in itself, but which is also practiced in conjunction with other methods

The practitioner of Chöd who accompanied my uncle Togden to the cave in which he was to make his solitary retreat led him by an extremely circuitous route that travelled by way of so many lonely spots favourable to his practice that instead of the usual four days, it took them well over a month to reach their destination. And on the way, each day, in the course of the ordinary conversation, he communicated straightforward instructions on all aspects of practice, not just on the Chöd, to my uncle, so that when he was finally left alone, Togden knew exactly what he should do. My uncle stayed for several years in that retreat, and when he finally left it, he had already developed the remarkable powers that led people to give him the name, or title, of ‘Togden’, which means ‘Accomplished Yogi’, by which I always refer to him, although his given name was Ogyen Tendzin.

He continued thereafter to make frequent retreats, between which he travelled from place to place. His wanderings came to the attention of the Chinese authorities who were then making inroads into eastern Tibet, and they arrested him and called upon him to explain himself. Because of the way he was as an individual, my uncle was not able to give them an answer to their satisfaction, and so they decided

he must be a spy. His execution was ordered, but despite several attempts to shoot him, it proved impossible to kill him. When he was released, the people of the area began to call him ‘Togden’. He could also communicate so well with animals that even the wild and timid mountain deer that normally ran away from everyone freely came to him and stayed wherever he did. Less docile creatures also frequented his company. On one occasion when the King of Derghe himself came to visit Togden, his minister climbed up to Togden’s cave to announce the arrival of the King and found an enormous mountain lion seated peacefully beside the yogi. The King had no choice but to share the company of that most royal of beasts if he wished to be received. This he did, with no little trepidation.

Living as he did, far from any centers of habitation, considerable hardship was involved for all those who gradually heard of Togden’s reputation as a practitioner and came to seek him out to receive teachings from him. The same was also true of my other uncle, **Khyentse Chökyi Wanchug**, although the circumstances of his early life had been very different from Togden’s. He had been recognized at an early age as a trulku, and was enthroned as the reincarnation of the abbot of four important monasteries. In this position he was expected to confirm to a certain pattern of life involving administrative and even political duties, as well as fulfilling scholarly and ritual obligations. He, however, despite considerable opposition, preferred to spend his life in retreat, dedicating his life to practice. When in retreat he, too, lived in remote isolation, in his case in a cave above the snow line, where there was snow all the year round. But such was his reputation as a practitioner, and in particular as a tertön, or discoverer of texts and objects hidden in the past to be

Focus on Our Master’s Masters

revealed later, that he was sought out by those determined to receive teachings from him.

Strange things frequently happened around Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug connected with his capacity as a tertön. On one occasion, when I was still quite young, I went to stay in a cave close to, but a little below, my uncle’s. While there, I had a dream one night, in which a dakini appeared to me and gave me a small scroll of paper on which there was written a sacred text. She explained that the text was very important, and that on waking I should give it to my uncle. By this time my practice had already developed to the extent that I could maintain awareness through my sleep and dreams, and in this dream I knew that I was dreaming. I remember closing one of my fists around the scroll, and then closing the other first tightly around the first.

The rest of the night passed uneventfully, and when I awoke at dawn, I found that my fists were still tightly clenched one around the other. When I opened my hands, I found that there really was a small scroll in the palm of one hand. I at once went in great excitement to knock on the door of my uncle’s cave. It was not normally permitted to disturb him at such an early hour, as he would be engaged in his morning session of practice, but I was too excited to wait. He came to the door, and I explained what had happened and showed him the scroll. He looked at it for a moment, quite calmly, and said, ‘Thank you. I was expecting this.’ Then he went back to his practice as if nothing extraordinary had happened at all.

On another occasion, he asked my advice about a vision he had had of where a terma, a hidden text or object, would be discovered. He always very kindly showed great respect for my opinions, although I was still quite young. He was not sure whether to make a public announcement about the terma, or whether to go about find it quietly. I felt it could be of benefit to many beings, in confirming and developing their faith, if many people knew about it and were present when it was found. My uncle agreed to this, and the announcement was made, declaring that the terma was located in a certain area, and that we would go to find it on a certain date. When the appointed day came, we went out, and were soon accompanied by a large crowd of people. The place my uncle had indicated was high up on the side of a mountain, and as he was an enormously fat man, he had to be carried by four men to get up there. Finally, he said that we had arrived close enough and pointed to a smooth, sloping rock face some way above us. He said that the terma was within the rock there. He then asked for a small ice-pick, of the sort that climbers use, and when one was given to him, he stood with it in his hand in silence for a few minutes, before throwing it with all his

might up towards the rock face. The pick lodged firmly in what looked like solid rock, and held there. My uncle said that that was where the terma would be, and as everyone else watched, several of the younger men present made a ladder from a tree trunk, and set it in position to climb up. One young man then climbed carefully up and removed the pick. To everyone’s amazement a certain amount of rock came away from what had looked like solid stone. My uncle then told the young man to search gently with the pick in the opening thus revealed. It was full of loose dry sand. My uncle told him to pull it out, and he very slowly did so. Then he stopped and gasped, perched high above us on the ladder. He said that he could see a smooth, round, luminous, white object. My uncle told him not to touch it. A blanket was then spread out below, held fairly taut between several people, and, using the pick, the young man up the ladder caused the object to fall into the blanket. My uncle then picked it up in a white silk scarf, and when he held it up we all saw the mysterious luminous white orb, made of no material known to us, and about the size of a large grapefruit.

When we returned home, my uncle closed the object in a special wooden container that was locked, and secured with a wax seal. He said that it would reveal itself later. But when after several months, we opened the still sealed container, the object had mysteriously vanished. My uncle did not seem surprised, but said that the dakinis had taken it back, as the time was not yet ripe for its discovery and revelation.

As I have already said, strange things frequently happened around my uncle, and partly as a result of them many people sought teachings from him. It was a long climb to get to his cave from the forest far below, but nevertheless sometimes twenty or thirty people would make the tremendous effort to climb up to see him. Then his cave was very small, and all twenty or thirty people would have to squeeze inside, and sit really squashed together to hear him teach. Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug didn’t plan to make it hard for people, it’s just that these were the conditions he himself lived in. Then at the end of the day, all those who had come for teachings would have to climb down the steep mountain-side in the dark – and we didn’t have flashlights in Tibet. When they got to the bottom, they would spend the night in the forest, sleeping rough. There was no hotel there. And the next morning they would climb all the way up again to receive more teachings.

Khyenrab Chöki Öser

Khyenrab Chöki Öser was born in the year of the Female Earth Ox (1889) and was given the name Rinchen Dorje by his uncle, Rinchen Namgyal, abbot of Öntöd monastery. Öntöd had been built by the king of Dege, Tenpa Tsering, who had constructed twenty-five large and small monasteries in Dege and twenty-five temples belonging to the Sakya Ngor tradition.

At a young age Khyenrab Öser had great faith and devotion and asked his parents to let him become a monk and study with his uncle, the abbot of Öntöd, but they were not in agreement because they wanted him to care for the family when he became older so for some time he had to care for the family’s livestock.

At the age of thirteen, he secretly prepared some supplies and during the night ran away in the direction of the great monastery of Dege. He spent the following night sheltering under one of the stupas and early next morning left for the Lasya hermitage where Pönlop Rinpoche was in strict retreat at the time. Between practice sessions the Master told him that he was happy that he had come there to study but that he would write to his parents to let them know that he was there.

When Rinchen Dorje’s parents came to know where he was they were relieved and happy to know that he was doing well at his studies and finally agreed for him to remain at the monastery. Shortly after this he took his vows as a novice and received the name of Khyenrab Öser.

At this time his uncle Rinchen Namgyal, the abbot of Öntöd, became very ill so Khyenrab Öser went to assist him. While he was there his uncle told him he was pleased that he had arrived there before his death and advised him to follow all the instructions of Pönlop Rinpoche, to write down the history of Öntöd monastery and protect its teaching. A few days later he passed away.

In the years that followed Khyenrab Öser worked hard at his studies and received many transmissions and teachings from Pönlop Rinpoche who considered him to have an exceptional mind. He studied the four tantras of medicine with their various commentaries and started to teach the upadesa tantra of medicine and its application. He continued to deepen his study and knowledge of medicine and at the age of twenty started to serve as a doctor to those at the monastery and became known as the ‘doctor of Yarlha’.

When he was twenty-one he met Shenga Rinpoche and, encouraged by Pönlop Rinpoche, decided to study with him. Over the next few years he received many teachings from that master, became one of his best students and his assistant at the college. At Dzogchen Shriseng



Khyenrab Chöki Öser. Photo courtesy of Mr. Tashi Tsering Josayma. From ‘A Saint in Seattle’ by David P. Jackson, Wisdom Publications.

he received numerous precious teachings from Shenga Rinpoche as well as teachings from other non-sectarian masters such as Jamyang Chokyi Lodro and Gangkar Rinpoche.

Following the wishes of Shenga Rinpoche and Khyentse Rinpoche Chökyi Lödro he became the abbot of Khamje at the age of 34 where he remained for several years after which he became abbot of Palpung where he gave a number of transmissions, empowerments and commentaries.

In 1938 he founded the college of Öntöd monastery, building and renovating the big monastic complex and sustaining a number of monks. He taught there for more than twenty years giving a variety of teachings from different traditions: Sakya, Nyingma, Kagyu and Kadam to disciples from many different parts of Tibet including Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who was among his students.

In 1956 he accepted an invitation and moved to Dziphu college where he taught for two years. At that time the political situation in that area was starting to deteriorate and consequently he returned to Öntöd college where he continued to teach. He remained there even though the political situation was very negative and people were undergoing great suffering.

By the time Khyenrab Öser was seventy-seven, he had become a famous Lama not only in Kham but in the whole of Tibet. In this period this part of Tibet was under the control of the Chinese army and at a certain point Khyenrab Öser was taken by the Chinese to be brought to a people’s trial. The Master was accompanied by a group of Chinese soldiers and a local Tibetan revolutionary called Konchog.

On the way from Dziphu, they passed by an enormous rock

known as Shawa Dophag, ‘noble deer rock’, near the Stupa of the Five Families close to the large monastery of Dege. The rock had that name because during the ritual dances held by the great monastery of Dege, the dancer who impersonated the deer went to the top of the rock to dance. Khyenrab Öser said to Konchog that he was very tired and could not continue and asked if he could rest for a moment. The Tibetan asked the Chinese soldiers who agreed.

Khyenrab Öser went to rest on top of this rock, Konchog was nearby, while the Chinese soldiers had gone off for a moment. All of a sudden Khyenrab Öser made the sound ‘He Ka’, his body went limp and he died.

The Chinese soldiers came back to guard the body and sent Konchog to explain what had happened to the people’s committee. Later some activists carried away the Master’s body to a place called Black Water and hid it under the ground.



Gyalse Gyurme Dorje

Translated from the soon to be published book about the Merigar Temple of Great Liberation, Shang Shung Editions

Gyalse Gyurme Dorje (1895–1969) was born amid many marvelous signs as the third son of Adzom Drugpa. From an early age he remembered clearly his previous lifetimes and was recognized by Jamgön Kongtrul as the emanation of the great Master and tertön Terdag Lingpa. His father, Adzom Drugpa, was his most important Master and transmitted to him all the instructions of Dzogchen, from the preliminary practices up to the advanced stages of *tregchö* and *thögal*, and in particular the complete teachings of the Secret Essence, the Cetsun Nyingthig as well as his own *termas*. Gyurme Dorje practiced these teachings diligently until he realized their fruit. He also studied *sutra*, *tantra* and many other fields of knowledge under other Masters. Later on Adzom Drugpa decided that his third son should be his successor at their main seat at Adzom Gar and consequently, on his death, all of his numerous disciples considered Gyurme Dorje as inseparable from the Master and even the older students, overcoming all their hesitations, prostrated at his feet recognizing him as their spiritual guide. Gyurme Dorje followed the instructions of his father and continued to teach bringing immense benefit to beings and becoming a key figure most of all for the spread of the Dzogchen teaching in recent times. He was also the author of several important commentaries and treatises including the ‘Commentary on the *Bhadracaryapra idhana*’ and ‘A Drop of Amrita, a word by word commentary on the short expo-

A-Yu Khadro, Dorje Paldron

From ‘Women of Wisdom’, by Tsultrim Allione Published by courtesy of Snow Lion Publications www.snowlionpub.com

Homage to Dorje Paldron and Vajra Yogini! This biography is only a drop of the nectar of A-Yu Khadro’s life. As I write of her I will try to remember her presence. I am the insignificant disciple Namkhai Norbu, and this is the story of how I met A-Yu Khadro and how I came to write her life story. When I was fourteen in the Year of the Iron Rabbit, 1951, I was studying at Sakya College. My teacher there, Kenrab Odzer, had twice given me the complete teachings of Vajra Yogini in the sition of the path of illusory net (*Mayajala*)’. Moreover he had the woodblocks made for the famous text edition known as Adzom Drugpa Chögar, which consisted in newly publishing important texts from the Buddhist tradition including the Seventeen Tantras of the Ancients and the Longchen Nyingthig of which this is considered to be the best edition of the works of Longchenpa. Through visions Gyurme Dorje received the transmission of many *terma* from Padmasambhava but decided not to transcribe most of them, choosing to transmit more ancient *terma*. He was the Master of Tarthang Tulku, Rago Chogtrul, Tulku Losel, Tulku Kunga and also of Adzom Drugpa’s *tulkus*, Namkhai Norbu and Drugpa Rinpoche. In 1958, Gyalse Gyurme Dorje was arrested and held in prison where he began to give teachings to other prisoners. He died in 1969 amidst many marvelous signs.



Norpa and Sharpa Sakya traditions. One day he said to me: “In the region of Tagzi, not far from your family’s home, lives an accomplished woman, a great dakini, A-Yu Khadro. You should go to her and request the Vajra Yogini initiation from her.” That year he let me leave a month early for the autumn holidays with the understanding that I would be going to see A-Yu Khadro. So first I returned home and prepared to go with my mother Yeshe Chodron and my sister Sonam Pundzom. We set off, and after a journey of three days, we arrived at A-Yu Khadro’s place in Dzongsa. She lived in a little stone hut near a river in a meadow under the cliff face of a mountain to the east of a small Sakya monastery. The hut was tiny, with no windows. She had two assistants, an old man, Palden, and an old nun. Zangmo. They were also strong practitioners of yoga and meditation. We were very happy and amazed to see this situation. When we entered Khadro’s room for the first time, only one butter lamp was lit. She was 113 at that time, but she did not look particularly ancient. She had very long hair that reached her knees. It was black at the tips and white at the roots. Her hands looked like the hands of a young women. She wore a dark-red dress and a meditation belt over her left shoulder. During our visit we requested teachings, but she kept saying that she was no one special and had no qualifications to teach. When I asked her to give me the Vajra Yogini teaching she said: “I am just a simple old woman, how can I give teachings to you?” The more compliments we offered her, the more deferential she became toward us. I was discouraged and feared she might not give us any teachings.

That night we camped near the river, and the next morning, as we were making breakfast, Ani Zangmo, the old nun, arrived with her niece bringing butter, cheese, and yogurt. These, she said, were for the breakfast of my mother and sister, and I was to come to see Khadro. I went immediately, and as I entered I noted that many more butter lamps were lit and she touched her forehead to mine, a great courtesy. She gave me a nice breakfast of yogurt and milk and told me that she had had an auspicious dream that night of her teacher, Jamyang Khentse Wangpo. He had advised her to give me the teaching of Khadro Sangwa Kundu, his *gongter*. This was not the teaching I had asked for, but was a teaching she had received from him directly which she had practiced extensively. While we were having breakfast, she was examining the Tibetan calendar. Then she said: “Since tomorrow is the day of the dakini, we will begin then. Today go to visit the Sakya monastery, and in the meantime we will make preparations.” So we went off to visit the monastery and made some offerings there. They had statues of the Buddhas of the Three Times and a *stupa* five arm-lengths high made of gilded bronze and studded with many jewels. It had been made according to Khadro’s instructions. Inside it was empty. The next day around eleven we began the initiation of Khadro Sangdu. From that day on, every morning she gave teachings including the practices of the subtle nerves and the subtle breath. In the afternoon at the end of her meditation session, she gave further explanation of the Khadro Sangdu and the Chöd of Machig Lapdron, the Zinba Rangdrol. This was the Chöd practice she had done for many years when she was younger. There were five of us receiving these teachings: Khenpo Tragyal, the abbot of the

monastery; Yangkyi, a nun; my mother; my sister; and I. Her hut was so small that not everyone could fit in, and Yangkyi had to sit outside the doorway. The Khenpo assisted with the shrine and the mandalas. A month later, she began the Yang-Ti, one of the most important of the Dzog Chen teachings in the most advanced Upadesha series, having to do with the practice in the dark. This teaching took five days. Then she began teaching on the Longchen Nying Thig. This ended on the twenty-fourth. In the seventh month on the tenth day, she gave the Vajra Yogini in the Sharpa tradition, the instruction I had requested, followed by a complete explanation. This was linked to the Kha Khyab Rangdrol teachings of Nyagla Padma Dündul. Then she gave the complete teachings of her Singhamukha Gongter which took until the tenth of the following month. At the end she gave the long life White Tara practice. Not only did we receive formal teaching, but in addition, she made time for informal conversations and personal advice. I was not with her a long time, a little more than two months. During that time she had given eight kinds of teachings and was really so kind and gentle. We were very content with the generous gift of these precious teachings. The Khenpo, one of her principal disciples, told us that he had, from time to time, received teachings from her, but the kind and extent of the teachings she had given us were rare indeed. She normally did not give much teaching and had never given so much in such a short time. He was afraid this meant that she might pass away very soon. Then Palden, the old man, said that several months before we came she had had a dream indicating that she should give certain teachings soon. Before we arrived they had begun the preparations. So there was definitely a motive for giving these teachings. Sometimes, at my request, after the afternoon teachings, she would tell me about her life. I had the peculiar habit of writing everything down, unusual for Tibetans, so I wrote down everything she told me. From these notes I constructed this biography. [The biography of A-Yu Khadro follows] This text was written and verbally translated from Tibetan to Italian by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and simultaneously orally translated into English by Barrie Simmon in Conway, Massachusetts, on January 8, 1983. It was taped in Conway, then transcribed, edited, and annotated by Tsultrim Allione, finished in Rome, Italy on February 7, 1983.



