

THE MIRROR

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Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: M. Almici

2011

This is an approximate program subject to change

Australia
March 18–23
Namgyalgar Retreat

Singapore
March 31–April 4
Singapore Retreat

Taiwan
Taipei
April 8–11
Taipei Teaching Retreat

Japan
April 15–19
Tokyo Teaching Retreat
The teaching is
sPyod pa ro snyoms gyi man ngag

Russia
April 25–May 1
Moscow Retreat

May 2–6
Kunsangar North
The teaching of Medicine Srothig,
the root terma text of
Rigdzin Jyangchub 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

August 5–12
Merigar West Retreat

August 19–23
A special teaching



Photo: G. Horner

Caloundra Retreat

February 2011

Pamela Oldmeadow

People had gathered from all over Australia from Perth to Cairns, and also New Zealand, Japan, Europe and the Americas for this moment. We were so profoundly relieved, overjoyed and grateful to see Rinpoche there ready to teach us.

Rinpoche talked to us over the next few days about different paths, about vows and initiation and guruyoga. He talked about the inseparability of *khadag* and *lhundrup*, emptiness and potentiality, and methods for discovering our real nature. He gave us the direct introduction of Yeshe Sangthal. Also, he stressed the importance of developing our presence, and integrating this knowledge in our lives. He gave transmission of *lung* for many practices and a more detailed explanation of Ganapuja. We were grateful for the presence of Eduardo who had accompanied Rinpoche and managed the webcast.

As we sweltered in the heat and humidity and cultivated compassion towards the large, lumbering, stinging march flies, our energy harmonized with the teachings and an atmosphere of lightness and delight prevailed.

Mornings saw Nicki Elliot teach the Dance of the Three Vajras under the supervision of Adriana Dal Borgo, and developing harmony in all three mandala groups. After the teachings and lunch, there were clarifying practice explanations with Elise Stutchbury and Angie Gilbert. Afternoons also had Amare Pearl teaching Yantra Yoga, lightly making us all feel we could do and enjoy doing the Eight Movements (even if there were some things our particular bodies balked at). After dinner, we danced the Song of Vajra or the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra. Then those learning the Song of Vajra Dance practised, guided by Cosimo Di Maggio and Rosita Altamirano under the guidance of Adriana. Some

joined in evening Chöd practices, as well as Xitro for a recently deceased Vajra brother, Steve.

People browsed in the bookshop and acquired thigle-colored t-shirts bearing the gold longsal symbol. They went kayaking on the dam, or swam in the patchily warm and cool water. Some went to the beach. Others played bagchen. Gentle enjoyment.

After the Ganapuja on Saturday we held an auction of donated goods. Rinpoche asked us to open our hearts and pockets and consider the financial needs of the Community worldwide, especially the newly acquired land for the northern Gar in Australia. And we did. He himself donated his longsal ring, a longsal pendant and a necklace he had made. People vied to get crocheted berets with a thigle of 5 colors after Rinpoche modelled them for us. It was a lot of fun and altogether we raised about

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Teaching



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Gundu Sánboi Monlam

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Teaching



Khyentse Yeshe
From the
'Teaching on
the Essence of
Abhidharma'

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Focus



The
Primordial
Masters

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Gundu Sánboi Monlam

Invocation to Samantabhadra

Tashigar South, Argentina

February 12-13, 2011

Excerpt of the Teaching from Day 1, February 12
Introduction and the First Six Verses

Good day to everybody everywhere. We are here in Tashigar South for a weekend retreat. We are going to learn *The Invocation of Samantabhadra* because it is really a very important, principal Dzogchen teaching. I was going to give this teaching when I was in Brazil, but I had to cancel the retreat because of my health. Many people have been waiting for this teaching and that is why I am giving it this weekend at Tashigar South.

This teaching is a kind of invocation. The principle of this teaching is that it is a kind of introduction to help understand the principle of Dzogchen. The invocation, *Gundu Sánboi Monlam*, is a small chapter of a *terma* cycle corresponding to the *Gongpa Sangthal* (*dgongs pa zang thal*) tantra.

I received the transmission of the *Gongpa Sangthal* (*dgongs pa zang thal*) tantra, of which there are many volumes and initiations, from the son of *Adzom Drukpa* while I was doing a personal retreat. The son of *Adzom Drukpa* had gone to visit Central Tibet and was returning secretly to East Tibet. He returned secretly because otherwise people would discover and disturb him. He traveled in a very simple way. On his way back, he stopped to see my grandmother who he had known very well because she had spent many years as a student of *Adzom Drukpa*. He did not know if she was still alive and was searching for her and arrived at my parents' home. Then he discovered our grandmother had already passed. He had traveled many months without changing clothes, etc., and my father asked him to remain secretly for a few days with our family. Also my father prepared some new clothing for him.

The son of *Adzom Drukpa* was talking with my family and discovered I was doing a personal retreat at *Sengchen Namdrag*. This was a secret place. One morning my father and the son of *Adzom Drukpa* arrived to visit me. I was very surprised because I had always had the idea to go and see this teacher but I never had time, so now he arrived and remained one week secretly. I asked for many teachings and particularly he gave this *Gongpa Sangthal*. I also received all the *terma* teachings of *Adzom Drukpa* from him. So this is the history of the transmission of this teaching.

This invocation is called the *Invocation of Samantabhadra*. *Samantabhadra* is the primordial state of the *dharmakaya*. The invocation introduces and helps people to understand how to get into the state of *Samantabhadra*. When you get in that state you also have self-liberation. There are many translations of this invocation from many translators. Maybe you can find some translations and try and get the real sense of this teaching and see if it corresponds or not. The words are not important, but the real sense is. You try to understand this and I will explain.

The title of this text is the *Invocation of Samantabhadra*. In Tibet when we do this invocation, we do it together with a visualization. We try to get into the meaning and we chant. In Tibet this invocation is very diffused and they use it very often. Of course for Tibetans, it is not a problem to read or use the Tibetan language. For Westerners it is not so easy, so they cannot use the invocation as Tibetans do. For doing this invocation sometimes we use the melody of the seven verses of *Guru Padmasambhava*.

In this copy I prepared you can see there is a little sign between the verses. These verses are somewhat different arguments. Also when we sing, at the point of the little sign, we stop and start again. For Westerners who would like to do this invocation, you can use a slower and easier melody. Many years ago I gave this invocation at a retreat. During this retreat I had a very interesting dream. In my dream I gave an explanation of this invocation and when I finished this explanation I said that we could also sing slowly. There is a possibility to sing this melody. In the dream I already knew this melody and I taught it to my students in the dream. I explained all and we sang the entire invocation together. When we finished this invocation there was a small explanation of when to use it, which we



Photo: A. Rodriguez

can learn later when we do the invocation. For example when there is an eclipse, but there are many other periods as well.

When we arrived to the end of the invocation where it says *ñidá sá-yis zinba-ham*, which means the eclipse of sun and moon, I woke up and I was singing these words. When I woke up I immediately remembered my dream. I thought, this is interesting, particularly this melody, because in the dream I am an expert of this melody, but in the daytime I don't know it. I never learned this melody. I thought this was useful for my students – good for Westerners because they can sing it very slowly.

I immediately got up and recorded the melody. I have recorded many kinds of melodies this way. I am always present to record these melodies because no one knows when I will have this kind of dream. So we can also use this melody and we have it written down, so you can learn it. When you are singing with that melody, you should start and at each verse where there is a sign, you should stop and start again. For example you see at the beginning there are 6 verses, also there are again 6 verses, another has many verses, so if there are 6 verses you repeat 2 of the first 4. This is the rule of this melody. Then everything is fine and if we have time I can show you how to sing. But in this moment more important is that you learn the real sense.

༄༄༄༄། ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོའི་སྣོན་ལམ་བཞུགས་སོ།
Gundu sánboi mōnlam

ཧོ། Ho

སྐྱང་སྤྱིང་འཕྲོར་འདས་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀུན་ཅེ།
Nànsid kòrdas tamjad gun

Nàn means visions. For example when we see our dimension it is called vision. Pure vision is just like a mandala. Impure vision is like *samsara*, how we see in general.

Sid means in the dimension, in that instance. In *samsara* we have six *lokas* of beings and in a pure dimension there are all manifestations of enlightened beings.

So *nànsid* means together, like all these visions, all this existence, but in Tibetan it is one word, meaning we should know in that way.

Kòrdas is one word in Tibetan. The meaning of *kòr*, *kòr-wa* is transmigration. Impure vision. *Das* means nirvana. So we say *samsara* and nirvana. *Samsara* and nirvana together is called *kòrdas*. In Tibetan it is one word, so *nànsid kòrdas, tamjad* means all, *gun* means total, everything total of *samsara* and nirvana, pure dimension and impure dimension and existence. We can understand all existence in a very simple way.

མཁོ་མཁོ་ལམ་གཉིས་འབྲས་བུ་གཉིས་ཅེ།

Xí jig lam ñis drásbu ñis

Xí jig means one base. This is very important to understand in the correct way. Some people know the Hindu system and in Hinduism there is a different explanation. But it is saying in our total and general condition called *dul munpa nyíngtob*, there are three kinds of dimensions. If you have such realization, then everything is dissolving into *Brahma*. Even if there are ten people, ten sentient beings, when they are enlightened and in a pure dimension, they become one. They have this concept. You must not confuse *xí jig* with that. Sometimes we say *xí jig*, unique base, and then we are thinking everything becomes one, something like *Samantabhadra*.

We can have the condition of *Samantabhadra*, it is the same for all sentient beings. Particularly when we are in a pure dimension or realization, then there is not dualistic vision, no separation saying this is good and this is bad. Everything is the same condition of *Samantabhadra*. This is called *xí jig* – the same way – but does not become one. Be careful and don't confuse with Hinduism. Many people are confused in that way.

Lam ñis means two paths. Even if it is one base it manifests two aspects, because the real condition is just like the nature of *Samantabhadra*. When we speak in the way of Dzogchen, then we say the base. The base is essence, nature and energy. That is how we explain or do relative analysis, but it does not mean three conditions exist. Always essence, nature and energy are the same principle. It is the same principle of *Samantabhadra*. *Samantabhadra* is not a sentient being; *Samantabhadra* means the state, the real state.

Samantabhadra is the unique state. Even if there are six *lokas*, there is no difference between their real nature and *Samantabhadra*. This is something like origin. It is very important for Westerners to understand. Most Westerners receive a Christian education and in the Christian tradition God is very diffused. God is recognized as something outside. They don't know that God is in our real nature. If you have that knowledge and you are reading the bible, you can see there are many words that indicate God means our real nature. But then it developed in a more dualistic way. When they started to say, "the unique God governing all universe", then it became easy to think God is governing everything. But it does not correspond in the real condition.

So it is very important when you follow the Dzogchen Teachings, that you really understand what God means. It is not necessary to wonder if God exists or not. Some people are worried there is no God in Buddhism. In Bud-

From the Last Day of the 'Teaching on the Essence of Abhidharma'

given at Merigar West, December 27-31, 2010

So to end this short retreat, now we do something as usual connected with transmission. In the tradition of Atiyoga, not only the Nyingma tradition, but in general, when we talk about teachings connected with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, then we know that there is a series of teachings called Longsal. They have the purpose of making things more simple and clear. It means that just like we have so many teachings and explanations, there is also a simple way to understand according to our circumstances. And our circumstances are the Dzogchen Community – how we are, what we are and what we are doing. It means that the most important aspect for us is being present in this condition. In this condition, we have favourable aspects and opportunities because we have this kind of teaching.

According to the principle that we find in the series of Longsal, which are teachings more related with the third series of Upadesha, the way we enter into full recognition of our own state is based on observing ourselves. In the series of teachings on Longsal, we also find explanations related with direct transmission. We can say that the source of Longsal comes from this. Most of the first appearances of this teaching related with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu are mainly in the aspect of communication, the aspect of transmission.

Transmission in Dzogchen teaching in general is not something that we do much with words. It is not something that we put on our head. It is not something that we do with an action or with specific words, but is recognition and an opportunity to observe our own minds. How many methods do we have for this recognition? We have a lot. We have different methods and I have already applied some of them. Not only do we have a general explanation, like for example, an introduction. Let's say we introduce a text and we say from the Atiyoga point of view it works in this way. Not only

do we introduce general information such as where the teaching comes from, such as the primordial teachers, other dimensions etc., like more in the context of the concept of lineage. Not only in the idea of devotion.

But when we approach the taste of this knowledge, we also have symbolic transmission. Symbols are used to make us feel something. For example when we say that the nature of mind is connected with knowledge of the mirror, it means we are observing what the potentiality of the mirror is. Having the logical construction in our mind of this experience, we feel that it can be trusted, that there is some logic, there is something that we can grasp. When we can grasp something it means that when someone comes to us in the next hours and asks us what we did in these days and we say, "Oh I listened to this teaching, it is about this and that," and we can explain it very quickly, it means we have grasped something. Then this person listens to us and says that he doesn't understand a word of what we are saying because when we dealing with knowledge there is nothing that can be expressed in words.

If we are not teaching, there is nothing to discuss. There is no possibility of communicating outside this knowledge, because this knowledge relates to our own observations of our individual condition. With symbolic transmission we have understanding of the 'taste' of this knowledge. If we don't have the 'taste' of knowledge, there cannot be trust. It means that there is no space for confidence. But this is a starting point. Then one should develop one's own confidence. That's why the process is most important. Not the result.

The teaching of Dzogchen, of Atiyoga, has nothing to do with results. That's why, for example, we say in Atiyoga that we have no point of view, at least not a traditional point of view because point of view leads to application and application leads to results.



Photo: D. Ibragimov

In Dzogchen Atiyoga, the fruit is our ordinary condition. It means the result is our ordinary condition. We understand it better just because we are observing. And what is the bridge? The aspect of the emptiness, the vacuity of the mind because mind is completely empty and has this infinite potentiality of vision. If it were filled with something, it would never have this potentiality. It is just like the example of the apple. How important does something that you wish for become when you don't have it. How boring it becomes when you get it immediately.

Mind doesn't create anything when experience arrives immediately. Mind doesn't have space and opportunity to develop anything. For this reason, experience related to one's own state doesn't give anything. So when we say direct transmission, it has nothing to do with feeling something interesting. First we use symbolic transmission to break up all the schema and the logic of the mind, so it is important. Someone, for example, asks what you did during these days [of retreat]. What is re-

ally important, for even one minute in every two hour session, is that you feel that you can observe and understand your mind – for example, saying, Oh, I know this very well" – and recognising how it arrives in the mind, how it develops in the mind, how much it conditions life. And then most of all I start to see that it is like images in the mind. I can become more confident that it is like watching TV, that there is some distance. When I talk and you can see your mind better, this is the most important aspect. This is the 'taste' related with symbolic transmission.

The easiest way to achieve knowledge of oneself is breaking one's mental habits. This means listening. In Sutra we have an explanation of what 'wisdom' means. When we talk about how we apply *prajna*, real knowledge, first of all we learn to listen. When we listen we are always in the truth. It's just an example of telling the truth. When we are telling the truth it means that we have what is called understanding. There is a relationship between what arrives and what goes out. It means

that it is coherent. If something enters, it goes out the same because the mirror has the potentiality of reflection, not of changing reflections.

Most important is learning to be relaxed with objects of mind, not trying to change these reflections, but feeling, tasting and understanding that they are reflections and that is why they will never hurt. So it is very important that we understand what 'reflection' means. And this is mostly related with knowledge of the way of symbolic transmission.

Obviously in these days we cannot approach symbolic transmission from the point of view of clarity or a point of view more related with our energy. We will do this at the next retreat. But at least we try to understand the ground of what emptiness, vacuity means, of what the aspect of the mind means. Then we have direct transmission. Direct transmission means that we are entering this knowledge fully. ❀

Transcribed by L. Granger

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Schedule 2011

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UK
London
September 9
Conference at SOAS

September 10 (evening):
Public talk (at Camden Centre)

September 11–12
Teaching at Camden Centre

France
September 14–18
Visit Laerabling

Paris
September 23–25
Visit Kagyu-Dzong

Spain
Barcelona
Sept. 30–Oct. 6
Barcelona Retreat

Tenerife
October 14–23
Tibetan Culture Event

October 28–30
Thodgal Teaching Retreat

November 11–17
Ati Yoga Retreat

USA
New York
December 9–14
3rd Tibetan Language Congress

Venezuela
Dec. 27–Jan. 2, 2012
Tashigar Norte Retreat

2012

Peru
Lima
January 20–24
Peruvian Retreat

Brazil
Sao Paulo
February 3–7
Brazilian Retreat

Argentina
Tashigar South
February 22
Tibetan Losar

Khyentse Yeshe Schedule 2011

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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dharma there are so many kinds of gods, but Buddhists do not speak of the unique God. The essence of Buddhist teaching is Dzogchen, which is the final teaching of the Buddha Shakyamuni. Through Dzogchen we can really understand what God is and we don't have to worry if there is a God or not. God always exists as our real nature, the base, for everybody.

Lam ñis means that even if we have that base in the same way, not everybody has knowledge in the same way, particularly when we say how the condition of our real nature, the base, is in the Dzogchen teaching. In the Dzogchen teaching it is called *khadag* and *lhundrup*. *Khadag* means pure since the beginning - that is the real condition. That means emptiness. The Buddhist sutras are always explaining this famous word *shunyata*. But when you have knowledge like the Dzogchen teaching, and deeper knowledge, then you also have deeper knowledge of *shunyata*. *Shunyata* does not only mean emptiness. Emptiness has infinite potentiality. If there is not this potentiality *shunyata* does not have any value. It says this in the Sutra and Vajrayana teaching. This is explained in Dzogchen as *khadag* and *lhundrup*. *Lhundrup* means infinite self-perfected qualifications.

When we have all these qualifications, of course they can manifest. They manifest particularly when there are secondary causes in the mirror, like in front of the mirror there is an object, immediately that reflection manifests. In the same way, when there are all manifestations they can manifest easily. It is called *zhi nang*. *Zhi* means base and *nang* means the qualifications and how they manifest. When qualifications manifest then many sentient beings are falling into dualistic vision. They are entering into nice or ugly, liking or disliking, and then they decide what is good or bad. So even when a pure dimension manifests, they are ignorant and divide and fall into dualistic vision.

Ordinary people can have these kinds of experiences. Some people say that when they were young they had many interesting visions, seeing some kinds of lights and interesting manifestations. When they grew up there were no more manifestations but they were still attached to these visions. They ask me to teach them something so they can repeat these visions. We can have these kinds of visions, experiences, etc., because all qualifications are perfected in our real nature. For that reason when there are secondary causes these things can manifest. But when these visions manifest, if we do not have knowledge we immediately have attachment and think how nice. That creates obstacles. When you fall into dualism, of course these visions do not repeat and that is why when you were quite young you had these visions and now you cannot. What manifests now are the visions of the qualifications of the base. Falling into dualism is the condition of *samsara*. This is the origin of *marigpa* and obstacles. Manifestations never become obstacles when one does not fall into dualism, because one is already in the real nature. Never falling into dualism is called Ati Buddha. *Samantabhadra* is Ati Buddha, the primordial Buddha. *Lam ñis* means there are two aspects, two paths. The base is one. So it is easy, not so difficult to understand.