Gangkar Rinpoche

Based on accounts published in ‘The Incarnation from White Glacier Mountain’ by Minyag Gonpo, translation by S. Brinson Aldridge (Infinity Publishing) & ‘Buddhism between Tibet and China’ by Matthew T. Kapstein (Wisdom Publications)

Gangkar Rinpoche, the 5th in a series of incarnate teachers of Bo Gangkar Monastery in southern Kham, was one of the most illustrious personages of the Kagyupa school and was considered among the most important religious authorities of the time with numerous disciples not only in Tibet but also in China.

He was educated mainly at Pelpung Monastery in Derge, the foremost Karma Kagyu centre in far eastern Tibet, where his former incarnation had been a student. At Pelpung, Gangkar met the Eleventh Situ Rinpoche who became a supporting figure during his years of study. He studied under the eminent teacher, Khenpo Zhenga, a master of the Ris med non-sectarian movement and the founder of Sri Simha college at Dzogchen Monastery and became one of the most learned students at the college.

During his years of study, he journeyed to Tsurpu in central Tibet to receive Kagyu teachings on the highest yoga tantras from the Fifteenth Karmapa. On his return to Pelpung, he was appointed retreat master of the monastery meditation centre after which he returned to his home monastery, Bo Gangkar where he established a new school.

In 1930 he was appointed as junior tutor to the Sixteenth Karmapa and travelled to Tsurpu for a second time to instruct him for a year in the essential teachings he had received himself from the previous Karmapa. He returned to his monastery after this because he felt that the spiritual

teachings there were run down and that there was great need for a teacher.

In 1935, Gangkar Rinpoche was invited by Norlha Rinpoche to come to China. Norlha had spent several years teaching in China, had many students there and was a very well-known Buddhist teacher. On his death, Gangkar Rinpoche complied with Norlha’s wish and went off to China, stopping first in Chengdu where he gave empowerments and teachings. This was the first time that deep teachings of the Kagyupa were given in China and there were many requests for them even among the rich and powerful. He continued on to Chongqing where he gave Kagyu, Nyingma and Dzogchen teachings to monks and laypeople alike.

He travelled by boat with his entourage on the Yangtse River as far as Lu shan in Jiangxi province where he was greeted by huge crowds of people and monks including the leaders of the party in power at the time, the Guomintang, as well as army leaders. His main purpose there was to build a stupa to house Norlha’s relics, as the latter’s Chinese students wished. This was an area where Norlha had taught frequently and many of his Chinese students were still there.

After completing the construction of the stupa, placing Norlha’s remains inside it and the inauguration, although he had agreed to stay for longer to teach, he was forced to leave for his own monastery in Tibet because of the dangerous situation created by the outbreak of war with Japan, arriving home in 1939.

When the Sino-Japanese war ended in 1946, in response to many invitations, Gangkar Rinpoche set out on his second trip to China in order to give teachings to his, by then, numerous Chinese disciples. He toured much of China giving teachings on the profound doctrines of

the non-sectarian Tibetan philosophical systems to tens of thousands of disciples among whom were many political leaders of the time. He also gave lectures at universities where he presented general introductions to Tibetan Buddhism. He made the teachings of the sutras and tantras in the Tibetan traditions shine like the sun in China.

At the beginning of 1947 the central government of the Guomintang organized a meetings at Chongqing to honour the spiritual teachers of the country during which Gangkar Rinpoche was honoured as a ‘teacher of the Chinese nation’ and presented with a golden seal decorated with four lions. This second trip to China, however, was cut short due to the fluctuating political situation.

The takeover by the communists in China in 1949 had repercussions for Gangkar Rinoche because of his connections with Goumingtang high officials, many of whom were his disciples, and he was placed under house arrest in Dartsedo for several months and underwent intense questioning.

After his release he returned to his monastery where, in the early fifties, some changes were made to the traditional curriculum when some eighty young Chinese students arrived from the Central Nationalities Institutes in Beijing and Chengdu sent by the CCP. The group was led by Yu Daoquan, the first Chinese teacher of Tibetan at the Institute and included some students who would become part of the new generation of Central Institute Tibetologists. One of the instructors who worked with Gangkar Rinpoche was the young Namkhai Norbu. The classes were to introduce the Chinese students to Tibetan language and culture.

After the Chinese students had completed their course of study, Gangkar was asked to teach at the Central Nationalities Institute where he remained until 1955 giving teaching on Tibetan studies and translating documents for the National People’s Congress.

It was during this period that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche had the opportunity to meet Gangkar Rinpoche and receive various teachings from him, on Chagchen or Mahamudra, on Dzogchen, the Konchog chindu series and the Six Yogas. Before Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche left him, Gangkar Rinpoche wrote a document on the twenty-fifth day of the third month of the wood sheep year (1955) concerning the spiritual and historical role of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche:

“This is what was revealed to me in the nonduality of dharmadhatu (dbyings) and the state of rigpa. So that the opportunity of the manifestation of this master not be wasted, if he could accede to the residency of the Dharma Raja Ngawang Namgyal (Zhab Drung Ngag dbang rNam rgyal) Rinpoche of Bhutan (Lho ‘brug), this would certainly bring enor-



Rigdzin Changchub Dorje

Compiled by Nina Robinson

“The lineage of my Teacher Rigdzin Changchub Dorje (Byang chub rdo rje) goes directly to Guru Padmasambhava; there are no human masters in it because he is a great terton. One of the sons of the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen was called Muti Tsenpo. Changchub Dorje is considered to be something like a reincarnation of King Muti Tsenpo. Guru Padmasambhava transmitted this treasure teaching to him and kept it in the mind of Muti Tsenpo. Changchub Dorje woke up and he had that remembrance and he discovered that teaching. Guru Padmasambhava indicated that for the future Muti Tsenpo would appear again in the form of master Rigdzin Ösel Lingpa, this is one of the four or five different terton names of Master Changchub Dorje. A terton of-

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mous benefit to that country, to the Teachings, and to the welfare and spiritual happiness of all beings.”

When Gangkar Rinpoche returned to his monastery in the same year the political situation had changed once again and there was even less religious freedom than previously. Finally in 1957 he received permission for a month’s leave of absence and returned to his monastery, telling all his monks on his arrival that it was important to have an elaborate assembly. Following his wishes, they made many offering of precious objects and torma. In the evening he gave instructions to the younger students and then seated in the posture of Vairocana, passed away.

ten has a particular name in relation to his termas. For example Jigmed Lingpa is the terton name of Chentse Ösel.

“I now have all the series of terma of Changchub Dorje and also the root tantras. Many years ago I was very worried, thinking that maybe I wouldn’t be able to find all his books. In Tibet during the Cultural Revolution they were destroying everything, but the students of Changchub Dorje hid most of the books of his teachings in the rocks. Later when they had more freedom they took them out. When we had the possibility to have communication with Tibet, I wrote to my friends, students of my master Changchub Dorje, and they sent me most of the original books. Later, when I went to Khamdogar, I took all the other books. So now I have all the terma teachings of Changchub Dorje.”

Rigdzin Changchub Dorje was a disciple of Adzam Drugpa, Nyagla Pema Düddul, Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen and Drubwang Shakya Shri, but he himself was not well

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After his death, his body was preserved with precious sand, herbs and salt and a stupa was built at Chengdu to house it. However before the body could be placed there, protest campaigns had begun, the property of the monastery was seized by the government, the sacred texts were burned and the monks forced to give up their robes. Consequently, the body was taken to a cemetery. Devoted individual managed to wrap the bones from the cemetery in silk leaving substitutes in their place and concealed them. Today these are the most important relics of the monastery and people come from many different places to pay their respects.

Focus on Our Master’s Masters

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known as a teacher. He didn’t give formal initiations or wear elegant robes. He dressed like a poor farmer and transmitted the teaching in a simple direct way. Very few people knew him as a great Master, but he was famous as an extraordinary doctor.

Although he had never received any formal education and could hardly read or write and had never studied traditional medicine, he was widely known as a marvellous doctor. Numerous patients travelled long distances to be treated by him. When Trogawa Rinpoche gave teachings on medicine in London in the early 1980s he said there are three levels of doctors: the highest level is the Buddha who gives the definitive cure; on the medium level there are those who never need to study because they are totally clairvoyant and know what is wrong with the patients and how to cure their diseases without even seeing them and on the lower level are those who have to study for many years. He said he had only known one on the medium level and that was Rigdzin Changchub Dorje.

He was born in the village of Dhakhe in the Nyagrong (nyag rong) district in South-Eastern Kham. His mother, Bochung (bo chung), was originally from Dege and was a disciple of Gyalwa Changchub (rgyal ba byang chub), a highly realized yogi from Khrom. He founded his community of mostly lay practitioners in a remote valley in Konjo in eastern Dege. It was and is still to this day known as Nyaglagar and also as Khamdogar.

All those who lived there shared in the farming work, the gathering and preparation of medicinal herbs and the treatment of patients. They were each offered a bowl of simple soup every day. When the Chinese Communists arrived in the area in 1955, with the intention of implementing their agricultural reforms they were surprised to find that the Gar was already functioning as an agricultural commune and therefore was not in need of any reforms.

It was also in 1955 that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu met Rigdzin Changchub Dorje. He had dreamt of a place where there was a white house that had some mantras of Padmasambhava painted in gold on a blue board above the door. On the inner wall there was a thigle with A and there was an old man sitting in a corner. He looked like a farmer but he also had something of the aspect of a Yogi. He told Rinpoche and

his father to go to the other side of the house to the cave of eight Mandalas of eight Anuyoga Tantras. When they entered the cave they began to recite the Heart Sutra of the Mahayana. They went all around looking at everything. Some parts of mandalas were visible but it wasn’t easy to distinguish which mandalas they were. When they arrived back at the door they had finished the recitation of the Sutra and then Rinpoche woke up.

Rinpoche told his father about the dream. One year later when he went back to his home he heard a visitor telling his father about a special Lama, and describing his house and the chörtens. Everything was precisely like in his dream. Immediately he persuaded his father to accompany him there. They arrived after three days journey on horseback. The house and the appearance of the Lama were exactly as they were in his dream.

“The first time I met my Teacher Changchub Dorje I was a little surprised because his appearance and his way of living was just like an ordinary village farmer. He wore very thick sheepskin clothes and big, thick sheepskin trousers because it was cold in that country. Until then I had only met very elegantly dressed teachers; I had never seen or met Teachers who looked like that. The only difference in his appearance from a normal village man was that he had long hair tied up on top of his head and conch shell earrings and a conch shell necklace. I remember that when some important Lamas went to visit him they felt shy about paying respect to him. How can important teachers pay respect to a poor man? But Mahasiddhas are not always elegant or dressed like monks and nuns.

Although I was a little surprised I had no doubt that he was my Teacher because of the dream I had had one year before. I thought this dream was very important. Then I followed him and I had no doubt.

“Until I received direct introduction from him I only had a kind of constructed faith, not really natural faith. I had spent many years in a college where I studied many Sutras, all the philosophies, and all the different Tantras. I thought I was a scholar and I knew everything. I was very proud. I went to see my teacher Changchub Dorje, not because I didn’t know the teaching, and I wanted a teacher but because of the dream I had had.”

During the time Rinpoche spent at Khamdogar, Changchub Dorje asked him to assist

in his medical activities and also to write down his *termas*. While attending to his patients Changchub Dorje was simultaneously receiving *termas* and dictating them at intervals. In the evenings Chögyal Namkhai Norbu would copy them in neat writing and was surprised at how they were perfectly coherent. At first he always thought, “This teacher is not giving any teachings. I’ve spent a long time here but he is always asking me to work. He never gives me teaching.” He was always treating people, giving information and advice to his students and chatting. None of this seemed like teaching in the way Rinpoche was accustomed to being taught.

“I always received many teachings when I was around teachers. Also at Khamdogar I received transmissions, instructions and initiations from two very good disciples of Changchub Dorje: one called Aksoden and also his son, Gyurmed Gyaltsen, who was very learned. I was also accustomed to receiving Tantric style initiations. I always felt it was essential to receive initiations from important teachers. So I asked Changchub Dorje to give me an initiation on the special day of Guru Padmasambhava, on the 10th day of the 6th month. He said that I didn’t need it because he had already given me an initiation. The day I arrived he dreamt that he put a crystal rock on my three places and he had given me initiation in this way. I said, ‘That was your dream. I didn’t have the same dream. It doesn’t work for me’, and I insisted. So finally he agreed to give me his special *terma* (gter ma) teaching of the Xitro (zhi khro), the Peaceful and Wrathful Mandala. This is the only formal initiation I ever received from him. It is not a very complicated initiation, like the Kalachakra, but it took my teacher Changchub Dorje the whole day to give it. Sometimes he could not see well enough to read the words. Sometimes he was reading the notes that explained what to do and he was trying to do it. The initiation was a teaching from his own *terma* but he was going ahead like that with great difficulty. When the initiation was finished his students and I did a Ganapuja together quickly. My teacher was there but he didn’t take part. Then it was already late and dark, so I stood up and said, ‘Thank you very much.’ And I began to leave.

“Why and where are you going?”

“I’m going home to sleep now. I want to go back to my room and go to bed, because today I re-

ceived an initiation and I am very satisfied.’

“We didn’t do anything.’

I was very surprised. He had spent the whole day giving me an initiation.

“Sit down!” he said. I thought, ‘This master is really very strange’. I sat down at once because at times he was a bit fierce and if one didn’t behave well he was likely to get cross. My father also sat down. After a little while he started talking. At first he spoke in a very simple way to clarify what is meant by the necessity, the importance and the methods of direct introduction in the Dzogchen teaching. He said to me: ‘You studied for many years in college but your mouth is logic and your nose is Madyamikha’. You can’t understand, you can’t get in the knowledge in that way.’ Then he gave a direct introduction. He gave me the example of the difference between looking through eyeglasses and looking in a mirror. If you don’t know how to look inside yourself all the explanations of the Dzogchen teachings become other points of view. Before then I was convinced that I had really understood the *tawa*, the point of view, of the Dzogchen teachings. But then I realized that all my learning was external – just something to study, analyze, talk about and think about. Now I saw that what is called *tawa* is something alive, really related to our condition – something to work on in oneself.

He also taught me that the principle of Guruyoga isn’t the form and the system according to lineages; the real principle is the presence of the union of the state of all the Masters with our own state without any limitations. Without this principle, even if you do a very elaborate, formal Guruyoga there is no sense in it. We have to go beyond all the limitations of lineages, etc. So in a few words he taught me many things and how to find real presence.

After the direct introduction of course I really discovered what the Dzogchen teachings mean. Changchub Dorje went on talking for about three hours. He explained the base, the path and the fruit and all the essence of the Dzogchen Teaching. I understood everything very clearly. But after a while it seemed as if he was reading a Tantra from memory and the words of the explanation were becoming more and more difficult to understand. He was really a strange Teacher, a great Terton. He went ahead like that for another half hour. In the

end he saw that I no longer understood. Then he stopped and said, ‘O.K. Now you can go.’