རིག་དང་མ་རིག་ཚེ་འཕྲུལ་ཏེ།
Rig dan marig qotrül-de

Rig dan marig qotrül-de, this is why we have these two, it depends on *rigpa* and *marigpa*. *Rig* means you are in your real nature. Even if there are visions of all qualifications, you never fall into dualism. Even if we are in dualism, we can follow the Dzogchen teaching and receive introduction. The teacher shows us our real nature as it is, with direct introduction, and we can have this experience and when we are in this experience again and again, this is called *rigpa*. But we are not always in this state because we have transmigrated for centuries and centuries through infinite lives, and we are too familiar with that, so it is not so easy for us and it is very heavy. Not like at the beginning. So we return to this condition of how it is, with the knowledge of the *rigpa*. *Rigpa* means we are being in instant presence in our real nature. *Marigpa* means the contrary of that; *rigpa* is knowledge, when we add *ma* at the beginning in Tibetan that is negative. *Marigpa* means we are ignorant.

We must understand the real sense of ignorance in the teaching. In the ordinary way when we say ignorance, it means that someone did not receive an education, could not read or could not do something in an intellectual way. Then we say that is ignorance. In the teaching it is not that way. In the teaching it means we are ignorant of our real nature. We believe too much in dualism, what we see, what we hear, and the contact we have with sense objects. Then

we give that too much importance and we go ahead day after day and year after year and we accumulate negative karma. Even if someone is a great scholar and knows philosophy very well and is well studied, if you are ignorant of your real nature at the base this is always ignorance. So you see, the way of seeing ignorance is different.

Qotrül-de means something like ignorance, something like a miracle, or like manifestations of these two, because if you are in *rigpa* you are in the real state of *Samantabhadra*. When you are ignorant you have infinite *samsara* and infinite transmigrations and sufferings. So everything is manifesting through *rigpa* and *marigpa*. Also that is not so difficult to understand. *De* means continually.

གུང་དུ་བཟང་པོའི་སྤྱོད་ལམ་གྱིས།
Gundu sánboi monlam gis

Gundu sánboi monlam means the primordial state and Ati Buddha's invocation. *Gundu sánboi* in Tibetan or *gunsan* means *Samantabhadra*. *Gundu* means forever and *sánboi* means good, but not like good as in good or bad, that it is always dualistic. *Sánboi* means something like fine. In any circumstance it is fine, there is nothing to reject or accept. It is sufficient we are in this knowledge. So this is the real sense of *gundu sánboi*, *Samantabhadra*. *Monlam* means the invocation of this *Samantabhadra*, because invocation means introducing, we must somehow be in our real nature. Then there is no problem. Self-liberation is there. So this is introducing with this *monlam*. *Monlam gis, gis* means by this invocation.

ཐམས་ཅད་ཚེས་དབྱེས་པོ་བྲང་དུ།
Tamjad qosyin podran-du

Tamjad qosyin podran-du, tamjad means all - all sentient beings. *Qosyin* means *dharmadhatu*, how is its real nature, the state of emptiness. You see this word *dharmadhatu* is very diffused, also in a sutra. In America there was a teacher called Chögyam Trungpa and his dharma center was called *Dharmadatu*. *Dharmadhatu* means *qosyin, dhatu* means condition, *dharma* means all phenomena, the real nature of all phenomena is emptiness. So this is the real sense of *dharmadhatu*. We are in our real condition, everything, subject, object, everything is connected with that. *Podran* here means dimension. In general, in ordinary Tibetan language, *podran* means palace. When there is a palace like the Potala or some place important then we say *podran*, but its real meaning is dimension. *Podran-du* means in the dimension of the *dharmadhatu*.

སོན་པར་ཚྱུ་གེ་འཕྲུལ་མེད།
Nónbar zóg-de cangyá xog

Nónbar zóg-de cangyá xog, nónbar zóg means perfected. *Nónbar* means something concretely perfected. In general, the word *nónbar* means that we can see, we can feel, something concrete, it is not a kind of fantasy. So *nónbar zóg* means perfected concretely; two words put together. *Cangyá xog, cangyá* means enlightened. *Cangyá* and *cangye*, like the Buddha, are the same meaning. *Cangyá* corresponds with time, so it means there will be illumination in the future, this is the meaning of *cangyá*. *Cangye* means someone illuminated or the name of the illuminated one. *Xog* means invocation. When we say *xog* at the beginning in Tibetan, it is an invocation. In Western language, when they are invoking in Italian, for example, they *così'sia'*. It is amen. That is the real meaning in the invocation in Tibetan. ☉

Assistance with the Tibetan from Adriano Clemente
Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz

Short Talk on Health and Astrology

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave a short talk just before the Ganapuja webcast from Tashigar South on February 2, 2011 to thank people in the Dzogchen Community for their support during his ill health and to explain about the effects of a year that is negative according to traditional Tibetan astrology.

Good day for everybody and everywhere. So here we are at Tashigar South. Today we have new moon so we are doing the practice of Ganapuja together.

I want to say thank you very much to everybody everywhere. Most people did a lot of practice of *Mandarava*, knowing that my health this year has been a bit of a problem. There is also a very precise reason for this because you know according to the astrological system, this year was the year of the tiger and my birth year is the tiger. When we arrive at the year that is our birth year it is not positive. It is called *geg* [bgegs], which means interruption, interruption to health and life. In particular this is the iron tiger year and my life element is wood and there are some conflicts. But I was not worried about these things too much. I knew that this year was arriving but I thought maybe everything would go better. However when I arrived in Brazil a lot of problems manifested with my health. You already know that I had to cancel many retreats and programs. I am also sorry about that because many people were waiting and wanted to come to the retreats. But then in the real sense it was very important that I cured myself, went to the hospital and made some sacrifices, otherwise we couldn't go ahead. So now more or less I am overcoming all these health problems so I hope there will not be any more.

I always say that we live in *samsara*. We have a physical body. When there is a physical body we can always have problems. One of the most important teachers was Buddha Shakyamuni who also manifested death because he had a physical body. Of course in general most people can have many problems relatively but it is important that we do not worry too much and do our best for curing and overcoming them. When we worry too much this also becomes a secondary cause. Then of course when we manifest these types of problems there are also some weak points related to our condition.

For example, everybody is on the path. Everybody has a relationship with transmission. Knowing that we have transmission and that we have a relationship with transmission, it is very important that we try to do our best. In general I always say that if we keep our *samaya* in a perfect way, there will not be any problems, and even if there are relative problems, we can overcome them easily. If we are ignorant of this, it also becomes a secondary cause and that is a weak point. For that reason, when I had these problems people participated and did practice and this was very good, not only for me but also for everybody because it is just like we are all in a big boat. Everybody is related to our transmission so it is very important we are being aware and we do our best. This is also for the future because we live in time. Time is going ahead in circumstances, so we must be aware, then there will not be any problems.

So I want to say these things and particularly I want to say thank you very much to everybody for your participation and your patience. Some people think that there will not be this retreat and that retreat and they are worried. A retreat is important but the continuation of our transmission and practice is also important. Our health is also important, not only mine but the health of everybody. So if everybody is more aware there are also fewer problems. And we do our best.

In general when we have this type of problem like the *geg* of the year, it is better when the year has passed. That is good for me even though we still have almost one month. In Tibet, we have two kinds of New Year and with the calculations of the Kalachakra we have three. The first is called *lochung* [lo chung], which means 'small new year' and people have a little festival. This more or less corresponds with the Chinese calendar. Then next comes *Losar* or *lochen* [lo chen], which is a more popular festival for the New Year. Then the Kalachakra year starts even later because this calculation is connected with the zodiacal system. The calculations that we use for *Losar* are connected with the astrology of the elements and are a little different.

For people in general when we have this type of *geg* [interruption] for the year, we must be aware and try to do our best to do practices for long-life and for eliminating negativities. Then there is not only the *geg* year that is neg-

>> continued on page 6

རབ་འབྱུང་། ཉམ་པའི་སྐྱབས་མོ་ཡོས་ཀྱིས་གནས་ལོ་གསར་ཚེས་ལ་
 ཚེས་གོ་གསུམ་པོ་མོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཉམས་རྟོགས་ཀྱི་ཡོན་ཏན་སྤར་ལས་སྐྱབས་པ་འཕེལ་རྒྱས་ཡོང་བ་དང་
 རྒྱ་ཁམས་བདེ་ཐང་རྒྱ་ཚོར་ལོངས་སྤོང་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་ཡོང་བའི་སློན་འདུན་དང་
 བཀྲ་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས་བཟུ་



At the beginning of the year of the female Metal Hare,
 in the 17th Rabjung,
 to fellow practitioners - may the quality of your experience
 and understanding come to increase ever more than before,
 may you have perfect health, wealth and enjoyment!
 Tashi Deleg!

The Year of the Metal Hare

Gendun Dhargay

In the Tibetan calendar this year is 2138, the year of the Metal Hare.

It is definitely a very important year when our society will undergo great transformations from which all sentient beings may benefit. According to the characteristics of this sign - the qualities of calmness and gentleness but also determination - we will be required to develop the elements of patience and of kindness towards all sentient beings. We should become radiant examples of compassion but, at the same time, should try to be very resolute in taking forward our projects and the things in which we believe without letting ourselves be influenced by external energies or by other people's ideas. All around us and most of all inside us we should try to create an oasis of peace, to enter into contact with our inner world and rediscover the silence of the mind, far from discursive thoughts, searching for moments of solitude in order to create sacred spaces where we can cultivate our inner realization. The Buddha, too, invited his most awakened disciples to carry the lamp of the teachings on liberation and compassion into the world.

In today's world, there are few of us who are at peace with ourselves. We all suffer from different levels of internal and external struggles and find ourselves being more and more divided and distant both politically and spiritually from each other. This year we will be obliged to learn how to manage these conflicts in a different way, taking as our example the characteristics of the sign of the hare which hates conflicts and always seeks to live in peace. When there are conflicts to face, we will need to do this in a way that is not too direct, that is never violent, but always using diplomacy, great equanimity and wisdom. It will require great perseverance to follow these personal objectives, but if we learn to come into contact with our creativity,

with our intuition, with the wisdom of our hearts, we will be able to see important transformations in each of us that will lead us to eliminate all our old negative habits and motivate us to carry out important projects.

Regarding the sign of the Hare, all those born in the years 1891, 1951 and 2011 are in the sign of the Metal Hare. All those born in 1903, 1963 and 2023 are in the sign of the Water Hare; those born in 1915, 1975 and 2035 are in the sign of the Wood Hare; those born in 1927, 1987 and 2047 are in the sign of the Fire Hare; all those born in 1879, 1939 and 1999 are in the sign of the Earth Hare. This year the favourable day for people in the sign of the Hare is Thursday, the day that is favourable for health is Saturday while the unfavourable day is Friday. The signs that the Hare will have good connections with are: the Sheep, the Boar, the Dog, the Hare and the Dragon. The signs that the Hare will not have good connections are: the Bird, the Horse and the Tiger.

A child born in this year will have great wisdom and will think a lot about others. He/she will be very honest, will have a strong personality committed to carrying out projects for the benefit of others, will be very open-minded and able to understand the conditions of other human beings very well. He or she will be a child who likes to study a lot and from an economic point of view will not have any great problems. All those born in this year will have Mewa number seven, their element will be fire. This element is not very stable and tends to make people get angry very easily. If the person is a female she will like to sleep a lot even though her personality will be very strong.

May the blessings and the liberation offered from all the inner practices of transformation liberate our hearts, be of benefit to all beings and bring the world to healing and an awakening. ©

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Lungta

In areas populated by Tibetans, Lungta or prayer flags can be found strung in high places such as the tops of temples, monasteries and houses and along mountain ridges and peaks, and it is believed that the blessings of the prayers and mantras printed on them are blown by the wind to spread benefit to all. Traditionally the lungta are in sets of five colours, green red, yellow, white, blue, representing the elements, and they can show a 'wind horse', various mantras and prayers, and images or names of four powerful animals in each corner.

At the Gars of the Dzogchen Community we prepare strings of coloured lungta before the Tibetan New Year, or Losar, that are then authenticated and hung up around the Gar on the morning of the third day after Losar, according to tradition. The old prayer flags are removed and burnt. If, for example, a person approaches a year that is considered negative for them according to Tibetan elemental astrology, it may be beneficial for them to prepare and put up a string of lungta corresponding in number to their age.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave a brief explanation about the symbols on the Lungta at Merigar West in 1991.

Lungta, which means 'Wind horse', refers to the protective force of the individual. There are many types of force linked to the individual but this vital force is the most important. In ancient times in Tibet it was symbolised by a horse surmounted by a wish-fulfilling jewel. This vital force is linked to fulfilling wishes and bringing about good fortune, benefits and prosperity. If the fundamental vital force is perfect, everything will go well.

Why is this force symbolised by a horse adorned with jewels rather than another animal? In ancient times the horse represented impetus, speed. For example, today if we had to have a symbol for speed we would use the image of a missile. But long ago missiles did not exist and on earth speed has always been symbolised by the horse. Moreover, the horse has always been an animal closely linked to man. For these reasons the horse was chosen.

Lung means air. Some scholars such as Mipham said that lung comes from the Chinese, but this is an interpretation. The truth is that lung is linked to prana because our force is linked to prana. So when we say 'wind horse', by wind (or air) we mean our prana, our vital energy. This symbol is represented in the prayer flags which are also called lungta. At the centre of the flag is the horse, and in the four corners there are the figures of the tiger, the lion, the eagle and the dragon. These four animals, which can be seen on both Buddhist and Bönpo prayer flags, represent the elements according to an ancient system. Nowadays, the Bönpo do not explain these things thoroughly but when we study ancient Bön we can understand that the Bönpo used precisely these animals to represent the elements.

In the Bön tradition, the eagle is the most important figure and represents the fire element. When the Bönpo want to get into contact with the local guardians they do a sang ritual in which they use fire. In Tibetan temples, butter lamps are always used: there are hundreds and thousands of them everywhere. Even if there is electricity, Tibetans still use butter lamps. If it was simply a matter of having light, electricity would be enough, but in this case, we do not only need the light, we also require the presence of fire. When a butter lamp is lit, there is a continual presence of fire.

This is also true in the ancient Bön tradition in which fire and energy, represented by the eagle or Garuda, are very important. In Bön the Garuda is considered to be the source of all divine manifestations and of the local guardians and even today the most important practice in Tibetan medicine to heal illness is that of Garuda. In Tibetan medicine there are hundreds of healing mantra, a large number of which are linked to the mantra of Garuda. Therefore the eagle or Garuda is a very important figure for protection in general.

The dragon is considered to be an aquatic animal. Sometimes it is said that the dragon flies in the sky but his origin, however, is considered to be water and therefore he represents the water element.

The lion is the symbol of the earth element. Why? In Tibet people always talk about the snow lion. We don't know if the snow lion actually existed, but on the Tibetan national flag there is a snow lion that is completely white. Where is the snow found? On the highest mountains which are the symbol or the most concentrated essence of the earth element.

The tiger is an animal that lives in the jungle and the forests. A forest is made up of trees and in astrology the air element is represented by wood which in this case is not dry wood but that of living trees. Since trees never stop growing and spreading out, in astrology they represent the air element.

The ancient Bön tradition used animals as symbols of the elements rather than portray them directly. Why? Because animals are alive and live in a particular dimension which is the dimension of the respective element. So to explain that the elements have energy and are alive the Bönpo used the symbols of animals. This was their typical way of representing the elements.

On the prayer flags there are many mantra to reinforce and help energy and to develop the lungta. One can use all sorts of mantra – of Kalachakra, of Tara, of Padmasambhava etc. – but the principle mantra is always accompanied by particular words in order to develop the lungta...

What is important is to receive transmission of them because then, when they are applied, they can have an effect. Therefore when one does the rite of the lungta, authenticates with these mantra and then hangs up the flags somewhere, this can strengthen the person's vital force. ©

Excerpted from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's 'The practice of Lungta' published by Shang Shung Edizioni 1995



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Education - Vehicle for Development

Investing in education in order to safeguard the cultural identity of the Tibetan people and promote sustainable development for them.

What does sponsoring a young Tibetan at distance mean? What value does it have? The letter from Sonam, a young Tibetan, tells us all about this. Sonam is currently a university student who had access to education through ASIA and thanks to the support of a sponsor who accompanied him throughout his course of studies.

Every year ASIA Onlus receives dozens of letters from young Tibetans who wish to thank the

Sonam's letter

Dear Sponsor and everyone at ASIA,

How are you? I hope that everything is going well.

I am Sonam Dorje, a young person who has been sponsored during my studies through your organization. Now I am a university student. I had the opportunity to continue my studies thanks to your kind sponsorship and your great encouragement. I really appreciate your help and I will never forget it. I study a lot and with enthusiasm because I am full of curiosity and I want to learn.

I was born in the village of Dongche. In 1996 I attended the first class at the local school where I happily spent six years of primary school. In September 2002, still at the school in Dongche, I started the three years of middle



ASIA, I started my three years at the high school in Guide, where I obtained my high school leaving qualifications successfully. During those three years I studied enthusiastically, making use of every minute. Because of my dedication I obtained good results during the last year of school and in June of 2008 I passed the entrance exam to the university with a score of 449. Thus I was admitted to the Peking University of Nationalities as the best student from Guide high school.

Today I am a university student and the main subjects of my course of studies are linguistics and Tibetan literature.

For everything that I have managed to obtain up to this moment I have to say thank you to a sponsor who, from a distance, has supported me on my journey. I will never forget him and I am truly grateful for this help.

Access to higher education

Secondary school and most of all university are a goal that is very difficult to reach for young Tibetans, even for the most deserving and able. Due to extremely high school costs, which are often prohibitive for nomadic and farming families, even the most talented young people are forced to interrupt their studies, causing serious harm to themselves, their families and the entire community.

How the scholarship project works

ASIA's main office in Xining (capital of the Chinese province of Qinghai) takes care of choosing the young people who graduate from the middle and high schools on the basis of school performance, of their economic and family situation and of the desire shown by the student to continue his/her studies.

The office in Rome takes care of linking each student with a sponsor who receives the personal file of the young beneficiary along with his photo and all the information on his family and daily life.

Once a year the sponsor receives a photo of the student, an update on his school progress and, if the sponsor so wishes, he or she may have the possibility to meet their student personally.

500 euro per year and a continuing commitment of at least three years will guarantee a Tibetan student the right to higher education and will permit him to build a better future for himself and for his own community. ©

Information from:
www.ASIA-onlus.org



organization and most of all their own sponsors for having given them the possibility to receive higher education. They are letters in which these students tell us about their successes and their efforts to do their best in their studies. Sonam is one of these, a young person who was sponsored through ASIA starting from middle school and who, today, thanks to the scholarship project, is attending university.

school. In that period I also had the opportunity to start studying English with foreign teachers sent to the school from Italy. During my second year at middle school, with the encouragement and the support of Prof Rigzin, I was admitted to ASIA's distance sponsorship project. Since then I have been very curious and have tried to learn as much as possible. I am really very interested in studying.

In July 2005 I passed the exam to enter Guide secondary school with the highest marks in my class. In September 2005, thanks to a scholarship from



>> Short Talk continued from page 4

ative but there are also two other negative years, but with fewer interruptions. For example, if you are a tiger like me and this year is the tiger year, if you go ahead four years to the year of the snake, it is a small interruption but again not a positive year. Then when we go ahead seven years, it is called *dunzur* [bdun zur]. This is also a heavy year but not heavier than the year of the *geg*. When we count ahead four years it is called *zhizur* [bzhi zur]. Zhi means four, zur means corner and it is a negative year. But *dunzur*, which is seven years away is heavier. Whether you count seven going ahead or going backwards, it is always the same year.