“My castle of concepts had crumbled and I had finally discovered what Dzogchen is and what the essence of all teachings is. This is what ‘Root Teacher’ means. Later, when I read again all the teachings I had received up until then, I discovered it was my fault that I had not understood before. It was not the fault of all these teachers. The real meaning of Root Teacher is the one who makes us discover our real nature and then we discover the value of all Teachings and Teachers.”

“After I had received the introduction and discovered what Dzogchen really is, what my real nature is, I saw in a completely different way. Before that I didn’t understand that everything my Teacher did was related to teaching. He was always asking me to do service and to work to prepare medicines etc. Sometimes he would say strange things. He was also breaking down my attitudes. Even though I was not a monk I had always been in college where everyone behaved just like monks, so I also dressed like a monk and had learned to have the same attitudes as a monk. But I had only received two vows: one was to wear clothes that showed one was a follower of Buddha and the other was a vow of Refuge. I did not have any other vows. But the rule of the college was that we should behave like monks. So I had that kind of attitude very strongly. For example, if I saw nice females I would feel afraid and I would escape. Before I received these teachings, if there were some very nice young nuns nearby my teacher Changchub Dorje would say to me, “Do you like these nuns? They’re nice looking, aren’t they?” I would blush. So as soon as I saw any nice looking nuns I would try to escape, otherwise my teacher would make these kinds of comments. That is an example of my attitude at that time. But, later after I had received direct introduction, even if my teacher said something as a joke I understood very well that everything he said was related to the teaching and instructions.

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International
Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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In Memoriam E. Gene Smith (1936–2010)

Jacqueline Gens

It is with great sorrow we learned that E.Gene Smith, founder of the “www.tbrc.org”Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center and an old friend of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche died at home in NYC on December 16, 2010. Gene was universally known among Tibetan and Western scholars as the man responsible for saving the vast treasury of Tibetan Literature through innovative programs he created to collect, publish and digitize Tibetan texts. His digital library is the most comprehensive in the world. The leap from the centuries old and labor intensive tradition of printing with carved woodblocks to storing an entire library of millions of pages in the palm of your hand within a generation is one of technologies most gripping stories and Gene was at the forefront of this unique solution.

Upon hearing of his death hundreds of colleagues from around the world including many important lamas began circulating testimonials to Gene’s brilliant in-

tellect and his prodigious scholarship of Tibetan bibliographic history, which was made available to all who sought his advice. Matthew Ricard recounted that Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche used to address him affectionately as “Mahapandita Jamyang Namgyal” “The Great All Victorious Manjushri Pandita,” a well-deserved name. Gene’s legendary kindness and generosity served to manifest a culture of serious scholarship for virtually anyone studying in the field – both high and low. His influence is unpar-

alleled among scholars. Without his work, there would be no field of Tibetan Studies in the West, as we know it today, for there simply would be no texts to study and translate.

For nearly five decades Gene Smith dedicated his life to preserve Tibet’s heritage as a steward of Tibetan culture, Smith became acquainted with Tibetans in the early 1960s when he began study of the language among other obscure languages as an acceptable option for conscien-



tious objector status to avoid military service during the Vietnam era. While working on his PhD, he studied with Sakya master, Deshung Rinpoche at the University of Washington who encouraged him to seek out collections of Tibetan texts for publication. Armed with letters of introductions to the leading lamas of all schools, Gene embarked on his mission eventually becoming employed by the US government’s Library of Congress in the New Delhi field office and later South East Asia for whom he worked until his retirement in 1996. His innovative programs of recovery and publication resulted in making available large collections of Tibetan works that were disseminated to major university libraries and Buddhist libraries across the world. After retirement he founded the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center with the aim of creating an online digital library.

Personally, I found his book *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*, an extraordinary introduction to the greatness of Tibetan culture. Originally part of his textual annotations, these essays (somewhat legendary) glow with keen insights and deep appreciation for the subject matter. His excitement is palpable. Once while do-

ing research on Tibetan poetry, I stumbled upon his entry on 15th century author, Mon rtse pa kun dga’ dpal dan, where Gene writes, “Mon rtse pa’s style is graceful and his verse demonstrates a mastery of the idiom of folk poetry. He often succeeds in making his reader feel what 15th century Tibet must have been like.” Then in perfect meter, Smith translated an exquisite ballad that is Shakespearean in scope rivaling the greatest of Western literature. I was blown away, as they say. Reading this brief entry deeply inspired me that indeed there are meritorious works of complex literary achievement to be found in Tibetan literature. I believe Mr. Smith intended this to be the correct response.

Gene Smith is the recipient of many awards and accolades that can be found online. A movie called, *Digital Dharma: One Man’s Mission to Save a Culture*, is currently in production. To view video selections go to YouTube. For further information about The Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center visit, www.tbrc.org. Continue the work.....

Jacqueline Gens
Tsegyalgar East, New Years Day 2011

In the Forest of Faded Wisdom

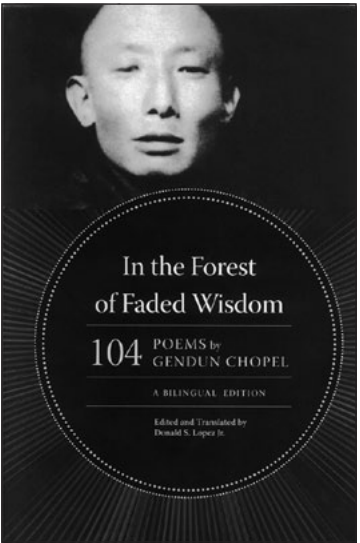
104 Poems by Gendun Chopel
Edited and Translated by
Donald S. Lopez Jr.
The University of Chicago Press

Alfredo Colitto & Giorgio Dallorto
Reprinted from the Merigar Letter
December 2010

This collection, in Tibetan with facing English translation, is the first complete collection of the poems of Gendun Chopel, or at least of those not lost following his arrest. The book also contains a detailed introduction both to the life and poetry of the author.

The poems are divided thematically in five sections. The first is called “Teachings of a Master without Disciples”. Gendun Chopel was a great Buddhist scholar who attained the highest academic qualifications within the

Gelugpa school, and this section comprises poems on this theme, many of which contain instructions on how to practise following the Buddhist path, even though they were written without the authorisation of a great lama or the request of a powerful patron. The title of the section alludes to the fact that no student ever asked to receive teachings from Chopel.



In the second section, “Laments of an Unknown Sage”, the poems are more autobiographical, starting with the one he wrote after leaving Labrang monastery. Gendun Chopel felt misunderstood and unappreciated throughout his life, and these feelings grew during the long years he spent wandering in foreign lands far from home.

The third section, “The Ways of the World”, comprises poems that in one way or another contain keen observations of a man sure of having seen everything, who with some cynicism describes human nature, the persons he met and the places he visited.

The majority of the poems of the fourth section, “Songs of the Tibetan Kings”, are connected with his most important historical work, “The White Annals”, unfortunately unfinished, which deals with the ancient Tibetan empire. In this part Chopel used terms and themes he came across

in the manuscripts discovered in Dunhuang. These are the poems of a Tibetan patriot, proud of his people and of the warrior spirit and power of Tibet.

The fifth section, “Precepts on Passions”, contains extracts from Gendun’s erotic manual “Treatise on Passion” (available from Snow Lion in Jeffrey Hopkins translation under the title ‘Tibetan Arts of Love’). Editor Donald Lopez has made a cogent selection from this fascinating work, including both specific instructions on the art of love and more philosophical passages on the nature of passion.

Buddhist themes and terms pervade almost all the poems, and cynical observations on human greed are frequently aligned with quotations or passages that bring to light Buddha’s infinite compassion. The aim or at least aspiration of this volume is to enable the finest of Gendun Chopel’s compositions to be read by the vast public that he deserved while alive.

The Madman’s Middle Way

Reflections on Reality of the Tibetan Monk Gendun Chopel
University of Chicago Press 2006

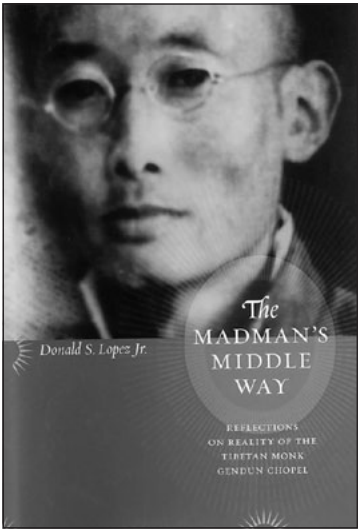
Alfredo Colitto & Giorgio Dallorto
Reprinted from the Merigar Letter
December 2010

The book takes its title from the nickname given to an uncontrollable and irreverent scholar from the monastery of Drepung: Gendun Chopel, called “The Madman” by his teacher Geshe Sherab.

It should be pointed out that the term “mad” (smyon pa) in Tibetan has diverse connotations, not all of which are negative. Gendun Chopel did not appear at all put out by this epithet, in fact he took it on to define himself, above all in the last years of his life.

“The Madman’s Middle Way” shows us the more philosophical side of this outré lama, denoting his qualities as a considerable thinker and expert in scholarship.

It opens with a detailed biographical essay on the life and works of Gendun Chopel, which also contained many poems with reference to specific events in his life, and proceeds with the English translation of his main philosophical work, bearing the title “An Ornament of the Thought of Nagarjuna Clarifying the Core of Madhyamaka”. The third part is a commentary to the text, the



fourth has notes on the author, while the fifths deals with the criticism which it received, because part of the fame of this text by Gendun Chopel is due to the controversies it inflamed.

This is a profound work on Madhyamaka philosophy, however written without the systematic superstructure typical of Tibetan philosophical literature. Often consisting of disjointed statements, these leap from one topic to another without apparent connection, and are at times so cryptic that it is difficult to decipher their meaning. It should be added that important Gelugpa scholars have written texts confuting his work, at times longer than Chopel’s own. Nevertheless what emerges from reading this volume is the feeling that this is an important text, the work of someone who penetrated deep into the meaning of Buddhism beyond pure philosophical speculation.



Rinpoche with the Vajrapani thodrol.

Photo: R. Friend

Tashigar Norte and the Future

At the end of the teaching session at Tashigar Norte on November 9, 2010, Rinpoche spoke about the situation and the future of the Gar.

“I want to tell something to everyone connected with the webcast. We are here in Margarita. And you all know we had some problems in Margarita – that’s why I am not living here as I was before, only coming for a short time while we are doing a retreat. But many people think I have almost renounced Tashigar North: this is wrong, I will never renounce Tashigar North. In Tashigar North I gave so many important Dzogchen teachings, this is a sacred place, we empowered it, we prepared it – for ever we will continue here – so you must not think that.

But in the Dzogchen teachings we always say we should work with circumstances. When the circumstances are negative somehow, we adjust our attitude and our way of being. That is what we are doing, this is with our awareness. It doesn’t mean I am renouncing.

Some people assumed, when they discovered I like Tenerife very much, that I am concentrated on Tenerife and that I am rejecting Margarita – I have not at all this idea. But Tenerife is a very important place, a very interesting place, something I discovered. We are developing something in Tenerife for Merigar; we are developing it more and more every year. Maybe I will also live there a little longer in the future, but it doesn’t mean I will not be living also in Margarita. It’s very important to make this distinction.”

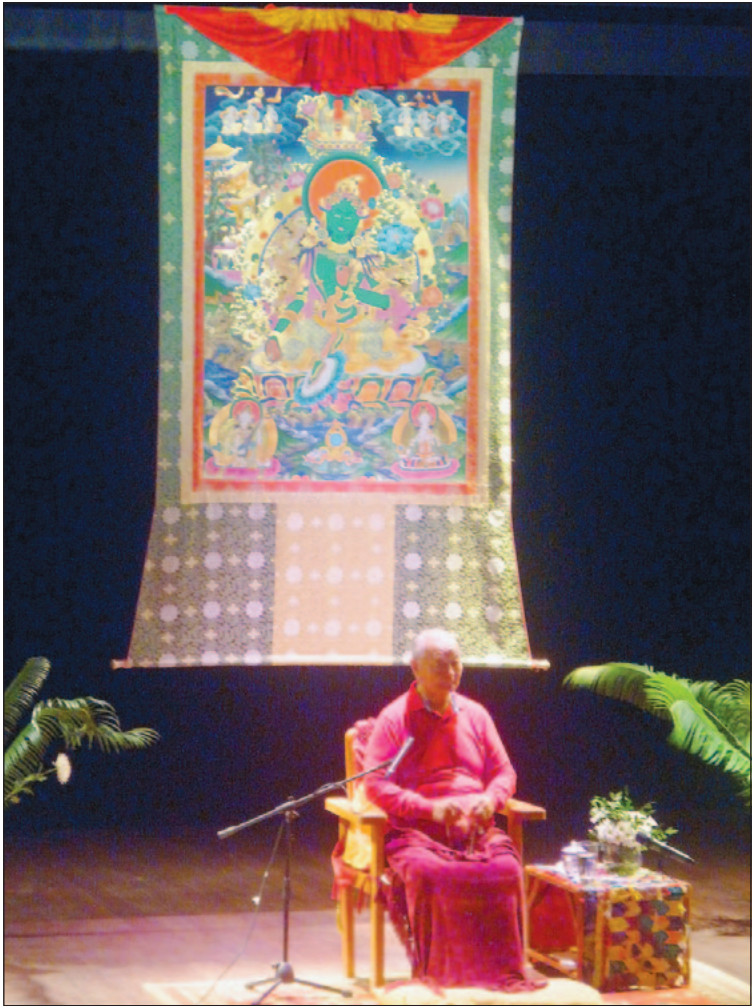
Transcription by Lauri Denyer

Rinpoche Teaches in Isla Margarita

Rosemary Friend

A wonderful event heralded the Chogyur Lingpa retreat due to commence on November 5 here in Isla Margarita. A public talk by Rinpoche organized by the Gakyil of Tashigar Norte also provided continuous videos of Yantra Yoga and Dance of Six Spaces, information booklets, many Dzogchen books and the large thodrol on display in the foyer of the art and cultural centre in Ascuncion. The large theatre filled with many local people interested to discover something more of the Dzogchen teaching. As a result we were delighted to welcome many new, local people to the retreat at Tashigar Norte two days later and enjoyed seeing so many Venezuelan people appreciating the profound presence of the Master and Teaching.

Many lungta filled the sky above us as we made our way up the road to gompa – joyful images of our elemental nature – happy to again be blessed by the presence of our Master here in this sacred land of Jnanadakini. The empowering flow of our Masters’ endless transmission saturated us with the blissful knowledge of the essence of semde, longde and upadesha; tawa, gompa, attitude and fruit; essence, nature and energy – exquisitely summarized from Chogyur Lingpa’s profound



terma teaching – essence of the three series of Dzogchen.

The dance mandala was full each morning with many new people learning Dance of three Vajras with Carisa supervised by Adriana; also Yantra Yoga sessions with Dina and Marisa and practice explanation sessions with Steve were all well attended and much appreciated. The international lottery was well sup-

ported by local and international community and will help begin construction of the dormitories that are the next important development on the land.

Rinpoche referred to two songs of spiritual feeling during the retreat – from Garab Dorje and Manjusrimitra. This is the story of one.

(8/11/10 – @ 1hr 19 min approx)



Participants who attended the Dance of the Three Vajras course that was held during the retreat with Rinpoche. Photo: R. Friend

Manjusrimitra was doing practice in the cemetery Hechen Dawa
Where there is a stupa at which many mahasiddhas had done their practice
He is sitting behind this stupa
And he is doing contemplation
Then in the early morning, around 4 o'clock
His knowledge arises and this Song of Spiritual Feeling comes out:
I am the student of Garab Dorje (son of the mind of / very close with Garab Dorje who transmitted important teachings)
And have received so many important teachings, transmissions
When observing, there is no-one who is doing this practice
(When being in the state of contemplation, there is no-one being someone in that state of contemplation)
The nature – luminosity is pervading everywhere

Also there is nothing manifesting like an object I can see
There is nothing (for which) I am considering ‘there is something’, even a small atom
The emptiness state since the beginning is pure
There is nothing – something concrete
And even not being concrete
(Still) manifesting its infinite wisdoms and dimensions
Automatically

One thing is very clear.
We are challenged to really enter the true meaning and experience our real nature continuously.
That is all.
It is time for us all to take up the gauntlet, meet the challenge.
Let’s go,
In this boat
Together

Report from Tashigar Norte

On the night of December 4, 2010, heavy rain fell in Margarita for about eight hours without stopping, creating flood-like conditions and landslides. The Gonpa was inundated the entire floor was covered in about four inches of mud. Although the houses were not affected, water got into the offices and also damaged roads and drainage channels. The cleanup work began immediately and went on continuously for two



weeks. We are happy to report that the Gonpa was not seriously damaged by the mud and is now fully functional again. The man-

dala is intact and we are back to our usual practice schedule.