When you have these kinds of problems, in particular you need to put up a lot of *lungta*, the number of *lungta* that correspond to your age. However when you have your *geg*

year, *lungta* are not sufficient. You should do practice like a retreat of long-life practice. You also need to do *serzan* [gser zam], which means making a 'bridge of gold' by carving long-life mantras on stone and putting small pieces of them in a line from one side of a river to the other so that the water always flows over them. This helps a lot for this person. Then if you still have more problems there is *soglu* [srog blu], which means that you need to save the lives of animals. If you go to a place where they kill animals and there are many to kill, you buy some and free them. So these kinds of rites are necessary to do when you have your *geg* year.

These are useful things to know in general. And then I have nothing much to say. I only want to say thank you everybody. ❁



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Ku Nye is of very ancient Tibetan origins. Through a careful observation of nature, Tibetans discovered the healing potentialities of herbs, barks, minerals and so forth and gradually they learnt how to treat diseases using their hands and simple substances such as butter, oils, herbs, stones, based on a knowledge of the circulation of energy both in the human body and in the external world. Ku Nye belongs to the last of the four therapeutic approaches of Tibetan medicine, which covers external therapies such as massage, digital-pressure and moxa.

With funding from the Tuscany Region, the Shang Shung Institute conducted controlled tests on Ku Nye in 2004 which established its effectiveness in specific pathologies such as backache, joint pain, headaches, menstrual problems, insomnia, stress and various nervous disorders.

The Shang Shung Institute in Italy currently offers various courses throughout Europe by qualified instructors at the end of which a diploma is given. One of the main instructors, Aldo Oneto, presents the theory and history of Ku Nye.



This phase is called chi and has a double action of cleaning and of purifying and should never be lacking during a ku nye treatment.

Both the ku and the chi are mentioned in a particular way in the Four Medical Tantras and are techniques that have been handed down over time. The nye phase, however, is subject to various traditions and can be variable depending on the person who transmitted the tradition. While the ku and chi cannot be adapted or changed, the nye can.

The Four Medical Tantras called gyud-xi were preceded many centuries earlier by the Bum-xi and, according to historical sources and the research done by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, originated in the kingdom of Shang Shung. As far as ku nye is concerned, there is also evidence of its existence in ancient times on the basis of documents found at the beginning of the 20th century in the caves of Dun Huang in which the techniques of the ku phase were described, but carried out with substances based on melted butter rather than medicated oil. These same documents also give information about chi, the removal of surplus oil, done with particular types of flour. This gives even further proof to show that the origin of Tibetan medicine was in the kingdom of Shang Shung. The documents on ku and chi found in Dun Huang were written in the Shang Shung language and, for this reason, prove the ancient origins of Tibetan medicine, of which ku nye is a small part, in the area of Shang Shung.

Over the course of centuries, specific massage techniques were gradually developed which became a fundamental external therapy that was practised both by the nomadic population as well as in the monasteries where it was developed even further. Tibetan medicine is a fusion between the pre-Buddhist tradition of Bön and the Tibetan tantric tradition. The philosophical basis of Tibetan medicine is represented by the Five Great Elements, which, in turn, form the three humours that govern the energy, body, mind of each individual.

One of the aims of kun ye massage is to try to rebalance any humour that may be unbalanced, to bring it back into equilibrium when there is a disturbance. Since massage particularly works on the lung or wind humour, in the case of a person who has no imbalance of humours, the effects will be positive because the lung is closely connected with our mind and our emotions. The result of the massage will be one of relaxation and also preventative.

In any case, a good ku nye practitioner will also be able to work with imbalances of the other two humours, bile and phlegm. In our society in general we have a great number of wind or lung disturbances that bring about disturbances of a psychosomatic nature. The lung humour also has



resented by the Five Great Elements, which, in turn, form the three humours that govern the energy, body, mind of each individual.

The Five Great Elements

The five Great Elements as shown in the Four Medicine Tantras are the origin of the outer universe or macrocosm as well as the inner universe, the microcosm, and are therefore the indispensable base from which everything manifests. There is a very important saying in Tibetan that the body, the illness and its remedy all have the same taste: the taste of the Five Primordial Elements.

If we speak of the three existences, the Five Great Elements can be associated with the mind in terms of consciousness. In terms of energy the Five Elements give origin to the three humours and, at the level of the body, we have the seven physical constituents that make up our physical body. In this case, when we refer to Tibetan medicine and mostly to massage, we are working with the three main energies or three humours that form a bridge between the body and consciousness and interact on all three levels.



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the power to condition the other two humours that circulate in our body and so we may not only have psycho-emotional problems but also disturbances linked to the other two humours. In general the energy of the bile humour is linked with our metabolism and can cause digestive problems and is called the 'warm' energy of the body, while the phlegm humour that governs the circulation of liquids in the body can cause disturbances of the lymphatic circulation and difficulty in moving the joints.

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Ku Nye at Shang Shung Institute

In 2007 the Shang Shung Institute set up a structure to organise courses to teach ku nye both in Italy and in Europe. The form of ku nye practised and taught at the Institute has been studied and developed in close contact with several practising Tibetan doctors so that it is strictly in line with the original Tibetan therapy.

The SSI offers kun ye courses at different levels in Italian cities and in various European countries giving many students, on completion of a whole cycle of study, the possibility to acquire a certificate that permits them to work in an autonomous way. Although this type of external therapy is not, at the moment, very widely known, one of the aims of the international Shang Shung Institute is to promote it along with different branches of Tibetan culture including tradi-

ditional medicine, dance, literature and painting.

One of the objectives that we hope to realise in the next two years is to form a school of ku nye massage that will have official recognition as an institution. The school will train not only massage practitioners but also future instructors. In addition we are currently in the process of concluding our new manual of massage which will be published at the end of February in Italian and shortly after in English. Then we are planning to make a DVD for students that will be a teaching aid when used together with

the handbook.

The SSI has also presented ku nye at various cultural events linked to Tibetan culture in Austria, Romania and Italy, always with the aim of promoting knowledge of both Tibetan medicine in general as well as ku nye massage which can resolve many problems because it is a complete external therapy and can give a lot of benefit to people.

Most of all we would like to thank Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for his ongoing research and published works on Tibetan history and culture, especially on the ancient kingdom of Shang Shung, that have greatly enriched our knowledge of the culture and sciences of Tibet in general. ©

Upcoming Ku Nye courses:

March 20-26
Prague, Czech Republic
Ku Nye level 1 course

April 1-2
Italy, Rome, Zhenphenling
Introductory talk on the fundamentals of Traditional Tibetan Medicine and Kunye

April 6-10
France, Karmaling
Final part: theoretical and practical test for acquiring the certificate

Ka-Ter Translation Project of the Shang Shung Institute

Tibetan Language Course and Training for Translators from Tibetan
4th July-5th August 2011

In Summer 2011 the International Shang Shung Institute is offering its ninth annual training for those who wish to begin or further their knowledge of the Tibetan language. This intensive program of study will take place at Merigar in Tuscany (Italy), where it has been held for eight previous summers. We are fortunate in having Dr. Fabian Sanders of the University of Venice again as instructor.

The training is offered at three levels:

- A. Beginners' Course
- B. Intermediate Course
- C. Advanced course

The three courses will be held simultaneously.

A. Beginners' Course:

No specific requirements are necessary, and everybody who is interested in learning Tibetan can participate.

The course will be held in English.

Fabian Sanders will teach the basics of the Tibetan language. Students will learn how to read and write Tibetan, as well as the fundamentals of Tibetan grammar. They will also initiate a translation from basic Tibetan into English.

Course fee: €165, or €108 for members of the International Shang Shung Institute.

B. Intermediate Course

Participation in this course is possible

- for people who have participated in an online course on Tibetan language,

- for people who participated last year in the Beginners' Course,
- for people who already have developed a certain capacity and who pass the required test.

All participants will translate and read a specific Tibetan text at their level. One of the best ways to learn and understand a Tibetan text is to translate it collectively.

Course fee: €115, or €55 for members of the International Shang Shung Institute.

C. Advanced Course

Participation is possible

- for people who have already attended the Advanced Course,
- for people who participated in recent years in the Intermediate Course, and who have gained additional knowledge through continuing personal study.

All participants will work on the translation of a specific more complex text.

Course fee: participation in this course is free and available only to members of the International Shang Shung Institute.

Food and accommodation are not included in the course fee.

All participants are requested to book their stay in the environs of Merigar individually, and are advised to do so early.

Fabian will make the final decision as to who can attend which course.

We are happy to welcome you to this unique opportunity to study the Tibetan language, and to develop the capacity to translate Tibetan texts into English.

Please send us your application as soon as possible, as space is limited. ©

Very best wishes,
Oliver Leick
Director of the Shang Shung Institute
International Institute for Tibetan Studies
www.shangshunginstitute.org
www.ssi-austria.at
www.shangshunguk.com

The Shang Shung Institute UK: London School of Tibetan Studies

The London School of Tibetan Studies is in the middle of its first year of existence and has been very active and its courses and lecture on the 'Five Fields of Knowledge' have been very well received. Please see our website www.shangshunguk.org for further details. We have also opened an online shop with many specialist books available on all aspects of Tibetan culture.

Programme

The Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra, Weekend Course
Fri, 4. March–Sun, 6. March 2011
04:00 pm–05:00 pm

Splitting the Atom: An Introduction to Logic in Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy, One Day Course

Sat, April 16–Sun, 17. April 2011
10:00 am–05:00 pm

SOAS Lecture Series: Advaita Vedanta and the Navya Nyaya
Monday, 18. April 2011
06:00 pm–08:00 pm

The Tibetan Yoga of Movement: Yantra Yoga for Beginners, Weekend Course

Sat, 30. April–Sun, 1. May 2011
10:00 am–05:00 pm

Tibetan Medicine and Dzogchen – A Perspective on Relaxation, SOAS Lecture

Friday, 27. May 2011
06:00 pm–08:00 pm

What is Tantra?: The Importance of the View in Mahayana, Vajrayana & Ati

Sat, 28. May–Sun, 29. May 2011
10:00 am–05:00 pm

Tibetan Calligraphy, Weekend Workshop

Sat, 25. June–Sun, 26. June 2011
10:00 am–05:00 pm

SOAS International Conference: Bon, Shangshung, and Early Tibet

Fri, 9. Sept–Sat, 10. Sept 2011

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Dzogchen Atiyoga Teaching Retreat

Sun, 11. Sept–Mon, 12. Sept 2011
10:00 am–05:00 pm

Pranayama & Yantra Yoga: a Means of Integrating Practice and Behaviour

Sat, 24. Sept–Sun, 25. Sept 2011
10:00 am–05:00 pm

The Five Aggregates and Primordial Wisdom, SOAS Lecture
Thursday, 3. November 2011
06:00 pm–08:00 pm

Dzogchen Without Buddhism, Weekend Course

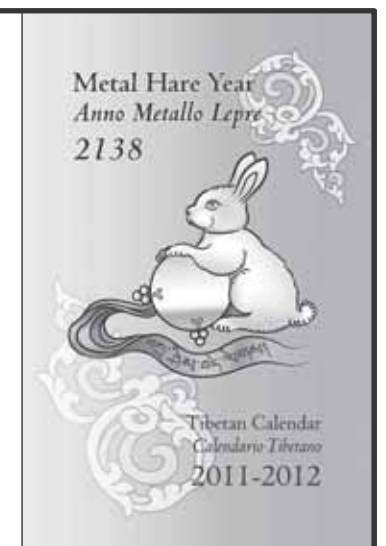
Fri, 4. Nov–Sun, 6. Nov 2011
06:00 pm–05:00 pm

Tibetan Metal Hare Calendar (2011–2012)

Pocket agenda containing concise indications of the practices recommended by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for special days, positive and negative days for the naga practice, astrological data of the Tibetan Calendar, and the individual aspects for those born between 1918 and 2011.

Indispensable for discovering favorable and unfavorable days for daily activities and for remembering special practice days.

The calendar is enriched this year with a chart indicating what days to avoid surgery in specific areas of the body. A table with the first day of the Tibetan New Year from 1915 onwards according to the Phugpa tradition is included, particularly important for those born in January, February, or March, so that they can determine their year and animal of Tibetan birth.



Available from <http://shangshungstore.org>



The American Branch of the Shang Shung Institute has recently received another very generous offer from a friend with a long-time interest in Tibetan Medicine. This friend would like to help continue funding the Khenpo Tsenam Rinpoche Scholarship Fund for

students of the School of Tibetan Medicine. The donor's businesses, JCROWS.com and the J. Crow Company look to support this very positive development in holistic health care by establishing the scholarship again this year for the 2011–2012 school year.

Matching Grant offered for SSI School of Tibetan Medicine Scholarship!

We need your help!

This donor has agreed to match donations to continue the School of Tibetan Medicine Scholarship fund, up to \$2500, for a total of \$5000 towards the continuation of the scholarship fund. We have 90 days from today to receive all donations towards the matching grant, so the deadline for all donations is: **May 9, 2011.**

The Scholarship will be need-based, and students will be asked to apply. The board and staff of the SSI-USA will choose the winner or winners for this year's scholarship(s) by the beginning of the Fall, 2011 semester. Last year we were proud to be able to offer scholarships to two

of our students for the 2010–2011 school year, based solely upon the donations collected from generous donors like you! We would love to be able to continue to offer this wonderful gift of learning!

To send a donation, please contact me, Anna Bartenstein, through email at: a.bartenstein@shangshunginstitute.org or call me through the SSI office phone at 413-369-4928. You can also donate directly through our webstore at shangshung.org/store (under "Scholarships" in the donations category), using multiples of \$10 to create a donation of any amount you wish.

Gifts to support or endow scholarships help students meet the cost of tuition and fees. As pioneers in a fledging program, it is often challenging for students to find the resources necessary to fund their education. We, and our students thank you immensely for your support of our program, and their studies!!

More information about this scholarship fund, its history, and past donors can be found on our website at

www.shangshung.org/medicine/program/curriculum/scholarships/scholarships.php.

Shang Shung Institute – USA
Conway, MA ©

Tibetan Medicine Webcasted Public Talks

with Menpa (Dr.) Phuntsog Wangmo
Spring 2011

The American Branch of the Shang Shung Institute is happy to announce our Spring, 2011 Tibetan Medicine Public Talk Schedule, with Menpa (Dr.) Phuntsog Wangmo.

You can now attend our Public Talk series from anywhere in the world by free live webcast!!

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

How does this work?

Simply type the following web address into your browser on the date of a public talk between the hours of 1pm and 3pm EST (Time zone of Boston or New York City): <http://www.shangshunginstitute.com/free.php>

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

If you would like to donate to the costs needed in order to help the Tibetan Medicine live webcast project continue, you can donate directly through the SSI-USA online store, or contact us directly at: (+1) 413-369-4473 or secretary@shangshung.org

To attend by Free Live Webcast or by On-Demand Replay:
Visit the following web address:
www.shangshunginstitute.com/free.php

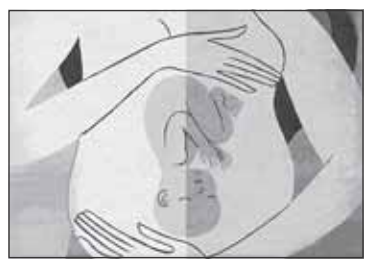
To attend in person:
Location: Shang Shung Tibetan Healing Center, 16 Center Street, Suite 323, Northampton, MA, 01060
Cost: Free, by donation
If you would like to attend in person please rsvp: (413) 585-1081 or matt@shangshung.org

Spring, 2011



Sun, April 3rd, 2011 1-3 pm
Topic: **Tibetan Astrology and Healing**

An Introduction to the crucial relationship between these two Tibetan sciences.



Sun, May 1st, 2011 1-3 pm
Topic: **Conception and Embryology**
An introduction to the basic Tibetan medical theories regarding the conception of life, as well as the biological phases of fetal development inside a mother's



womb. Buddhist concepts such as karma and consciousness play a major role in this explanation of the basis for human life.

Menpa (Dr.) Phuntsog Wangmo

Menpa (Dr.) Phuntsog Wangmo received her advanced degree from the Lhasa University School of Traditional Medicine in 1988. There she studied with Khenpo Troru Tsenam and Khenpo Tsul-

trim Gyaltzen, two of Tibet's foremost physicians who have been credited with the revival of Tibetan Medicine within Tibet under Chinese rule. Menpa Wangmo had the exceptional opportunity to undergo extensive clinical training with Khenpo Troru Tsenam after her graduation. Thereafter, she dedicated many years of work as a Tibetan physician in Eastern Tibet, where

she collaborated on and directed projects for A.S.I.A. (Association for International Solidarity in Asia), a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the Tibetan people in the sectors of education, health, training, disaster relief, and sustainable economic development.

From 1996 to the present, Wangmo has continued her work on behalf of A.S.I.A., setting up hospitals and training centers in the remote regions of Sichuan Province and Chamdo Prefecture. Prior to 1996, she was on the faculty at the Shang Shung Institute in Italy, where she gave numerous seminars and conference presentations on Tibetan medicine. Menpa Wangmo is currently on the faculty at the Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine in Conway, MA, where she has been in residence since 2001. She is the founding director of this unique program. ©

Year of the Iron Rabbit Losar Poem

Be fruitful
when you wander the warren
of your mind

Burrowing deep into the ground of stability.

To broaden your field of vision,

Scan the sky for predators of distraction.

Then, stop in your tracks,
O Fearsome Bunny –
Proverbial Trickster whose cunning

Outwits pundits of sophistry.

For your path
is a zig-zag
To liberation.

Time to change course in a flash

Defy convention

Give into laughter like Bugs BUNNY

Show your metal and step up to the plate.

For this is your lucky year!

Jacqueline Gens
Tsegylgar East
2011

Jim Valby's 2011 Program

Transmission

Mar 11-13, 2011
Kundrolling in NYC,

Compassion

Mar 26-27, 2011,
Tsegylgar East

SMS Base

Apr 21-24, 2011,
Atlanta, Georgia

Vajra Breathing

Apr 30-May 1, 2011,
Tsegylgar East

SMS Base

May 13-17, 2011,
Kundusling in Barcelona
SMS Level One
May 18-22, 2011,
Kundusling in Barcelona

SMS Base

May 27-31, 2011,
Paldenling in Poland
SMS Level One
June 1-5, 2011,
Paldenling in Poland

Public Talk

Jun 12, 2011, Zurich
SMS Base
June 13-19, 2011, Switzerland

Public Talk: Compassion

Jul 21, 2011, Pittsfield, MA,

Semdzin

Jul 30-31, 2011, Tsegylgar East
Dzogchen without Buddhism
Aug 20-26, 2011, Tsegylgar East
Rushen
Sep 24-25, 2011, Tsegylgar East
Parlung
Oct 22-23, 2011, Tsegylgar East

Public Talk

Nov 3, 2011, London UK SSI,
Dzogchen without Buddhism
Nov 4-6, 2011, London UK SSI,

SMS Level One

Nov 9-10, 2011,
Kunselling, Wales

SMS Base, Fruit

Nov 12-13, 2011, London,

SMS Base

Nov 16-20, 2011, Budapest

SMS Base

Nov 23-27, 2011, Germany

Six Paramitas

Dec 3-4, 2011, Tsegylgar East

>> *Caloundra Retreat* continued from page 1
\$AUD 25 000. This will help pay for the development applications we will make for the new Gar.