During this challenging time, everyone collaborated very well

and as a result we were able to carry out the emergency work very effectively. Throughout the process of digging new flood channels and removing the mud, we continued to do collective Mandarava practice several times a day, mostly following the webcast from Merigar West. Steve Landsberg started to give a Mandarava course in which he explained the meaning of each Tibetan word in the practice.

The dormitory project has begun and we have located a site for the building that was outside of the flood zone in the recent storm. Architect Carolina Hernandez has made a preliminary

drawing and we will be reviewing that in the coming weeks. Maria Angelica found an engineer for us who is advising us on how to prevent any damage from occurring should there be another heavy rainfall.

There are about twenty to thirty practitioners here, most living on the Gar, and we are happy to report that Tashigar Norte is alive and thriving. Should anyone wish to donate for the flood relief effort please contact the secretary at tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com.

Look at the Gonpa of Kunsangar South!

Kunsangar South Gakyil

A lot has changed at Kunsangar South in the last two months. First of all, the gonpa now has a roof! And very soon – in the New Year – we will finish fixing the windows! We have practically no walls, everything is mainly made of glass, and the windows are a non-standard size, so our order was a complicated one, but finally the task was completed and very soon everybody will enjoy the new look of the gonpa. We have also placed special forged hooks on the columns inside the building for attaching the tented dome to the gonpa at large retreats. At the moment the tent has been dismantled to preserve it from the strong winter winds.

At present we only need to do the drains and guttering on the outside. Also we have to decide about the important question of condensation on the metal which needs correct insulation outside and inside the building.

Finally we got the necessary documents and began the process of engineering and connecting to the power grid. By the end of December – beginning of January we will have our own electricity line and will finally give up the rest of our generators and start getting about 40 kW of electricity. In general, it is not expensive, we must enter into the planned budget.

There is a solution for the heating system which Giovanni Boni likes and is currently the most economical and practical for us. The source of the heat will be electricity, and we will install

an electric boiler that heats the water in the system. The heating system will be hydrous and will consist of aluminum radiators around the perimeter of the windows and underfloor heating beneath the floor of the laminate. Inside the gonpa we have built a small streamshop consisting of two parts – a boiler room (with a switchboard) and bathroom.

In November we planted trees – 27 practitioners from Sevastopol, Bakhchisaray, Malyi Mayak Yalta, Simferopol, Moscow, Gelendzhik, Krasniy Luch and Dnepropetrovsk participated. The weather was warm and favorable. The total num-

ber of trees was 91, we planted three lanes and several groups of trees. At the entrance to the Gar there will soon be an alley of plane trees growing – traditional Crimean plants that live up to 400 years. Around the Gonpa there is now a circle of maples and oaks growing.

Many people make rope Mandalas – we made a rope fence. At the moment we only have 20% of the money for a concrete fence, but we really needed to protect the area from cows that walk



around and could eat our young trees and shrubs. We dug some wooden poles into the ground and stretched ropes between them and hung up yellow and red flags. They look very nice, and bring to mind Tibetan lungta, and the cows do not go there and there is a sense of bordered space. This fence looks very joyful, and all the local inhabitants immediately began asking us: “What kind of flags are they, is it necessary, yes?”

We are also organizing a security system. We have an agreement with a security agency for their services, and we are planning to install an alarm and an

alarm button. We also plan to have one or two guards, karmayogis, staying in planned accommodation at the place who will be on duty according to a schedule. We will provide illumination on the land, even though electricity from the generators is quite expensive, it is necessary in any case for alarm.

There is an important point we are currently working on – all the wiring: internet, audio, different kinds of alarms in the gonpa, and, of course, the electricity



Photos: A. Balyura



itself to make it all easy to use. We have now all the information and have finished working on all necessary questions to start the mounting.

Previously we made a 100 m2 veranda around the house of the Geko and now this is our rescue from wind and cold and it also preserves the heat in the house. We meeting there, eat, communicate, do practices and enjoy some moments of sunny weather. We have established a mini-boiler on the wood inside the house so now

we have fire inside and smoke outside.

That’s the way Kunsangar South is going ahead. We wish long life and health to our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, do Mandarava practice for him and prepare this beautiful Gar for all future activities!

New Old Gar – Kunsangar North

In the forests of Russia, in the Moscow region, a Gar was created in 1998 named Kunsangar by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

However, in 2006 Rinpoche decided to sell this place and it was no longer a Gar of the Dzogchen Community. This complex with a functioning Gonpa, a dormitory, a teacher’s house

and the rest of the infrastructure was bought by a Community member and became a Buddhist retreat center. Rinpoche gave it a new name – Kunphenling.

Over the next four years many great masters of Buddhism gave teachings there. There were also courses there organized by the Dzogchen Community – countryside retreats on Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance.

Then another place was found in Crimea, Ukraine. Rinpoche named it Kunsangar South.

And now we also have Kunsangar North! Due to the fact that community members who stayed to work in Kunphenling proved their devotion to our Master and Community over the years, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu returned the status of Gar to Kunphenling and named it Kunsangar North.


After the retreat in Moscow from 2nd till 6th of May 2011 Rinpoche will bestow the Teaching of Medicine Srothig, the root Terma text of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje there! How wonderful!

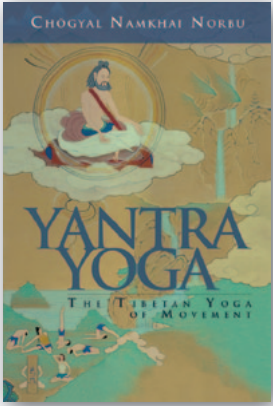


Retreat on Tsalung Mandharava with Elio Guarisco, Moscow Rinchenling November 18–21, 2010.


Photo: D. Ibragimov

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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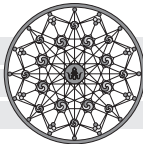
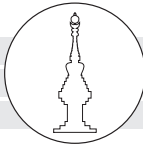


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MERIGAR 30

“The Joy of Being Here”

30th Anniversary of Merigar July 15-18, 2011

Pancho Company
Project Manager for the Celebrations

Merigar – the beginning

What are the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of Merigar West? The first thing that comes to mind are the words of Rinpoche – first there is number one, then number two, three, etc., because numbers start with number one. And Merigar represents number one because it was from here that the whole international Dzogchen Community developed.

We are celebrating an anniversary that is very special because it is the 30th anniversary of Merigar. By ‘special’ we mean that it won’t be something internal like we did in the past when we just celebrated among people of the Community and everything took

place at Merigar. This 30th anniversary will be an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of the Dzogchen Community to the public in general because Merigar represents the beginning. The celebration will be a way to show that the Dzogchen Community is a social entity integrated into society, a way to give people a concrete idea of what Merigar actually is.

Then as a cultural association Merigar has steadily grown from only a handful of people 30 years ago until now there are thousands of members all around the world. So this celebration is also an opportunity to show the importance and relevance of our whole international Community.

Three aspects

The festivities will have three important aspects. The first is to create a high level event with complete and rich elements. The second is that it will not only be a celebration of Merigar, but of the whole Dzogchen Community so that the richness and skills within the Community can be presented. The third aspect is to share the celebration with the people of the villages around Merigar to show them that we are ‘normal’ people just like them, with our work, our interests, our lives, etc. The Dzogchen Community always represents the Master and the Master always manifests in an impeccable and distinguished way and we, as a Community, should manifest in the same way at the celebration. So to integrate the social aspect of the Dzogchen Community the events will mainly be held in the three villages around the Gar, in Arcidosso, Castel Del Piano and Santa Fiora, with people participating not

only from the Community but also from the local area.

“The joy of being here”

This celebration has been called “The joy of being here”. At the beginning it seemed to be just a nice name but when I became more involved in the feeling of the celebration I discovered the meaning of the name: ‘here’ implies space and time, or *samsara*. ‘Joy’ implies knowledge, wisdom. The knowledge of being aware that we are in *samsara*, is a joy. If we don’t know that we are wandering in *samsara*, we suffer, but when we are aware of it, rather than being ignorant of it, then there is some measure of joy in that.

And ‘here’ also refers to Merigar, the Master, the transmission, the teaching and the whole Community. Each one of us is the Community. We are all the Community. We have to make this joy of being here felt. It is a unique and extraordinary opportunity. Merigar has existed for 30 years. The Community has developed, there is the Master and we receive his teaching, we are minimally aware of our state – this is something that makes us truly joyful. By recognizing that this special occasion of the 30th anniversary represents all the work

of Rinpoche, the growth of the Community and this richness that we have received, this joy manifests.

Collaborate and participate

How can we collaborate and participate in the joy of being here? First we can feel this joy and then make others feel it. Then we can collaborate in our own capacity, be it intellectual, or artistic. If we have time, we can come and give a hand in the preparations. But even if we are unable to come here we all have the chance to collaborate minimally if we really have this joy of being here. There are many things that can be done. We can collaborate by participating in an artistic performance, in the events, by helping the organizers in their work, letting the organizers know about Community people with specific skills and putting them in touch with them. Then we can help by supporting the celebration with even a minimum donation.

People should understand that it really is a great joy to be here. This possibility that Rinpoche has given us is truly extraordinary and we need to treasure it and to take this responsibility of collaborating so that the celebration becomes a success.

“The Joy of Being Here”

An event to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Merigar Dzogchen Community July 15-18, 2011

In July 2011 the Dzogchen Community will celebrate 30 years since the birth of Merigar. The festivities will take place on July 15, 16 and 17 and conclude on July 18 in the morning.

We are planning on giving the event an international tone by inviting people from the Community all round the world, but we strongly believe in creating a programme of events that can be shared with the population of the Amiata area who hosted the birth of Merigar and have always followed its evolution attentively and enthusiastically.

We would like to create a series of different situations in each village, in Arcidosso, Castel del Piano and Santa Fiora that will be characterized by an intermingling of artistic and cultural events and gatherings.

We are organizing a programme that combines festivities and meetings, two distinct moments structured in the following way:

Collective exhibition of Art

Collective exhibition of Sculpture:
The Castle in Arcidosso
Collective exhibition of Visual Art:
Castel del Piano – Palazzo Nerucci

Exhibition of Tibetan Art:
Santa Fiora – the Town Hall

Friday July 15

Arcidosso – the Aldobrandescan Castle
10:00 Inauguration of a sculpture entitled ‘To Peace’

Merigar

11:30 Meeting with the authorities
13:00 Lunch

Arcidosso – Piazza Indipendenza
19:30 Gastronomic Stand with International Dishes
20:30 International Festival of popular and folk dances
22:00 Firework display

Saturday July 16 & Sunday July 17
Arcidosso – Town Hall (only Saturday July 16)
10:00 Opening – Friendship Meetings

Arcidosso – The Path of Kindness
Castel del Piano – The Path of Well-Being
Santa Fiora – The Path of Equilibrium
10:30 Presentation and Speeches
12:30 Buffet

Arcidosso – Parco del Pero
Castel del Piano – Piazza Garibaldi
Santa Fiora – Piazza Garibaldi

18:00 Presentation of the Dzogchen Community – Shang Shung Institute – ASIA
18:30 Activities – Dancing on the Mandala, Yantra Yoga, Kumar Kumari, Ku-nye Massage

Arcidosso – Piazza Indipendenza
19:30 Gastronomic Stand with International Dishes
20:30 Artistic Stage Performances
22:00 Late Evening Show

MONDAY JULY 18

Arcidosso – Town Hall
10:00 Thirtieth Anniversary Closing Events
Presentation of commemorative plaques and thanks

Announcements

International Festival of popular and folk dances

The first evening of the festivities will be dedicated to popular and folk dances from the places where Community people live. For this reason, those who know how to do these type of dances well should get in touch with Luda, luda@merigarw30.org, who will be coordinating all the groups coming from different parts of the world.

Friendship meetings

Three paths for meeting and exchanging experiences between the Dzogchen Community and the community of Amiata.

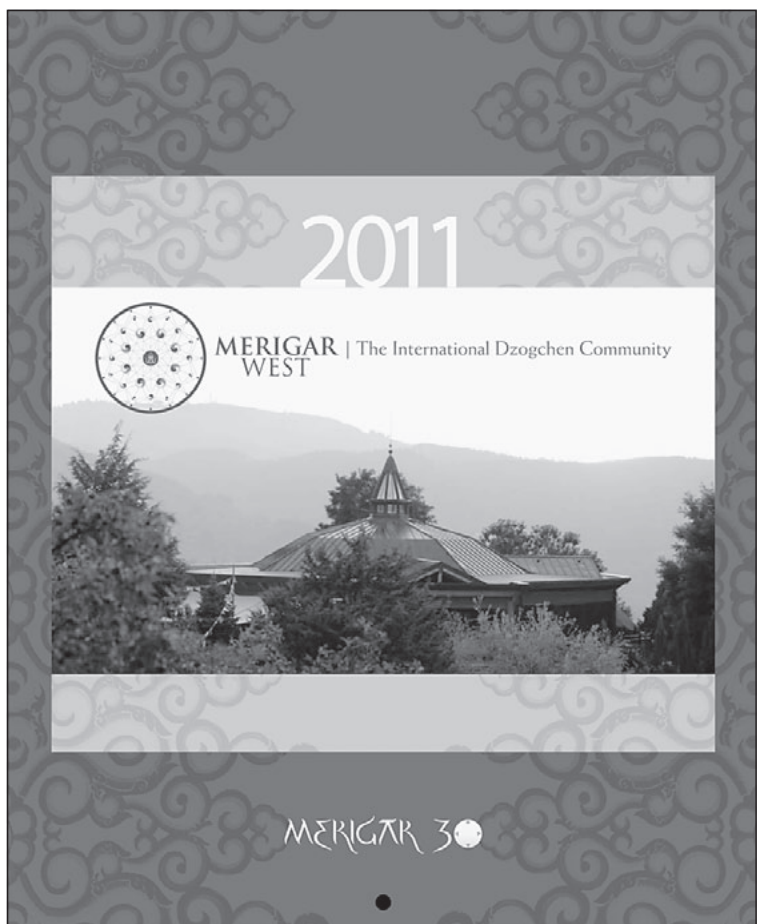
On July 16 and 17, in the mornings, in three different places (Arcidosso, Castel del Piano and Santa Fiora), there will be a series of talks, each 15 minutes at the

most, on themes in which people can talk about their personal experiences in life and at work.

The topics, listed below, are many and varied, and relate to a

wide range of experiences and professionalism, so there is space for everyone:

>> continued on the following page



2011 Wall Calendar for Merigar’s 30th Anniversary

Containing wonderful photos that recall the tireless work that our precious Master has carried out right from the beginning of the Community for the benefit of us all. Offerings collected for the Calendar will be used for organizing the 30th anniversary celebrations in 2011.

Rinpoche considers this event to be important and will certainly appreciate the participation and collaboration of us all.

To order the calendar, please contact Shang Shung Institute:
www.shangshungstore.org info@shangshunginstitute.org

Free Workshop on Tibetan Thangka Painting and Restoration of the Paintings in the Precious Temple of Great Liberation
under the Guidance of Migmar Ciren
April 1–June 30, 2011

The workshop will be held in the Gonpa. Merigar West offers accommodation and food for those participating. The daily schedule will include 6 hours of techniques and practice of restoration of the Gonpa and 2 hours on techniques of Thangka painting. Only those who have knowledge and experience of painting techniques for restoration should apply. Those participating should take part for at least one month. Migmar is a Tibetan artist who is expert in painting, decoration, restoration and wood carving. One of his most recent works was in the Tashigar Norte Gonpa on Margarita, which was completely decorated in traditional Tibetan style under his direction. This workshop is a special occasion because it will be the first time that Migmar has led a work experience of this kind at Merigar. Those interested should contact the Red Gakyil: mwred@dzogchen.it with a short career description.

Ignazio Bernardoni and
Patrice Bricaire
Merigar West Red Gakyil



Liberating eels.

>> continued from previous page
The Path of Equilibrium: man, people, the environment and nature
The Path of Well-Being: body, voice and mind
The Path of Kindness: respect and collaboration

Everyone is invited to send a proposal to sergio@merigarw30.org

Performances
A special section will be dedicated to all the artists in the Community who will give live performances, whether they are musicians, singers, dancers, magicians, clowns or other. The idea is to have a high level celebration with the participation of the entire International Community together with artists from Amiata during the evenings of July 16 and 17 in the main square of Arcidosso. We will also try to organise performances by practitioners from different places who will be able to perform together, for example in a piece of classical music with different soloists, or a jam session, etc. All proposals should be sent to pancho@merigarw30.org

Visual Arts
Three exhibitions of visual art will be set up in the three villages closest to Merigar (Arcidosso, Castel del Piano, Santa Fiora) in suitable places.