On Sunday after the last teaching and lunch, we went with Rinpoche to the new land where he chose the Gonpa site and talked with

Giovanni, designer for Rinpoche of the Merigar West and East Gonpas amongst many things, and us, about the possibilities for using the land and house. We are thrilled Giovanni will be able to develop the design and thank him and the committee for all the work they are and will be doing.

We also thank all the people who helped plan the retreat, prepare the center for our retreat, to run the retreat, and to pack up. Most of all we thank our beloved teacher for his presence, the living teaching. ©



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

An Edited Excerpt of a Talk Given to the Tashigar South Gakyil & Community Members

February 15, 2011

In two or three days time Rosa and I will leave [Tashigar South], so it is useful to meet the Gakyil to decide what needs to be done here and how the Gakyil should work. You know very well that the Gakyil means the Dzogchen Community, which is a Community of teaching, not simply a social organization. You have to remember that and make a distinction. It is called the Dzogchen Community because it is not an ordinary organization; all the Gakyils of the Gars and Lings that we have in several parts of the world are all linked to the Dzogchen Community. The Gakyil is not something closed, made up by a small group of people, it is not like that and it doesn't work in this way. It is very important to remember that. You know for example how I teach – I do not teach only here or in Merigar, but everywhere where there is the Dzogchen Community on this globe.

We have to think about how to continue, so also the Gakyil has to work on this very important aspect. I want to listen to what the Gakyil has to say, what your projects and ideas are, what you want to do. As I said before, for sure I'll be here for Losar next year. I do not think I'll be able to be here at Christmas, because I have had to change my plans for the Third International Conference of Tibetan Language in New York City. I have to be present at this conference in December or they cannot do it. It is organized in collaboration with Columbia University.

I would like to know what your projects are for the future. You have succeeded in making a beautiful new comedor [dining room], but now we need to make more space, dormitory, etc. Space is important for the Community, for the people who arrive here not only during retreats, but also for those who arrive to participate in all the different activities. The Community must do something more to provide space. Also in Merigar, from what they told me, at the beginning Merigar could bear all the costs thanks to membership cards and donations. The Dzogchen Community is not decreasing; on the contrary it is expanding more and more every day. The difference is that we have many Lings, which means an income shortage for the Gar. So what can the Gar do? The Gar cannot live only on memberships or retreats. In order to be able to keep going and cover maintenance costs, we have to develop different activities; we must create them.

You have to understand that the way of the Gakyil is not that people take responsibility and remain closed. This is not good. The Gakyil should be more open. Gakyils represent all the Community, not just a group of people, so if it doesn't open up, it will not succeed in developing activities. It is not that the Gakyil must do and create everything, there are so many people in the Community with many ideas that the Gakyil must accept, check and be responsible for. For example, if someone wants to make a statue, it is very good, but this doesn't mean that the Gakyil has to pay for it. On the other hand, if somebody wants to do something and then leaves it half way done, this is not good. The Gakyil is responsible, so from the very beginning, it has to guarantee that what has been proposed by someone gets done. If someone wants to make something, the Gakyil should get in touch with this person, speak with him, understand what he has in mind in a very precise way and then proceed without limitations. Sometimes the Gakyil limits many things, it says that if Gakyil members do not agree or approve of it, there is nothing to do. This is not good, you must be careful! This is something I want to say not only here. Things like that happen in different countries of the Community: people block everything, nothing is developing and then maintenance becomes difficult and incomes are blocked. Sources of income must be created, because income doesn't develop by itself. Without money we cannot maintain the Community and our activities.

Here we have a 'terton', our Eduardo who succeeded in finding water. He not only found water, but it is very good



water and a large quantity of it. This means we have to find a way to keep water and decide how to utilize it. This interests and involves all the people living here, if there is more water than needed we can allow others to use it, but this cannot be a project only of the Gakyil. There should be the participation of all the people who have houses here. Try to do something important: water here is like a treasure!

There is a story of Changchub Dorje who at the age of 34, as it is written in his biography, went to a region of Tibet where there was a family with a daughter whose father was an important master. When she grew up someone proposed marriage to her, but then another master arrived to the village - this master was like a *terton* - and he said that they should not let the daughter marry an ordinary person because she was a very special girl, and one day, he prophesized, she would meet and marry an important person. This was like a prophecy. Changchub Dorje had indications that he had to find this girl to develop his *termas*, so he asked the family if he could marry her, but they refused. Changchub Dorje was quite unusual and also a simple practitioner, so the girl's father was against it.

This family at that time had serious water problems and while he was there, Changchub Dorje found a water *terma*, a spring near their home, and so they became his disciples and offered him the girl in marriage. This caused a great change. Changchub Dorje said that this girl was very important for him because she had helped him to open his *termas*. Changchub Dorje loved this woman very much. She died before him and he always lamented her death and said she was most important for his practice and development.

In general, all the Community people, whoever they might be, must feel responsible towards the Community to insure its continuation in terms of practice, Gars and Lings, and whatever there is. If one has a full understanding of this point, automatically collaboration arises. I always speak a lot about it and always ask people to collaborate, but this aspect is missing sometimes and there are difficulties because of our limited human condition. There are people who told me, "I'm interested very much in your teaching, I want to follow it, but I do not want to be part of the Community or the Gakyil." Then I replied, "You do not have to think like this, you mustn't have this point of view, if you do not like the Gakyil, you have to consider that Gakyil people are individuals, they are not the teaching or the Dzogchen Community. You have to make this distinction and you must not have this idea. We are human beings with our limitations because we are in *samsara*. In *samsara* there is no one who has no limitations!" Sometimes people can make mistakes without even realizing what's happening and consequently other people speak badly about them and this is not good at all. So it is very important to understand that and take responsibility with presence.

So it is good to be open with the local people. If there is some possibility, it is good to get in touch with local people and something can develop. The Community doesn't have to remain separated or isolated. Our Community is very large and is present all over the world. It is not only large, but it can also rely on many people who are qualified, gifted, capable of doing many things, and expert in different fields. If we check well, there are many people like that and the Gakyils should get in touch with them to check and see what can be done and developed.

Many years ago when I started writing the book on the foundations of the Dzogchen Community, I presented it to the Community at a more international level, but quite a few people criticized me. So eventually I did not do what I wished to do, because it seemed that many people didn't agree with it, so I did not carry on with my ideas. Nevertheless I decided to apply this in the Gar and Lings, even if the Lings were created later. I said that I wanted to apply this in the Gar no matter if the Gar agreed or not. I began in the Gar, because everything starts in the Gar. The Lings were created so practitioners could have one local place. This all was not that easy, but in this way we developed. If one reads well what I wrote there, it is very clear: The Community is the Community - but this doesn't mean that the Community must manage every activity. We can create mini-Gakyils or groups of at least three people or cooperatives in order to create something. In order to do this, even if at the very beginning there is no money, but the project is serious and reliable, the Community can help. In this way, the Community does not directly manage the activity - it becomes something private even if it is connected to the Community - and the people in charge have to pay a percentage of the profit to the Community.

This is something that was developed at Merigar West and I consider it to be very important. If we have to develop something, everything does not have to be managed by the Community. Also private people, members of the Community, can develop something. An example of what corresponds to my idea is all the houses and families here [Tashigar South]. When we started selling the land at the very beginning, we did not tell people to buy it, but simply to pay for a sort of registration so that they could build their house, without having the possibility to sell it then to people outside, because the property always belongs to the Community. In this way you have to organize all the activities, so that the Community becomes stable and can rely on some source of income.

When we started the Gar in Margarita, it was different. Gilberto, one of the founding members, seemed very much interested and said there was this idea of an aloe plantation which could bring a lot of profit to the Gar because we could legally show we had farming activity. The people who became involved in this project started building houses. For many years they insisted to carry on the aloe project with no results; the huge profits turned out to be a fantasy. I personally invested a lot of money, thinking that in the end there would be a return and I also divided my money giving like a share of the capital to all Gars. I also added up more money to contribute to maintenance expenses, but eventually the plantation activity was not successful at all, so what could we do? We had also to think about the terrible legal problems we might have if we could no longer prove we were farmers, so we thought we could make some changes and transform the farming activity into an agro-tourism, but we had to check if there were any possibilities for this transformation. We asked Maria Angelica to take care of this project and in the end we fully succeeded and now the agro-tourism has all the legal authorizations. So now they have to organize several activities, but as I said before, this doesn't mean that everything must be managed directly by the Community and the Gakyil. This is difficult and impossible, but they can look for someone available to take on the responsibility to organize, to manage, so that there is a return for the Community and for the person in charge so they can have a profit and continue developing the activities.

>> continued on the following page

Gundu Sánboi Monlam Retreat The Invocation of Samantabhadra

Tashigar South, February 12 & 13, 2011

Naomi Zeitz

After several challenging months of serious illness and a rather stunning recovery, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu walked determinedly and without any assistance into the sparkling Gonpa of Tashigar South, applauded by around 150 overjoyed practitioners. Rinpoche settled into his chair for a 2 day teaching retreat as if nothing had ever happened; he sat down, adjusted all his things, looked at the clock and asked Fabio how much time left until the webcast begins, just like always.

How did it happen, this miracle? With the amazing strength and will of our Maestro, with the untiring devotion of Rosa, Khyentse Yeshe and Yuchen Namkhai, Fabio Andrico, Ricky Sued, and Clara Bordeau, among many others, with the kindness and help of Otavio and Roberto Lilla in Brazil and with the excellent medical team of the Albert Einstein Hospital in Sao Paulo, Brazil. As Rinpoche said at the first webcast Ganapuja after his illness, thanks also to the daily Mandarava practices and prayers dedicated by the people of the Dzogchen Community around the world, which benefitted us all.