One will be dedicated to Tibetan thangkas, the other two to visual art in its widest sense. In order to participate and exhibit your art, contact: visualarts@merigarw30.org

The committee for the Thirtieth Anniversary of Merigar West celebrations will carefully examine all proposals for the Dance Festival, the Friendship Meetings, the Performances and the Visual Arts and will then choose participants for the programme according to quality, content and technique.

Collaborating in the organisation
We need a large number of volunteers for different jobs, some of which require particular skills and others which don't. Contact: info@merigarw30.org

We are calling on the different Gars and Lings to let their practitioners know about the event in order to find people with spe-

cific skills or who simply would like to offer their enthusiasm and creativity.

This Thirtieth Anniversary will be a wonderful chance to meet each other, spend time together, have fun and show our precious Master all our gratitude and affection.

For this reason the Merigarw30 Committee needs you all.

www.merigarw30.org
<http://merigarw30.org>

Liberating the Animals

Every year on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's birthday on December 8, his students at Merigar West usually send him a birthday present along with their greetings. This year because of his health problems, the Merigar gakyil thought that as well as buying him a present it might be beneficial to buy some animals destined for slaughter and free them. Liberating animals in this way is a Tibetan custom that brings benefit because you are saving life.

After collecting money from everyone, some eels destined for Christmas tables (in Italy they are considered a delicacy) were bought from fishermen on the coast of Italy, in Maremma. This type of fish can live several days out of the water, can be transported fairly easily and, in addition, can be liberated in either a river or the sea.

In the photo you can see the eels being liberated into the sea.

We have already bought and liberated the first batch of eels and have asked the fishermen for another 60 kilos. We also intend to continue this kind of activity by liberating other animals in the near future.

Merigar West Gakyil



Passages

Born: Alessandra Policreti and Carlos Garcia are very happy to announce the arrival of their daughter, Rosa Gualupe Garcia Policreti, who was born in Montepulciano, Tuscany, Italy on December 14 at 11.51 am.



France

Vajra Dance in Paris

At the beginning of December 2010, Prima Mai came to visit the French community in Paris for the first time. She was welcomed by a bout of brief but strong rain as she got off the plane from Italy, and on her way to Montmartre, the top of the city, where she stayed during these few days.

From Paris's practitioners, a thousand thanks to Nadia who taught the Vajra Dance under supervision, and to Prima Mai for these three days of happiness, in St Ouen, on the Mandala of the World, three days recalling presence, through the practice of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra.

There were 13 participants, occasionally 14 in some sessions, and for most of them it was their first contact with the Dance. Everyone participated very diligently, first of all to get to St Ouen, the place of the Mandala, in the sudden cold of these days.

The teaching was enjoyed by all the participants, as it reduced our difficulties, and brought relaxation and happiness, in place of the well known confusion, the struggling, the distraction and the tensions of life!

We were reminded how the Mandala is a symbol of our existence, how this precious practice is a tool for having experiences, for discovering our real nature and integrating with our condition. This practice, which opens the three existences, makes our body taller, harmonises the voice, and relaxes the mind.

Thank you again to the teachers, their commitment and promise, their sacrifice and patience and all their marvellous manifestations, waiting for other opportunities, in Paris and all over the world.

Finally the snow came on the last day to greet Prima and tell her from our heart, that we hope to see her again soon.

Homage and Long Life to the Master

Accommodations near Merigar West

Information for people who intend to come to Merigar for retreats or to follow courses
If you are looking for accommodation, airport transfer, local car hire or only logistic assistance, you can contact the following information and reservation service:

Accommodation Service

(Information available in English, German, French and Italian)
Information service and reservation of accommodation during retreats, local transport, & logistic solutions:

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

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

Italy

Dribselling - The Ling that Removes Obstacles

Clara Lovisetti

Last November 1st, on the occasion of the Worldwide Guruyoga Transmission, "Dribselling", the main place of the Milan Community in Italy, came into being

After a final rush that had us working almost full time in the final weeks, we managed to open Dribselling, the bright new centre of the Milan Community on November 1st, exactly on the occasion of the Worldwide Transmission of Guruyoga for the anniversary of Adzom Drugpa. It was an event we had been waiting a long time for.

After Rome and Naples, Milan has been one of the cities that first hosted the Master's teachings. In the 1980s he came here for a conference held at the Palazzo delle Stelline, an ancient convent right opposite the Madonna delle Grazie church – which houses Da Vinci's famous Last Supper – which has become a conference centre.

The history of the Milan Community is quite complex and difficult to tell in just a few words and then I don't really know much about it first hand. So I will have to stop here and there will have to be an article in the future that goes into this in detail.

What I can talk about, however, is my personal experience, that started ten or so years ago when I arrived in the Community thanks to a Yantra Yoga course led by Giovanna Conti at a Hatha Yoga centre in the heart of Milan's China Town. Even then the Community was on the point of closing a deal to share some space with another Dharma centre, but then things fell through not because of lack of goodwill on our part but because our counterparts withdrew their offer.

For a while we didn't talk about finding another space, held back by circumstances that were not very favourable, such as the need to find a space that would be suitable to house the Mandala and also there were only a small number of practitioners who, faced with quite exorbitant costs, were ready to make sacrifices to support the centre.

In this way on the one hand a virtuous circle was created, but on the other a 'vicious' one. For Yantra Yoga and Dance of the Vajra we rented suitable spaces while for the practices and the Ganapujas we took turns at different people's homes. For a couple of years, for example, we practised the Dance of the Vajra in the meeting hall of the railwaymen's social club, right under platform one of Milan Central Station. It was a space that was available practically for free, every Monday evening, thanks to a practitioner who worked for the railway. A place with a strange en-

ergy, where we did the Dance to a background of clanking trains arriving or leaving passing directly over our heads and which we had access to by going along a bit of tunnel under the platforms and then through a door that seemed like the door to Polipheme's cavern. But people were not put off by this and, in fact, a group of about ten dancers from Milan was created who were joined by some practitioners from Turin, given the convenience of the trains.

On the whole it was a situation that was easy and didn't need great commitment, but it didn't let us grow because we didn't have a fixed reference point for new people. And so we started to turn to Valter Bianchini's hospitality for practice retreats, in his lovely house with a swimming pool in the Piacentine hills. The first of the series was a Mandarava retreat with Nina Robinson. Then a Tara retreat followed, then another of Mandarava with Elio Guarisco and, in recent years, Gomadevi with Enzo Terzano. All wonderful experiences both from the point of view of practice as well as the pleasant cheerful atmosphere, experiences that reinforced our community even further but made us feel even more the lack of a centre where we could continue to practice with that same atmosphere once we returned to Milan.

Then 2008 arrived when we invited Khyentse Yeshe at the beginning of December, exactly at the same time as the Master's birthday. We had to find three locations – one for the morning teaching sessions, one for Yantra Yoga and another for the Dance and the Ganapuja on December 8th. For the teachings we found the Philological Society, a respected prestigious cultural association with its headquarters in a Liberty building near the Scala Theatre, in the heart of Milan. For Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance we found two spaces more on the outskirts of the city but, for-

tunately, only a few minutes on foot to get from one to the other.

It was on this occasion that Yeshe, in a not very roundabout way, chided us for our inertia, for this dangerous catch 22 that we were not managing to get out of. We were only a few people because we didn't have a centre, but without the centre we would always be just a few. With his words, a marvelous unscheduled teaching on the afternoon of December 8 after the Ganapuja, he gave us the right push.

We started to look around with renewed commitment, considering, too, the particular aspects of the space that we wanted, not only for its considerable dimensions but because a mandala for the Dance had to fit in.

And so 2009 arrived, another decisive year. At the auction during the August retreat at Merigar, after hard bargaining, our Community managed to get a thangka and a statue of Gomadevi, the latter belonging to Yeshe and containing precious relics from Ayu Khadro.

A few weeks later, someone asked the Master and received the name of the Ling, even before we had found it. The connection seemed obvious and we had understood who could help us. But most of all now we really had to dedicate ourselves because we had a name and we had to find a place as soon as possible. In the meantime, in confirmation, a person had unofficially appeared who said they were willing to make an investment by buying a space for us. We immediately started to search in a more systematic and organized way, appointing a person to collect suggestions and then organizing visits. The search was not easy at all but a couple of suitable spaces were found. This person had to decide and choose on the basis of the amount that they could invest.

Right on the occasion of a Gomadevi practice retreat organized in mid-June 2010, this person gave us a wonderful surprise: a set of keys. They were the keys to Dribselling, which had been bought just a few days before and put at our disposition.

Dribselling had found a home in via Sibari 15/a, in a large open space of more than 180 sq.m. on the first floor, a square area without columns which is perfect for the Mandala. The building that houses it has only two floors and is a new construction, situated in one of the many ex industrial estates on the outskirts of Milan that have been reclaimed partly for residential use and partly for workshops and craftspeople.

Now we needed to structure the space to make it suitable for our needs. We had no time to lose since the summer break would have made the time even longer to get the Ling up and running. And what better moment for an inauguration than the next Worldwide Transmission in the autumn with our precious Master in webcast!

November 1st was a beautiful day even if it was accompanied by driving rain and a grey sky. However that did not manage to spoil our joy at finally having a place of our own where we could meet, practice and put ourselves forward as a stable reference point in the Milan area.

This is a brief account of the day which started at 11 with the explanation of the Transmission of Guruyoga followed by the webcast from Costa Rica with our precious Master. After this there was a sumptuous ganapuja thanks to the generous offerings of some great Sri Lankan food brought from a nearby restaurant. After the practice, the atmosphere became pleasantly merry, human warmth making up for the shortcomings of the early November weather and a central heating system that still wasn't working.

In conclusion, around 7 pm, a fun of Dance brought us back to a contemplative atmosphere with its harmonious melody and the dancers recreating the magical choreography of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra with their movements.

Eight intense hours that had witnessed the participation of about thirty people in the Worldwide Guruyoga Transmission, around ten of them were new people or had only recently approached the Teaching.

This was the first "official" event, open to all, which was followed on November 28th by an open day with Emmanuel Jouan dedicated to Yantra Yoga, in particular beginners, and which, once again had about ten people present who we hadn't met before.

At the beginning of December we hosted the webcast for the Mandarava practices for the health of our precious Master and on his birthday, December 8th, in the intervals between the webcast sessions, we held a little Christmas market and sold some things for ASIA. There were some practitioners from Como present who had been invited for the occasion, including Elio Guarisco who kindly explained the Mandarava practice on the request of some people who were new. In January we are expecting Fabio Risolo for a meeting on meditation and, after that, Maurizio Mingotti for a course of the Dance of the Six Spaces as well as other open days and courses of Yantra Yoga.

All these events are to help Dribselling grow and develop waiting for its real inauguration when our precious Master and Khyentse Yeshe can come to visit.



Dribselling practitioners met on the occasion of the Master's birthday to do the Mandarava practice.

Photo: C. Lovisetti

MerigarWest

Germany

Vajra Dance, Beginners course
6 Spaces of Samanthabadra
with Lenka Kroh
January 7–9 Dargyaling Cologne,
registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktorija.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

Vajra Dance, Beginners course
Song of the Vajra Part 2
with Karin Heinemann
February 8–13 Dargyaling Cologne,
registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktorija.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

Yantra Yoga, Advanced course
first series of Yantra
with Elke Glander
February 18–20 in Munich
registration Martin Fleischer
martin.fleischer@dzogchen.de

Mandrava Tsalung course
with Sasha Pubants
March 3–5 in Höfen
Practice retreat
March 6–19
registration Martin Fleischer
martin.fleischer@dzogchen.de

**SMS Meditation and Contem-
plation according to Dzogchen**
with Jakob Winkler
April 1–3 in Dargyaling, Cologne
registration Jil Self
self@dzogchen.de

Yantra Yoga, Advanced course
third series of Yantra
with Elke Glander
May 13–15 in Munich
registration Martin Fleischer
martin.fleischer@dzogchen.de

Yantra Yoga Beginners course
with Saadet Arslan
March 25–27 in Dargyaling, Cologne
registration Martin Fleischer
martin.fleischer@dzogchen.de

Vajra Dance, Beginners course
Song of the Vajra Part 1 and 2
with Karin Heinemann
April 30–May 11 in Höfen
registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktorija.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

Jnana Dakini and Vajra Dance
practice retreat
with Karin Heinemann
June 17–22 in Höfen
registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktorija.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

Yantra Yoga, Pranayama and
Kumbhaka
with Elke Glander
June 22–26 in Höfen
registration Martin Fleischer
martin.fleischer@dzogchen.de

Public talk Dream Yoga
with Michael Katz
July 21 in Dargyaling, Cologne

Dream Yoga retreat
with Michael Katz
July 22–24 in Höfen
registration Jil Self
jil.self@dzogchen.de

Gomadevi retreat
with Enzo Terzano
September 9–11 in Dargyaling, Cologne
registration Jil Self
jil.self@dzogchen.de

SMS Base
with Jim Valby
Nov. 23–27 in Dargyaling, Cologne
registration Jil Self
jil.self@dzogchen.de



Italy

Naples, Namdeling
New Gakyil
Blue: Alberto Carpasio, Gino Vitiello; Yellow: Giuliana Novelli, Lucrezia Bordoni;
Red: Antonio Capurro, Francesco Paolo Coppola

Rome, Zhenphenling
New Gakyil

Yellow Gakyil
Luigi Volpi (director)
lufox86@hotmail.com
Federica Mastropaolo
aciredefa@yahoo.it
Red Gakyil
Gemma Di Santo
gemma_di_santo@yahoo.it

Lucilla Curini
lucillascintilla@libero.it
Blue Gakyil
Daniela Monaci
danmonaci@tiscali.it
Monica Marinelli
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MerigarEast

Merigar East	23 August 907005	phone: 0040 746 26 08 61
Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen	Constanta	office@dzogchen.ro
	Romania	www.dzogchen.ro

Tree planting at the Gar

by Michal Marcinov

I have to say that planting trees at Merigar East was one of the best karmayoga activities I have participated in. The weather was beautiful, already November, but it felt like it was summer, at home. Blue sky, warm sun, pleasurable wind which cooled us down us while we were working. We planted around seventy trees, also with the help of the tractor which dug the biggest holes. People arrived from Slovakia, Russia, Moldavia, Poland and Romania but it didn't feel as if there was any difference between us. It was as if we had known each other a long time ago.

Everything went smoothly, and after three days, we started to put wooden barriers around the trees, which we connected with coconut rope in order to provide some protection against the strong winter wind. Of course we did not lack the local "Palinka" medicine during our work. Thanks to the spacious sky and the blessing of the place, we felt very calm and aware mentally.

We were able to share our life experience, to enjoy Greg's jokes, and we purified our samaya with ganapujas.

After this experience, everybody who participated felt ready to repeat it. I hope that after winter finishes and the time comes for planting bushes around the Longsal symbol, we will see each other once again. A la la ho.



Photos: G. Ladra

Passages

In memory of Abel Paizs
(1968–2010)

Our Hungarian Vajra brother, Abel Paizs, lately known as the "Yellow" from the Gakyil of the Merigar East Community, unexpectedly passed away last month at the age of 43 due to a sudden stomach ailment causing lethal internal bleeding.

Abel was a very kind, quiet and helpful single man with a very delicate sense of humour. In the last couple of years he dedicated his life mainly to his activities in the Dzogchen Community.

Abel was a university graduate in religious philosophy, but also studied economy and finance. At the beginning of his adulthood, still very young, he had shown some interest in politics and



as a founding member of one of the first democratic parties of Hungary, he had been posted as secretary to the Minister of Welfare in the first democratically elected government.

Right after that, he took off for Honolulu, Hawaii to join his younger brother with his surfboard in his bag. Aiming to enjoy life, he chose to stay and became a Rider of the Waves.

After these adventurous years he returned to Budapest, and in 2002 his hometown became the very place where he met Rinpoche for the first time in his life. He immediately found refuge in the Dzogchen Community. As his mother recalls:

"My son, Abel, had always been a seeker. He only engaged himself in inquiries that looked beyond his own existence. If he found some path of that kind he dedicated himself to it. He got often disappointed, but always started all over again. At the end it was always the cause that left him, as he would never give up on anything. The Dzogchen Community was something very special in his life, the only cause that stayed with him, that proved him... I feel he reached his goal, he realised the meaning of something he had dedicated his life for..."

Czech Republic

Advanced Retreat of the Song of the Vajra
with Rita Renzi
February 3–6, 2011 at Phendeling, the Ling of the Czech Dzogchen Community in South Bohemia. Please contact Nikol Stanisoava for more information:
yellow@dzogchen.cz

Yantra Yoga third series course
with Zolt Somogyvári
February 25–27 (Friday till Sunday) at Phendeling

You are very welcome to join in. Good knowledge of the eight movements and the first and second series is necessary.

For more information please contact: blue@dzogchen.cz

MerigarEast

Bulgaria

Connecting with the Transmission

by Lune Jazudekova
ME blue gakyil

November 1st 2010, the day of the Worldwide Transmission, one of the special days, when our precious master Chögyal Namkai Norbu introduces instant present to all students and people that are interested in the teaching.

Since the Dzogchen Community in Romania and Bulgaria is still growing,

the Merigar East gakyil used this opportunity to connect to our members here and also invite new people.

Bulgarian members invited Igor Bherkin to Sofia, so we used this opportunity and the WWT here was followed by two public talks and small retreat with him, during which we listened to the webcast and Igor answered questions and offered explanations of the basic practices of the Dzogchen Community.

Sofia welcomed us with beautiful weather that stayed with us all the time up to our departure. Sunshine, warm temperatures, friendly people... I have to say, I really enjoyed the city, discovering beautiful bio cafes, soup shops,

delicious local food. One of the days we even had the chance to go to Mt. Vitosa that towers above the city. What a great experience! Taking the old public transport bus, moving through the traffic of the metropolis of Sofia and then, all of sudden, you find yourself in a wonderful, almost zen-like atmosphere of the mountain. Trees, waterfalls, silence – the perfect place to meditate.

At the weekend I walked to the little yoga place, where we organized the explanations and the WWT, and found there 12 new people sitting with open hearts, ears and eyes, eager to understand, experience, to meet the Master and to know more.

They left with enthusiasm and good feeling, wanting to meet again and learn more. I was very happy to meet them and see that there are other new vajra brothers and sisters in this part of the world.

Igor Bherkin came the next days and in his very special and catchy way explained Knowledge of Mind and Real Happiness during the two public talks.

Through the laughter, straight to the essence... actually presence.

Our trip came to an end and now we have some new people who want to meet Igor again, and come to Merigar East, to meet in person our Master Chögyal Namkai Norbu.

Hungary



Passages

Born: A daughter, Anita, was born to Anna Mittich and George Tenger on November 25 in Budapest, Hungary. All best wishes to the new arrival!

Poland

Polish Dzogchen Community Goes Into the Offensive

By Jacek Machowski
SMS Base Level Trainer

When Yeshi Namkhai came to Poland in October 2009, we were quite a different sangha. For years our Community was about 100 people...

Yeshe left us quite a direct message: "You've lost Rinpoche! Now you have to make Him come back".

Maybe the first thing He made us understand was, "It is not something bad, when the sangha grows!".

First we had to change our ideas, that only people with very deep connections from previous lives and high capacity of understanding come to Dzogchen teachings, so there is no need to take care of newcomers – after all they will find their own way. If that was true, what would be the reason to pray at the end of each session: "(...) The



Participants with O. Leick at Namdag Ling, Warsaw, for the Seventh Lojong weekend course in December.
Photo: S. Kościuk

unsurpassable Dzogchen teaching, Like the sun when it rises in the sky, May it spread everywhere." That's our wish and we have to act accordingly, using swift methods and adapt to newcomers' levels of understanding. As a result in one year we increased to 130 members, almost 30 % more people!

Yeshe also left us this message: "Where there is a place, there can be a program and people would gather". About a third of the whole Polish Community live in Warsaw, so we rented a small flat for a Gonpa and asked Rinpoche to establish a Ling. It is called Namdag Ling – Ever Pure.

So we only needed instructors and here Rinpoche came with compassionate help. Some people passed exams, and some were let to pass (like the one writing this article) by Rinpoche. From summer 2010 we have one Vajra Dance instructor, two Yantra Yoga instructors and one SMS Base level instructor!

This autumn/winter time it looks like the Polish Dzogchen Community is going into the offensive. In just a few months we've done a lot of retreats. First of all we invited a lot of foreign teachers. Rita Renzi said that she already feels at home in Poland, because she has been coming here so often. Then for one week Sasha Pubants was our guest with "Explanation of chapter five from SMS" and Oliver Leick visited us for a weekend with "Seventh Lojong" explanations.

Sasha also gave an open seminar in Warsaw entitled "Dzogchen – the Path beyond limitations of the mind" and an open talk in Łódź, "Dzogchen – enlightenment as one's natural state". Oliver also found time for two open

talks: "Treasures of Tibetan culture" and "Awareness in daily life".

It was really a great pleasure to meet these two teachers one after another, week after week. Sasha offered very complex explanations, for people with a high capacity of intellectual understanding. And then, for newcomers one week later Oliver gave a talk, in very simple words, which everybody could understand. Someone said: "Why are there only 50 people here? There should be thousands listening to him! It seems so simple!".

Also our Polish instructors are very active and every two weeks there is something going on somewhere. Many new people are asking us to teach Dance, Yoga or explain practices etc.

So it seems we are following Yeshe's directions and we are waiting for the good health of our Master. We hope He will come to Poland one day – very healthy and in perfect condition! "May the lotus feet of the glorious masters remain firmly upon the earth". This Earth.

KunsangarSouth

Ukraine

Retreat with Jim Valby

November 5–14
by Vladislav Bespalov

This event took place in Ukraine, known for its stunning landscapes and beautiful heartwarming people, in the countryside of ancient Kiev, in a place that looked like it came

out of a fairytale, with oaks and firs, immersed in peace and tranquility. The weather was summer-like on the eve of a snowy winter. One of Jim's friends from Australia wrote, "I sympathize that you are now in Ukraine – it is so cold there", so we specially took a group photo to show that it was really not so bad.

We did retreats with Jim Valby on the Base and First levels of Santi Maha Sangha over a period of ten days that

passed quickly and, at the same time, unforgettably. Jim was incredible. He is an instructor who creates a revolution in your mind, a senior student, a vajra brother who is the same as you, a cheerful person, a wise man laughing at himself, a Ph.D. explaining the Teaching directly and indirectly following Rinpoche's advice, the person who helps us to understand ourselves.

What is the difference between attending a good retreat and dharma-tourism? A retreat changes your life. I had done the same practices before but after the retreat I did them in a different way, with a different attitude, with a new sense and inspiration. Before I personally met him, I had heard about some mythical Jim Valby to whom many practitioners are thankful for acquiring knowledge. After this retreat in the Kiev countryside I started to understand the meaning of their words.

About the retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Kyentse Yeshe Namkhai, for me it seems like I was born to meet them and listen to their Teachings. When I met the SMS Instructor, Jim Valby, I felt as if we had met before in a previous life that I couldn't remember. And I also had a subtle feeling that this meeting would have a

great influence on me. Jim spent a lot of time with us explaining the Teaching, doing the practices, answering our questions, telling stories and having fun with us near the campfire and at the parties that his charming son helped to organize. At the end Jim thanked us for coming and spending time with him! Then the translation by Andrei Besedin erased all cultural differences with his inimitable enthusiasm.

The members of the Tashiling Dzogchen Community who organized this retreat showed the characteristic hospitality of the people of Kiev. Everything was perfect and homelike. The retreat was attended by practitioners from all over Ukraine, and also from Poland, Romania, Russia and Tatarstan. I am sure that in their hearts, as in mine, the memories of this wonderful time with Jim will remain forever.



Photo: I. Pinigin



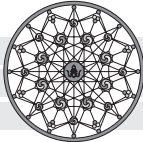
Retreat with Liudmila Kislichenko, in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine from 19th to 30th of November, both parts of the Dance of the Song of Vajra.
Photo: I. Pinigin

China

Left:
Vajra Dance course led by Tracy Ni and Wes Guo, Wuhai, Inner Mongolia, China Nov. 5–6.
Right:
Yantra Yoga course led by Tracy Ni and Wes Guo, Wuhai, Inner Mongolia, China, Nov. 7–8.



Namgyalgar
and Pacific Rim



Namgyalgar
Dzogchen Community in
Australia

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www.dzogchen.org.au

Calendar
of Events

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Revised Program

The following retreat has been cancelled:
· Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Namgyalgar, 4–8 February
The following Yantra Yoga supervision courses are being rescheduled, please check Namgyalgar website for new dates/ locations:
· Yantra Yoga Supervision Course at Namgyalgar : 10–15 February
· Yantra Yoga Supervision Course: 26 February–3 March 2011, Brisbane, Queensland

February
The Vajra Dance of the Song of Vajra, 1st Part
12–18 February in Brisbane, Queensland
A beginners course taught by Vajra Dance instructor, Cosimo Di Maggio, supervised by International Vajra Dance instructor, Adriana Dal Borgo. To attend the course it is necessary to have transmission.

Sunshine Coast Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
23–27 February, Landsborough, Qld

The Vajra Dance of the Song of Vajra, 2nd Part
27 February–4 March, Sunshine Coast, Qld.
A beginners course taught by Vajra Dance instructor, Cosimo Di Maggio, supervised by International Vajra Dance instructor, Adriana Dal Borgo. To attend the course it is necessary to have transmission.

March
Public Talk/Weekend Seminar with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
11–13 March, Melbourne, Victoria

Complete Harmonious Breathing Course with Fabio Andrico
15–17 March at Namgyalgar
In this course Fabio will give instructions on inhaling and exhaling so that we learn how to control and balance our breathing in such a way that our energy can become harmonized and our mind can become clear and less distracted, leading to less stress and a healthier life. This course is suitable for newcomers without transmission as well as Dzogchen practitioners.

Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
18–23 March at Namgyalgar, Tilba Tilba, NSW

The Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
24–26 March at Namgyalgar
A course taught by Vajra Dance trainee instructor, Nicki Elliot, under the supervision of International Vajra Dance instructor, Adriana Dal Borgo. This course is suitable for newcomers and experienced dancers.

All information available at Namgyalgar website: www.dzogchen.org.au



Yantra Yoga Weekend in Adelaide, Australia with Emily Coeling

The Dzogchen Community in Adelaide held its second Yantra Yoga course at the end of November at the Unley Primary School hall. Starting with the 8 movements on the Thursday the 25th and Friday the 26th evenings, we then followed, for the very first time in Adelaide, with the 1st and 2nd series of Yantras, the Vajra Wave and the Rhythmic Breathing on Saturday and Sunday. A group of 15 people attended the evenings and approximately 10 the weekend, with a mixture of previous attendees and newcomers at both. All participants were very interested and interactive,

with many useful questions asked and answered for both the beginners and more practiced, including those preparing for Yantra teacher supervision and those dreaming of it. Communal soups were a good time to get together and talk between old practitioners and new students, as was Saturday nights group BBQ, which was enjoyed by all. Many thanks from Adelaide to Rinpoche who has made all this happen, and to Emily for another wonderful weekend full of learning and fun, and all the others who made it possible. We hope to repeat it soon! E Ma Ho!



Dance of the Three Vajras with Cosimo Di Maggio in Queensland
By Joanna (Lily) Giblin

During the first weekend of October, a group of practitioners from South East Queensland and Northern New South Wales joined dance teacher Cosimo Di Maggio in Brisbane for another joyful Vajra Dance experience.
This time Cosimo taught us the Dance of the Three Vajras complete with its special aspects. As I have never tried this dance before with a complete mandala and with the special aspects, I was very surprised at how beautiful and harmonizing the dance variation was.

Cosimo's gentle and relaxed way of instruction, combined with his meticulous attention to keeping the correct form of the dance, meant that by the end of the weekend our collective expression of the movements resulted in an extraordinarily integrated and light experience of this exquisite dance. It truly was totally beautiful, relaxing and yet energizing all at once. We are so fortunate to have Cosimo here in Queensland where he now lives with his wife, Marie, in Cairns. Thankyou again Cosimo !!

New Zealand

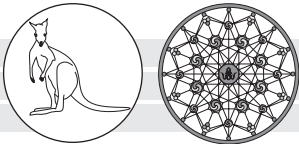
News from New Zealand
By Slavica Voglar

When people ask me where I live, I say "At the end of the world". The location of New Zealand has its advantages and disadvantages. New Zealand is a place that gives me a unique feeling of the space element; it is spacious, and not as densely populated as the cities in Europe. There is one disadvantage though: if you wish to go elsewhere, it is very expensive, except for trips to Australia.

I moved here 10 years ago, with the help of a few practitioners, who helped me to deal with the administration here. Since then, I have been more or less part of the Gakyil and I consider work in the Gakyil as a precious part of my practice, as well as strong challenge for integration.

In the last few years, the New Zealand Gakyil has been organizing at least two retreats a year, one in the summer, and one in wintertime. This year, we have also had three retreats: two times Yantra Yoga and one Vajra Dance retreat. Also on 9, 10 and 11 of September we held a small closed retreat of the Gomadeva practice. At the moment we are organizing another Vajra Dance in October. As Rosa (the Vajra Dance instructor) now lives in New Zealand, starting
>> continued on the following page

Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



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from this year we will concentrate our practice more around Vajra Dance. We are doing Yantra Yoga every Saturday, and we have found a place where we can dance every other Friday as well.

We are very happy about Rinpoche’s plans to come to New Zealand in January, and we are also planning to invite Yeshi.

We have started to realize the Karamea project. On the West Coast of the South Island the Community has land near a small township called Karamea We have started the construction of a retreat cabin and will slowly develop a foundation for the Mandala as well

as a cabin for a dark retreat at a later date. We believe that we will soon be able to organize a retreat on the land, thus building a place that will be useful for all practitioners. We would welcome any assistance to help us to realize these plans. Please find below the information for sending donations.

Account Name: Dzogchen Community
Account Number: 03 0187 0720787 003
Bank details:
Westpac Banking Corporation
Wellington, New Zealand
The SWIFT code/BIC (bank identifier code) for Westpac New Zealand is: WPACNZ2W
Paypal
To set up an account www.paypal.com

Retreat Cabin Project Karamea, New Zealand

We are progressing slowly but surely on the isolated Retreat Cabins Project. Karamea, New Zealand
www.dzogchen.org.nz/index.php/karamea

We are asking for those able, to make financial contributions to this work. New Zealand is a small community with few resources and needs support to complete this work.

You can go to this link to see a short video of where we are up to with the first cabin, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOqfZQ4-EXY

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

We are building one simple retreat cabin and one dual purpose cabin that will also be used for dark retreat

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



To build the second cabin and facilities we estimate we will need to raise another NZ \$17,000

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

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

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

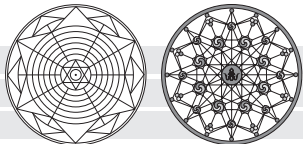
Japan

We would like to let you know that a new Gakyil of Japan has been decided as follows.
Yellow: Yoko Morita
Red: Takatomo Sasaki
Blue: Keigo Yoneda
Please contact us at sona.dewa@gmail.com



Vajra Dance Course with Rosa Altamirano in Wellington New Zealand September 8–10, 2010.

TsegyalgarEast



DCA Tsegyalgar East		
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Conway, MA 01341 USA	Fax & Bookstore: 413 369 4473	www.tsegyalgareast.org

Calendar of Events

- January 15–16
Advanced Beginner’s Yantra Yoga
with Paula Barry in Northampton
- Feb 2–6
Mandarava and Tsalung Retreat
with Nina Robinson
- March 17–21
Santi Maha Sangha Retreat
with Jakob Winkler
- April 8–9
Dream Yoga in Northampton/
Benefit for Khandroling
with Michael Katz
- April 29–May 9
Song of the Dance of the Vajra Review
and Beginner’s Course
with Bodhi Krause

Details of courses and dates TBA.

Courses with Jim Valby:
Jan 29–30 Guru Dragphur
Feb 26–27 Emptiness
Mar 26–27 Compassion
Apr 30–May 1 Vajra Breathing

For more information contact:
secretary@tsegyalgar.org



Green Tara Practice Retreat with Yuchen Namkhai and Paula Barry December 11 & 12, 2010 at Tsegyalgar East Conway MA

Paola Zamperini

Green Tara is one of my most favorite yidams in the vast Vajrayana pantheon. As an Aries born in the year of the Fire Horse, her embodiment of compassion in action and movement have always resonated profoundly with my own passionate (albeit chaotic) energy and engagement with

the Dzogchen path. Ever since I received the transmission of her practice from our generous Guru, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, many years ago, I have often turned to Green Tara not only to try and expand my limited understanding of the Dzogchen teachings, but also to deal with various chal-

lenges that living with a dualistic vision can bring to us.
I was thrilled to learn, therefore, that Yuchen Namkhai would give instructions and lead us in practicing the Green Tara sadhana over the weekend of December 11th and 12th. Particularly exciting (and not just for a Green Tara “groupie” like myself) was also the fact that it was the first time that Yuchen gave any instructions at Tsegyalgar East. True, Yuchen and her family have been living in Western Massachusetts for a while, and they have truly become integrated in the fabric of our lives: the most recent example

was Emy and Maya’s collective party, on November 20th, when little and not so very little ones met to eat cake and pizza, dance the limbo, and wear Hawaiian garb to celebrate the young girls’ birthdays.
At the same time, to have the chance to learn about Green Tara from Yuchen Namkhai felt like a very precious and rare opportunity, one impossible to pass up. And I clearly was not the only one at Tsegyalgar East to feel so thrilled about this weekend: a good group of us showed up on Saturday morning, eager to get started. As Luigi drove away with Maya and Emy, for a morning of winter shoe-shopping for the girls, we entered the Gonpa, many of us carrying, as the Tsegyalgar East Gakyil had suggested, the images of Tara that we had been practicing with to share them with all the practitioners over the weekend. As a result, the Gonpa quickly became a veritable Tara field, and it was quite lovely to see Rinpoche’s calligraphy of Tara’s seed syllable next to all sorts of beautiful statues and paintings of Tara, either by herself or in her twenty-one manifestations. We sat down in a circle, and immediately Yuchen’s calm and unpretentious manner made us all feel welcome and relaxed. She began the morning by
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and unpretentious way, with her words first, and then with her singing and chanting, Yuchen gave us a very powerful teaching in presence and lucidity. The following morning, Yuchen talked the history of Tara, the legends about her birth and origins, and she explained, in a very clear and yet deep way, Tara's significance in terms of the ultimate meaning of the Dzogchen path. This said, I must confess that my most favorite part of Sunday morning was listening to the stories Yuchen told us, with humor and sweetness, about the connection between the Namkhai family and Tara. I know we all felt very privileged to share this part of our Guru's family history directly with her.

At the end of our Sunday morning sessions, Ruben, as the Gakyil representative, thanked both Yuchen Namkhai and Paula Barry for their help and guidance, with words and presents, and we all had a good time posing for group photos, as you can see from the

result shown here. There is so much we all had to be grateful for at the end of this weekend and our happiness clearly shows in the photograph. Personally, the most inspiring lesson I took away from this weekend spent with Yuchen was perhaps her generosity in making herself available to each and every one of us. Being a full-time mom does not leave her much time, and thus I know it was not easy for her to create the opportunity to be with us. On top of this, Yuchen had just returned from Brazil, where she had spent time with Rinpoche, in the hospital; and yet, if I had not known it, I would have never guessed that she had just gone through what must have been an incredibly trying experience.

This is why, in my usual ram-bunctious and boisterous Italian fashion, I made sure to ask Yuchen before she left to take care of her girls to come back to teach us and lead us in practice again and again. She, with her usual modesty, smiled and demurred politely, but I know I am not alone in hoping that the December 2010 Green Tara retreat will be just the first of many, many wonderful experiences we will share with Yuchen Namkhai at Tsegyalgar East. I look forward to sitting soon again in a circle, in our Gonpa, listening to Yuchen's words and stories, and to practicing together with her and as many of our vajra brothers and sisters as possible.

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

Heidi Schorr

An international group of 20 Europeans 20 Mexicans 17 US West Coasters and 10 East Coasters, comfortably housed in the now finished casitas, gathered each morning to hear Khyentse Yeshe expound upon the newly drafted version of Bright Moon

The “entertainment team” as Khyentse laughingly referred to the land based crew devoted to the upkeep and vision of the Gar, was prepared with afternoon outings for the more adventurous amongst us (which turned out



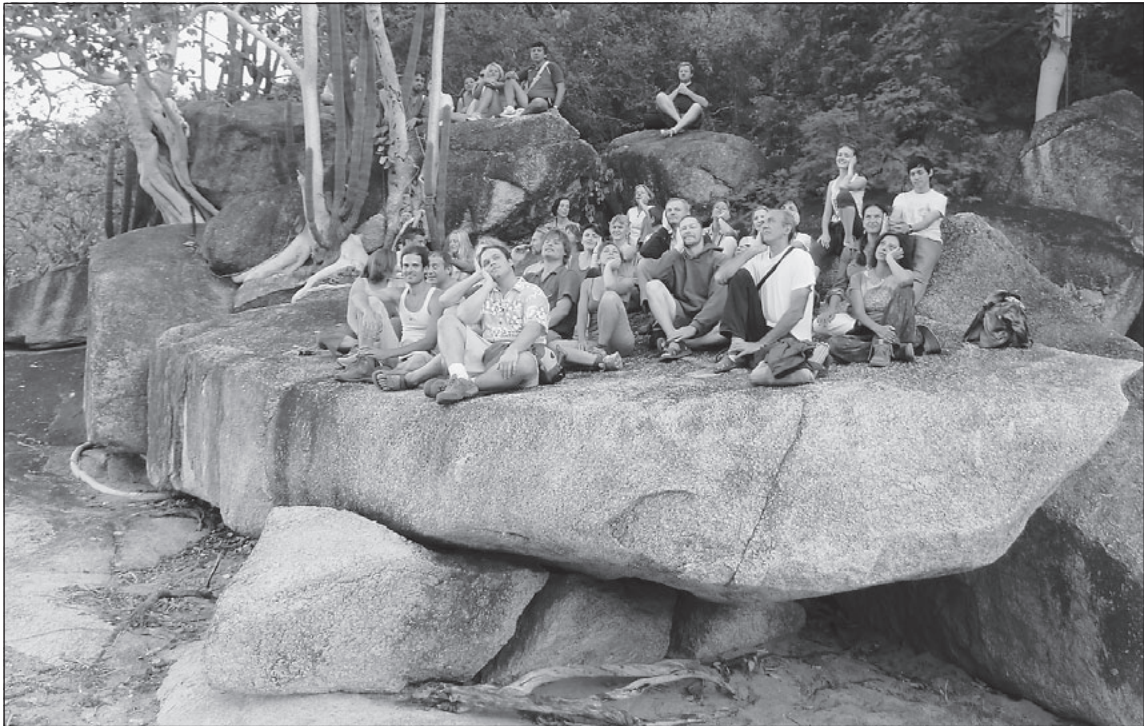
to be almost everyone.) Near the end of the retreat the group was shuttled to the top most corner of the 1200 hectare (3000 acre) land, where the road meets the large arroyo, to descend by foot what we had a few days previously ascended for a spacious and direct teaching on the rocks. The uppermost reaches of the arroyo, at its bend, has an almost gorge like feel to it with massive rock ledges and escarpments large

enough for all of us to climb onto and comfortably sing the Song of the Vajra. We all earnestly posed in our best Longde A position for an instantaneous sky practice. The descent took longer than anticipated and Khyentse skillfully shepherded his flock up and down the giant sized boulders strewn like mere marbles across the sandy canyon floor. The group, aided by the luminescent orb of the moon, trailed Khyentse

as he followed the calling voices and an innate path to the light of the waiting shuttle cars. The adventure was as memorable for its exciting climax as for the wonderful experiences along the way.

Tsegvalgar West impressed us with its wildness and raw beauty the first time we visited. I can say that this time, though still enormously impressed by the wildness and beauty of the land, the rawness of the facilities is receding. Through collaboration and hard work the land, along with our wild minds, is undergoing the process of taming. Together we are all preparing the ground, laying the paths and hopefully creating the auspicious circumstances so that we might soon harvest the fruit of our endeavors, both physical and spiritual. Just two weeks home, we already long to return. We urge you to visit this magical and powerful place for teaching programs or personal retreat.

For Daniel and Heidi's pictures visit www.dzogchenseattle.org and click on: Photos from Tseg-yalgar West



Journey to Maratika

Lacey Segal

“Is festival day” he said, staring off into the distance, blankly. When the man from Tara Airlines left to find a driver willing to summit and descend the winding mountainous road to Maratika Caves, the three of us felt little confidence. Joel, Mary, and I had landed in Lamidanda at 2:30 pm, our flight four hours late, to find no porters and no guide awaiting us as promised in this tiny village where everyone was drunk and no one really spoke English.

“What should we do?” I asked Joel.

“Relax,” he said.

Trekking up the steep mountainous escarpments was out of the question because we had big bags full of heavy gear in order to make a film about Mandarava. So we sat there. We hadn’t eaten lunch, and none of us had water. It started to rain.

Then we heard a sound. It emerged as a small humming and grew slowly into a loud roar. Two skinny teenage monks in robes skidded through the pools of water on the road splashing mud everywhere as they struggled to stop and balance their heavy motorcycles. Maratika Lama had sent his students. The monks, bashful, introduced themselves. They both looked about 20 years old.

“It take us three hour, for you, maybe four” they explained after strapping our gear to the back of their dirt bikes. Then, they gave us detailed directions to get from Lamidanda to Haleshi:

“You walk up mountain; you walk down mountain to other side.” With no other options and a lot of faith, we turned and began walking in the rain.

We walked through a magical dream. In the distance, the snowcapped mountain peaks of the Himalaya lined the horizon. Everest surpassed the foothills, green majestic mountains with mist creeping between the corridors. A light blue river flowed through the valley, and waterfalls streamed down hills terraced with rice patties. We hiked past tiny villages of houses made with earth, dried branches covering rooftops, stones and mud like a paste holding them together. We crossed a bridge above a river to a narrow trail along a rice patty, fuchsia, yellow, orange and purple wildflowers lining the hillside, until we came upon a little girl sitting by herself on the trail, singing and crushing herbs with a mortar and pestle. Her voice echoed against the rocks. Seeing us, she stopped suddenly and looked at her hands. We passed, making our way up the steep trail, and after a few moments we heard her sweet voice spiral up the hillside.

The land felt alive, and feminine; although it was deep and rugged wilderness, there



View of the town from the hike to the Mandarava Cave.

was something soft about it. Drenched in sweat, thinking we were almost there, Joel, Mary, and I summited to find the village of Visule in celebration. Women walked hand in hand with bright colored dresses, laughing. Everyone’s forehead displayed a striking red “tika” made of rice and paste. A giant swing made of four bamboo trunks, bowing with the weight of the children swinging, bounced and creaked as small feet kicked into the empty sky. Perched on the mountain crest, up against the sky at sunset, Children swung in slow motion, like the rhythm of breathing, on this otherworldly swing. The Himalayan foothills stretched in every direction. The town possessed an ethereal quality, like nothing had changed in ten years, or one hundred years, and if we came back again it would look the same. There was nowhere to go; there was no hurry; there was no time.

People stared at us. My brown T-shirt clung to my body, completely soaked with sweat. Mary asked some women,

“Maratika?” and they smiled warmly, directing us to the small shrine where people put a tikas on their foreheads.

“No, no, no, MAR-tika,” Mary said, laughing. They stared at us blankly.

So we just kept walking, but faster. We planned to get there before dark. Somebody made a joke about purification and we all laughed. I had a headache. It nine PM, after Mary twisted her ankle, I abandoned a heavy dharma book, and Joel had extreme cotton mouth, that we realized purification was not so hilarious. With one headlamp and three people, we inched down the mountain in the rain in the dark, avoiding big muddy ruts. We came upon two women and asked,

“Maratika?” They said a lot of things in Nepali and kept walking. We met an old man.

“Uta, Uta!” he said, and pointed profusely with his cane. This meant “go ALL the way down the mountain.” It was good we did not understand.

When we arrived at a small smattering of lights on a large terrace that was the town of Haleshi we wanted to cry. I approached a house and asked for some water. In one room slept the woman, her husband, her daughter, and her son’s wife with a tiny one

month old baby. The floors were earthen and smoke filled the air from the hearth. Somehow, this woman’s son, a new father at the age of 19, was the only English speaker in the town, Naveen Giri. He showed us to the monastery and became our guide for the week. We loved him.

Collapsing into the Monastery guest room we bowed to a thanka of Manjushri and sipped hot chai. The teenage monks gave us a bowl of Hot Ramen. I felt nauseous and my body trembled; so a monk took me to the special bathroom, the one with a lock and key.

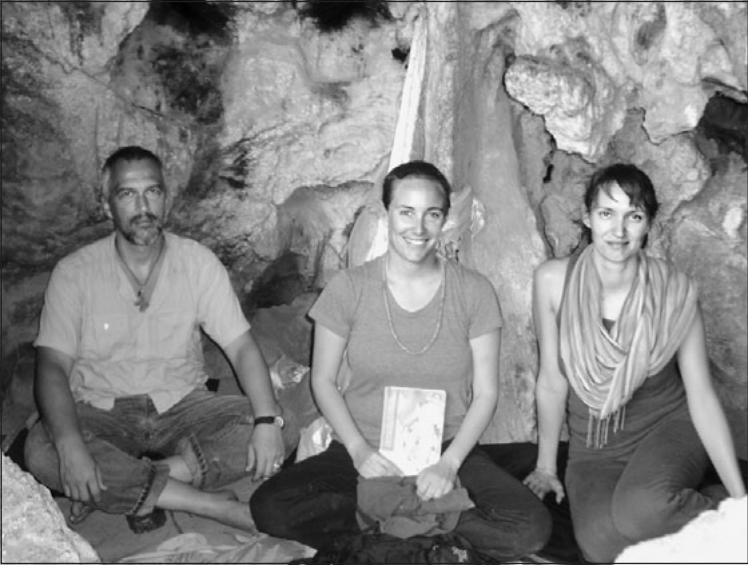
“Don’t be scared,” he said sweetly. Inside the wooden structure awaited a tiny pit toilet with three spiders the size of my hand dangling above it... Suddenly I wasn’t nauseous, and I didn’t have to go to the bathroom any more. I decided to have an anxiety attack. That night I had a dream that I was smelling the putrid toilet and saying out loud,

“Mmm this smells good!” and I had to laugh at myself a little bit. Couldn’t there be a nicer way to communicate the idea of “one taste” than this?

Back in the room, Mary was petting a medium sized dog that whimpered every now and again. I looked at the dog and noticed a tiny black puppy, and then two more came out. Mama was licking them. They were slimy and wet with their eyes closed. Then Joel saw the placenta sitting next to his hand on the floor. Mary stopped petting the dog. I said goodnight and woke up 12 hours later.

The next morning, none of us were sore, and we felt extremely happy. Just before the full moon, Joel, Mary, and I hiked to the Mandarava Cave for Ganapuja. We strolled across a narrow trail covered in wildflowers and prayer flags lapping in the wind. On a steep cliff sits the crystal cave quietly. We did the long practice, using incense sticks as dars, all of us deeply moved. As we sang the Song of the Vajra in unison there was nothing else to do but deeply relax and feel gratitude for everything that had ever happened, was to be, and existed right then. We saw a double rainbow.

The energy at Maratika felt powerful. I am convinced that this place is a portal, an overlap-



Doing the long Mandarava Puja.

ping of two worlds, a giant vortex. We experienced life there as fluid, flexible, with opportunities every second; we noticed the magnetism of our thoughts like never before. “Reality” was constantly and instantly re-calibrating itself.

This feeling intensified at the wish fulfilling vase in the main cave. I practiced there for an hour before I asked the rock if I had permission to enter its field with my consciousness. I sensed acquiesce; so I put my hand on the stone, and I felt inside of it. Palpable energy flowed from the center of my palm up my forearm into my central channel. The waves peaked, like a line on an echocardiogram. They were grainy, like sand mixed in water. I relaxed to find my own consciousness inseparable from the stone.

“What do you want me to see?” I asked, and a sultry female voice answered,

“What do you want to see?” No pictures or smells or sounds or feelings came. It was like two mirrors facing each other. For a moment, my mind could see that it was empty, and whatever I wanted to see I would have to imagine. But there was nothing

that I wanted. The imagining took effort. It was fine the way it was. It was blank; it was quiet. It had a sense of humor somehow. It felt kind of flirtatious. I don’t know.

Then, on the last day, I entered the Heruka cave, the one with the portal to Amitaba’s pure land where Mandarava and Guru Rinpoche ascended. I practiced, experiencing an overwhelming wish that everyone I loved could have blessings from this cave. Then, I wanted everyone they loved to have blessings. As if it was some big surprise, I realized that what I really wanted was for everyone, everywhere, to be happy. And that was it. After all the practice and all the complexity, this was the answer. Walking out, a large drop of liquid hit the top of my head. There was a pigeon there, but I prefer to call it nectar.

One year ago I had never heard of Mandarava or Maratika. It is with tremendous gratitude for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the Dzogchen Community that I write this article, so that all beings may benefit!



Wish fulfilling Vase in the main cave.

Review

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The Game of Liberation

Lauri Denyer

The Game of Liberation is a wonderful board game created by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It is both a game and a way to understand various aspects of our condition. The game consists of a board with 108 dimensions or spaces, some playing pieces and a booklet telling the players where they should place their tokens, which could be literally anywhere, ranging from the Dharmakaya to the hell of Diverse Desires, or any place in-between.

The object of the game is to reach the Dharmakaya, or liberation. To do this each player throws the dice and places the playing piece on the indicated dimension space, and moves from there according to the instructions on the next throw of the dice. From the higher realms, it is still possible to go to the lower realms, perhaps passing through the human dimension. From the human dimension it is possible to go anywhere, though in stages. All players begin there. Then depending on the roll of the dice, one goes either up to the Ati yoga path, or any of a number of other paths to liberation, or to the formless or form realms, the bardo, or any one of the six lokas.

This game is similar but not exactly like other games of its type, the most familiar to westerners being Snakes and Ladders (Chutes and Ladders in America). In India where this type of game originated – possibly as early as the 3rd century a.d. as a game



Photo: P. Fassoli



Photo: L. Gräf

which showed the consequences of actions – it was known as Moksha Patamu, or Leela and still exists in various updated forms. It was traditionally played both as an enjoyable and as an instructional pastime, but when it was adapted into a children's game in the west, it lost its educational function. A Tibetan version of this game was invented by the great thirteenth century master Sakya Pandita.

The Game of Liberation designed by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche can be played by as many as can fit around the board. In playing

it, it becomes clear how hard it can be to reach liberation, how precious the opportunities are for a fortunate rebirth, and how difficult it is to liberate from the lower realms. And once reaching the Dharmakaya, it is necessary to wait until everyone else arrives too, because the game is not over until all are liberated, and one never really plays alone. This is just one of the myriad ways that our precious master has devised to illuminate our passage through this life, laughing as we exist together in this multitude of uncertainties. May all players reach the Dharmakaya!

Secret Teachings of Padmasambhava

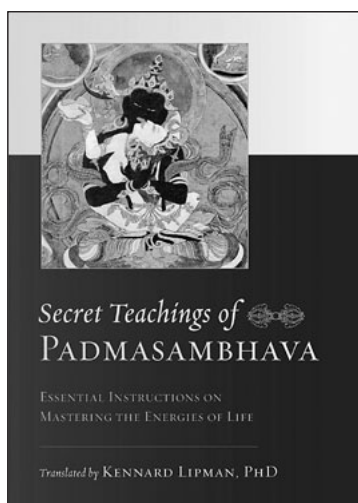
Essential Instructions on Mastering the Energies of Life

Translated by Kennard Lipman, Ph.D.
Shambhala Publications,
October 2010

Andy Lukianowicz

Many of us remember scholar-yogi Kennard Lipman, who in the early 80s came to study with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Italy, taking residence in Formia and attending Rinpoche's courses at the university of Naples and his retreats in Europe. Now Kennard has added to his (too) slim corpus of translations this remarkable work, drawn from Longchenpa's Nyingtig Yabzhi collection of Padmasambhava's Upadesha teachings and dedicated to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and in memory of Professor Herbert Guenther, his two main teachers.

Kennard takes as his remit three questions: 1. What is a holistic world view? 2. What is human energy and how do we



master it? 3. What is the place of sexuality in the mastery of human energy for healing and enlightenment? Seeking answers to these questions in Padmasambhava's teachings, Kennard draws (among other things) on Chinese medicine (of which he is a practitioner) and Jung's considerations on alchemy and individuation, to further his explorations of tantric and Dzogchen physiology and human development, thogal praxis, and sexual practice with and without a partner (interesting in this regard are Jeffrey Hopkins' 'ruminations' ending his book, ostensibly on gay love,

but far more comprehensive in scope, on the physiology and psychology of sex and sexuality).

There are also three very useful appendices, one on Buddhist cosmology treating Longchenpa's systematisation of the Abhidharmakosa mythology and another on the 'five phases', treating the five elements in line with Guenther's adoption of the dynamic process thinking of cognitive science. A third appendix is a considered appraisal of the evolution of Guenther's approach to the language and terminology of translation. (It is interesting that Keith Dowman, too, has dedicated his most recent translation from Longchenpa, 'Maya Yoga', to Guenther, whom however he witheringly disses in a somewhat cavalier, 'Stephen Potterish' fashion in his introduction to that book! His translation is, needless to say, clear, 'zingy' and as fresh as paint.)

To return to our book, each text translated by Kennard, refreshingly free of jargon, is preceded by insightful examinations of its meaning. The first text 'The Fivefold Essential Instruction', is usefully subdivided as presenting five levels: the outer, the in-

ner, the hidden, working with the more hidden (specifically treating sexual practice with a partner), and the final stage (how to heal illnesses by harmonising the phases). The second text, 'A Section of Hidden Instruction, the Innermost Essence of the Dakini', offers a more comprehensive treatment of the five 'phases' and includes a presentation of the Dzogchen view according to the Upadesha with quotes from several important Upadesha tantras. For ease, Kennard has subdivided it too in sections: a presentation of the initial ground of being, how things are in the midst of our present situation (this part contains a description of the gestation of the body in terms of the five phases and energetic pathways, energy and creative potency), how primordial intelligence itself is present (with comments on trekchod and thogal practice and the uniqueness of the Dzogchen view), and experiencing how pristine awareness is present in the body. It would be churlish to describe the contents of these translations in too much detail, rather like spoiling a story by revealing a secret before time.)

In the Commentary section Kennard also offers a succinct presentation of the Dzogchen approach to yoga, based largely on Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's teachings from the early 80s, with considerations on bodhicitta and motivation, with examinations of mind calming (shine/shamatha) and insight (vipassana/lhagtong) practice according to Dzogchen, direct introduction, yoga energy-body praxis, and applying passion on the path.

Also offered throughout this work are helpful reflections on the elusive and multifaceted meaning(s) of primordial intelligence, which translates the notion 'rigpa'.

This book, which many will find very helpful, is deceptively short (less than 100 pages!) but compact, replete with carefully thought-out cogitations on issues succinctly expressed. The penultimate section on Kennard's brief Introduction is titled 'The Relevance of these Teachings to Our Time', making clear that these teachings are not merely mystical musings but are in fact crucially and vitally necessary to us in these (and future) challenging times.

Review

Ex Nihilo Nihil
Dorothea Franck

editions ex Nihil,
Amsterdam 2008

Louise Landes Levi

As long as modern verse shall last your lovely songs
will make precious their very ink.
Dante re Arnaut

To ornament the nature of the mind, w. poetry, dance & music has been a prerogative of the yogic schools since time immemorial. Efforts to follow suit in the 20th century, when the Eastern schools of learning moved definitively westward, have met w. varying degrees of success. In certain initiatory instances, the above arts, form in themselves, a path – The Dance of the Vajra, a terma of Dzogchen master & tertön, Namkhai Norbu, is an example.

A previous Mirror (No 103/ March-April 2010), has introduced, in depth, a poet in this tradition, Doro Franck, a native German speaker who writes, in her recent publication **ex nihilo nihil** w. an amazing alacrity & eloquence, in English as well as in her native German & Dutch. The poet resides in Amsterdam.

What is
Is nothing
Nothing
But
A coming and a going

What is is nothing?
Oh what an interesting nothing
Nothing is as great as rich
As infinite
As
Nothing
Fr. HOW THE UNIVERSE BECAME TRANSPARENT

Franck has no specific background in oriental languages nor in the linguistic traditions in which the poetry, for example, of the Indian & Tibetan cultures evolved, no faux-Sanskrit in her work. She is however, an excellent interpreter of the esoteric tradition in Ancient Greece (Origen et.al.) & a connoisseur of modern American & European poetry, in particular.

In **ex nihilo nihil** (creation myths Kosmischer Schwinder donkere materie) the poet – practitioner writes the primordial within the context of her daily life & her alarmingly personal perceptual & philosophic inquiry. As in the teachings of (the above mentioned master’s son) Khyentse Yeshe, traditional vocabulary, detailed references, w. relation to text & source, is omitted in favor of direct speech – in **ex Nihilo** a poetry of amazing ingenuity & clarity, a view that seems to arise from immeasurable rays (& realms) of a single crystal – one is not sure of the poet’s perspective (– where is she coming from?) making her poetry, though apparently, quite straightforward, indeed mysterious.

I will not explore (or present) the work in Dutch or German, although familiar w. these languages, to explicate poetry in these languages, is far beyond my capacity. Even in English, can one ever understand that which is, by nature, beyond understanding?

The origin of light
Is a tiny tiny hole
In the surface of
The world

Rays piercing through
From the unseen side
Eager to return
To their beginning

In your eye
Fr. WHERE THE LIGHT IS COMING FROM

Doro Franck is a student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, a contemporary Ati Yoga master. Those familiar w. his teaching will recognize in the themes of her work, her dedication. But these poems are equally accessible to those unfamiliar w. the specifics of Dzogchen & can serve as just introduction to certain of its aspects.

To close I quote, pts. 2 & 3 of a poem particularly dear to me:

2.
so you can see
seeing creates the eye
now let the sun come up and the stars
and put them where they belong

in advance nobody could have thought of
something like this world
never anyone could have ever imagined
not in their wildest dreams
that everything would be
the way it is.

3.
.and creation is not finished
in the amazon jungle they recently
found a singing ape a small creature
looking like a teddy bear

and while the monkeys sing they
hold each other hugging
hugging and singing
oh happy apes, oh happy apes
singing and hugging

nevertheless biologist declare
that the singing is just a means of
protecting their territory
(so much for the academic version of
things)
they will go on singing and hugging
as long as we let them live
and as long as it lasts
the songs will create other singers
and perhaps trees and sweet fruit
and sunshine and rain

and in any case the water will remember
and start all over if necessary
perhaps next time
without
those scientists.
Fr. CIRCLE SMALL COSMOLOGY

This book has been printed in the Netherlands, by edition ex Nihilo, an independent press for poetry & critical prose. Copies of this volume, delicately printed in deep blue ink on light grey paper & beautifully designed by Theo de Vos, are available at: 25 Ruysdael Kade, Amsterdam 1072 AH, NL,. The price is E. 20.

Highly recommended to lovers of verse & the universe of poet-ics, a subject, upon which, the poet in mention, Dr. Dorothea Franck, is a noted expert.

Flat for sale in Castel del Piano, near Merigar West
Yuchen Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani are selling their flat in Castel del Piano (GR) in Italy, 9 km from Merigar.

The flat is about 90 sq.m, on the 1st floor and consists of a large living area, a large fitted kitchen that is fully equipped, a box-room, a bathroom, 2 bedrooms and 2 balconies.

The flat has an autonomous heating system with radiators and a private GPL tank. In addition there is a private garden of about 200 sqm. The building is in a sunny position, facing a small wood with panoramic views over the valley.

It is a real bargain at the asking price of 105,000 euro.

For further information and to view the flat, please contact Renata at renatanani@libero.it



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How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Nina Tkachova

In 2002 I was cleaning my house when a book that I had never seen before fell down into my arms. While I was reading its title, “Cutting off hope and fear”, inside me a deep experience of knowledge arose that seemed to be one that had always been there but had never come out before.

I read this book in two days. Without being acquainted with Buddhist terminology it was hard to understand but despite this, the deepest source of real knowledge was opened and entered my heart. The introduction was written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. I had strong feeling that he addressed me in an accessible language with simple and clear words. The book also contained some photos in which he was playing some instruments for chöd practice. From the first look at these photos it was clear that I should find this teacher to make this knowledge concrete. Machig Labdrön lived in past time, but Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is living at the same time and in the same space as me. My intention to meet the Teacher arose.

A few days after this discovery, I met my neighbor on the street. He told that in two months time a Dzogchen Teacher would come to Crimea called Namkhai Norbu. I was shocked and could hardly believe it - this information seemed to be unreal. I had just discovered the teaching, found this knowledge and immediately the teacher manifests in my life. I did my best to get to this retreat and meet him. It was September 2002 in Crimea. Unfortunately, I was not very well prepared, so it was hard to understand the teaching and practices, because I had no idea what Dzogchen was. Besides the book that had touched me to the soul I also read “The Golden Letters”. The only thing I understood from this book was the Three Statements of Garab Dorje.

While I was going to the retreat, an unexpected event happened, as unexpected as meeting the teacher and the teaching. That day I discovered I was pregnant, so I arrived in Crimea in a changed state and felt strange – sick and dizzy, my blood

pressure was very low. Everything seemed unreal like in a dream. There were 1500 practitioners at the retreat, all completely different people and many of them seemed strange to me. Everything that happened to me during the retreat didn’t correspond with my ideas of how it should be. But the most disappointing thing was the fact that I didn’t understand the instructions on the teaching and had no idea what to do. But when all the people together with the teacher pronounced the syllable A and started singing the Song of Vajra, I recognized these sounds as myself.

After three days of the retreat I worried that I hadn’t understood anything. Also my physical condition was quite miserable. My friends advised me to go directly to the teacher and ask him for help. Standing in the line that moved so fast I realized that contact with Rinpoche is significant and I couldn’t ask anything for myself, so when my turn came I still did not know what to say. The teacher was waiting, so I told him about the pregnancy and asked him to bless the baby. With a wide smile he blessed my future child. I experienced complete bliss and peace from this contact. Walking back to my friends I found that the books with the explanations of the practices had already arrived. I bought all the books that were available at that moment to understand what I had received and how to work with it.

Returning from the Crimea, I started looking for the Dzogchen Community in Kiev. I found a few old practitioners who met on special days and did Ganapujas. And so little by little I started to work with a lot of practices that I had already received transmission for and started to get familiar with this knowledge. Since that time my life has been full of miracles that haven’t stopped even today.

As my understanding developed I recognized that meeting the teacher, teaching and community is priceless, rare and fortunate. I have never had questions after the teaching. When some questions arose I recognized them being invented and they disappeared. I already have all the answers



inside since the beginning. By participating and collaborating inside the community I had a unique opportunity to learn these precious methods, attending retreats on Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and group practices in my native city, Kiev.

One of the methods that has worked for me is Yantra Yoga. Under the guidance of Fabio Andrico and Viktor Krachkovskiy I learned this amazing practice. In 2002 at the retreat with Fabio I started with the 8 lungsang – the movements for purification and coordination of life energy prana. Even without a clear understanding of all the aspects of Yantra Yoga from the beginning I felt a deep interest to this method. Before I had practiced hatha-yoga and was quite familiar with working with the body and energy. When in 2003 my son was born I did the usual body exercises but didn’t calculate the stress on my body. I received a serious injury associated with the spine. After that my mobility was severely restricted.

Experiencing serious physical pain, being in despair about this, I also had deep trust in the methods given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Doing these practices for a long time restored my health. I could only hope to do Yantra at that time! Beginning Yantra Yoga practice, I felt a strong pain in my injured back. For a few years I did everything possible and impossible to balance my organism and get the possibility to practice this precious method.

The next possibility to meet Chögyal Namkhai Norbu personally was in 2005: before going to the Crimean retreat he stopped in Kiev where he gave a public talk about the essence of the Dzogchen Teaching. I had incredibly good fortune to live near the teacher for 3 days, taking care of his comfort, cooking and cleaning. I saw with my own eyes how Rinpoche lives and travels bestowing his precious teaching. I understood and realized how hard it is for

his physical health. I don’t know how to describe this experience, maybe the deepest empathy for his boundless compassion for all of us. With my own eyes I saw that Rinpoche lives to teach us.

After the Crimean retreat in June 2005, in the next months I had a dream in which Rinpoche recommended receiving the Gomadevi initiation on Margarita on his birthday. I did everything possible to get to Venezuela. This time the Teachers Training on Yantra Yoga 1st Level with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti also took place. Being deeply interested in Yantra Yoga I attended this course that helped to deepen my knowledge. For many years since 2004 I have led classes on Yantra Yoga.

For me Yantra Yoga is a very fundamental method for recognition of Dzogchen knowledge. Concretely working with experience, it has physical benefits such as improving and strengthening health and also relaxation of the mind that is necessary for deep practice. Now Yantra Yoga is open, many people have the possibility to come into contact with this method, learn and practice it, and that way get a connection with the community, teaching and teacher who is the source of transmission.


In April 2010 Khyentse Yeshe arrived in Kiev with teaching. For me he is inseparable from Rinpoche and the line of transmission. He is an important support in understanding and correctly developing the precious teaching. After this retreat I wrote my first poem:

In the empty bluish infinity
With the blissful sounding, opened the essence:
Unwashed, with a bitter sweetness of eternity
Flattened, merged, no sleep...

Sweeping away all doubts fearlessly
Without hope to return anything
Laughing by tears about important things,
To distinguish the path in the dream.

Merging a moment with eternity in movement
without interruption,
Dropping to the source of wisdom and compassion,
Vajra Master opening direct introduction
Manifests the freedom of consciousness.

This reincarnation has been extremely fortunate: I have met the teaching and teacher who have given me the chance to recognize and realize real knowledge. And the community. Working on the Gakyil of Tashiling was a remarkable experience. My true desire is to create favorable circumstances for many people to meet, learn and practice these precious methods. Collaboration with other people for the teaching and teacher makes my practice inseparable from life.



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