Rinpoche gave this retreat of The Invocation of Samantabhadra in order to satisfy the many people who had been awaiting it since the cancellation of the same teaching scheduled to happen in Brazil some month's prior. The

webcast was reaching many thousands more than could fit into the Gonpa of Tashigar South and the international participants were thrilled to see Rinpoche in such good form. We were all very fortunate to receive such profound Dzogchen teachings once again.

This teaching *gundu sanboi monlam*, The Invocation of Samantabhadra, is a small chapter of a terma cycle related to the *dgongs pa zang thal* tantra. It is a pure Dzogchen teaching. In Tibet it is usually chanted as an invocation and has been widely diffused there, primarily among the Nyingmapa lineage. Rinpoche went through the invocation with us word-by-word, and line-by-line, explaining with his classic patience and precision, the various arguments presented. Some of the arguments are: the first few as an explanation of the pure dimensions and the base and how we liberate in this knowledge, then marigpa, what is the root and condition of samsara and how we liberate using Dzogchen teachings, visions outside, deva, asura, ignorance, all sentient beings of the three worlds, and the final verse is some advice of application.

Up until the time of the formal retreat, the practitioners at Tashigar South were busy practicing Mandarava daily, starting off with an intensive few weeks of Mandarava several times a day, followed by a Tara retreat led by Griselda



Galmez, another spontaneous Mandarava retreat with *sogtigs* for 5 days with Naomi Zeitz and breathing training through Yantra Yoga with Carolina Mingolla, after which was daily Mandarava, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance practices. There was a Vajra Dance course with Nelida Saporiti and a breathing course with Fabio Andrico, followed by a breathing and kumbhaka course with Fabio Andrico, assisted by Carolina Mingolla and Naomi Zeitz.

The retreat had a very jubilant and celebratory quality as one could imagine. As usual, people practiced Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance. There was an explanation of the Ganapuja for newcomers, and there were many who had been waiting since December to meet Rinpoche. There was an international lottery full of wonderful prizes directly from the Master himself and one joyful afternoon of a fundraising bingo game, the first big prize going to the more than deserving Rosa Namkhai!

All in all the time in Tashigar South was a powerful and challenging time, filled with all that could be imagined with the final realization being the returned health and vitality of our precious Maestro. What more could be asked for.

Long life to the Master. ©



Errata

In a past issue of The Mirror in the summer of 2010 and in some publications within the Dzogchen Community the incorrect image of Garab Dorje has been presented. When Garab Dorje is giving Direct Introduction, Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has stated that the right hand should be placed as it is in this drawing and the right leg is forward.

We are sorry for any errors!

Thank you.

The Mirror Staff

Worldwide Transmission Days

About the Worldwide Transmission

Newcomers who want to participate in the worldwide transmission must be truly interested in the Teachings transmitted by our Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and practiced in our world wide Dzogchen Community. Participants in this Transmission should try to receive Teachings from Rinpoche in the future. After having received the Transmission, they should also try to train and collaborate with the Sangha of the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Originally, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had the idea of a 'Transmission at a Distance' because he wanted to help people in different situations, who could not travel at that time to meet the Teacher. The Transmission will enable them to practice the Dzogchen Teachings transmitted by Rinpoche without needing direct contact with the Teacher at that time.

Here is a summary of how the Live Webcast Empowerment works:

To receive the World Wide Transmission, new students need to participate with an experienced student who will host both the preliminary explanation as well as the actual practice well in advance of the event.

Hosts of Empowerments should be members of the International Dzogchen Community.

For new and interested persons, it is important to have seen the explanation by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche that is on a videotape, in advance. They should also have the possibility

to clarify any doubts about the practice on the videotape with some serious, dedicated older students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche before the Empowerment.

Exactly at the given time (see timetable) at your place, you can listen to or watch Chögyal Namkhai Norbu wherever he is in the world giving the transmission. You can be with him in that moment and receive the transmission together with students and other newcomers worldwide. The session consists of doing the Thun together and ending with the dedication of merits.

We wish you all a successful practice. Please contact your local Community for details. ©

Global Timetable

Anniversary of Garab Dorje
1st Tibetan month – 16th day
Celebration at 8 am Oddyana time.

Friday 18th March 2011

17:00 Hawaii
19:00 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver (US Pacific Time)
20:00 Denver (US Mountain Time)
21:00 Chicago, Mexico City, Belize (US Central Time)
22:00 New York, Montreal, Detroit, Havana
23:00 Caracas

Saturday 19th March 2011

00:00 Buenos Aires, Sao Paolo, Santiago
03:00 GMT, London, Dublin, Lisbon
04:00 Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Amsterdam, Stockholm
05:00 Helsinki, Athens, Jerusalem
06:00 Moscow
08:00 Oddyana (Karachi/Pakistan)
08:30 Dehli, Bombay
08:45 Kathmandu
09:00 Dacca
10:00 Bangkok, Jakarta
11:00 Singapore, Hong Kong
12:00 Tokyo
14:00 Melbourne, Sydney

>> continued from previous page

This is an example of how things are going on now in Margarita, but this idea should be applied everywhere in all Gars. In society instead of saying we are Buddhists, we have to work with circumstances as I always explain in the teachings. In some countries it could be an advantage to be registered as a religious center, in other places not at all, so that's why it is important to work with circumstances day after day. There should be small, well organized cooperatives, able to realize concrete ideas and projects, because everyone can propose his own project, but the Community cannot go after all of them. If a project is serious and concrete, the Gakyil can help and then check it.

When I spoke about the project of starting a small cooperative in Merigar West, many people reacted in a very personal way saying they had particular projects, ideas asking for money from the Community to carry them out, but then I replied this was not good. Then after talking to people, I personally lent some of them money, hoping I would get it back if the projects were successful, otherwise....who knows! What happened was that the three or four people I gave money to left their projects half way through! This is no good; we need a project that has the commitment of at least three people and then everything becomes more serious. ©

[At the end of the talk, Rinpoche replied to some remarks of Martha Trillo who lives in Tashigar South, thanking Rinpoche for having been a living example of how a true practitioner should face a disease and go beyond limits. Rinpoche said, "You mean to say that my disease has been helpful? Many practitioners have said, "At last I learned how to do Mandarava practice!"]

Transcribed by Elisa Copello

Edited by Naomi Zeitz

Reviews

12

Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye The Treasury of Knowledge Books 9 & 10, Journey and Goal

Translated by Richard Barron (Chokyi Nyima)
Snow Lion 2010

Andy Lukianowicz

This is a welcome addition to the ongoing project undertaken by Snow Lion and Tsadra Foundation, Kalu Rinpoche Translation Group, to publish the English translation of Jamgon Kongtrul's monumental encyclopaedic work, *The Treasury of Knowledge*. Alongside Richard Barron it has involved many translators, including Sarah Harding, Ingrid McLeod, Elizabeth Calahan, Ngawang Zanpo and our own Elio Guarisco, with a forthcoming volume by Gyurme Dorje, translator of Dudjom Rinpoche's *Nyingma School, History and Fundamentals*.

In brief, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye (1813–1899) was one of the foremost Tibetan Buddhist practitioners and scholars of recent times. Together with his guru Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Chogyur Lingpa he co-founded the Rime ecumenical movement (of which Ringu Tulku has written a valuable account, 'Ri-me Philosophy of Jamgon Kongtrul The Great'). Among his other works he also compiled the famous *Rinched Terzod*, now the statutory collection of Nyingma

termas. His *Treasury of Knowledge*, with his original verse composition and own auto-commentary, is recognised as the encyclopaedia of Buddhist wisdom; this volume forms part of Snow Lion's ongoing project to publish the entire English translation of the work.

As in the first volume translated, *Myriad Worlds*, Jamgon Kongtrul subsumes the contents, 'the analysis of the spiritual paths and levels to be traversed and the consummate fruition state', under three classifications, the 'Hinayana' and common Mahayana; the extraordinary Mahayana or Vajrayana according to the Sarma or new schools and especially the Kalachakra tantric doctrine; and the teachings of the ancient Nyingma school.

Book 9 offers an analysis of the spiritual paths to be traversed. The opening long section on the first vehicle, comprehending the Sravaka, Pratyekabuddha and Bodhisattva Mahayana approach, treats the five paths and ten levels of the causal dialectical vehicle, while the section on Vajrayana (again according to



the five paths) treats the particular intent of the Anuttarayoga approach (largely based on the writings of the important Karma Kagyu hierarch Karmapa III Rangjung Dorje) and then proceeds to the Kalachakra tradition, generally deemed in the Sarma schools to be the highest of tantras. Kongtrul then follows with a detailed description of behaviour (including explanations of conduct during the Ganachakra ritual and wrathful activity) before broaching the paths and levels within the three (inner) yogas of the ancient Nyingma school: Mahayoga, Anuoga and Atiyoga. The latter includes detailed discussions of empowerment, masters of awareness, and the 'four visions' of Atiyoga.

Book 10 deals with fruition. In the first part, on the dialectical approach, there are descriptions

of Nirvana according to the different spiritual approaches, the nature and meaning of Buddhahood, the process of accomplishment of the three kayas, timeless awareness, the qualities of enlightenment and of enlightened activity (following in large part the famous Highest Continuum treatise by Maitreya) of the more common attainments (enlightened activities and siddhis) in the Mahayana. Part 3 presents fruition in the Vajrayana, distinguishing between nominal and actual fruition, discussing essence, causal factors, and results (distinguishing between primordial unity that involves training and that that involves no more training), and the three or four kayas and timeless awareness. Part 4, on Nyingma, starts with a discussion on fruition according to the main Mahayoga tantra, *Web of Magical Display* (object of a detailed commentary by Longchenpa, translated by Gyurme Dorje), and finally addresses fruition in Atiyoga Dzogchen, on gaining fruition according to the 'vajra pinnacle' or *Vajra Heart Essence of Utter Lucidity*; his analysis is again largely informed by the writings of the omniscient Longchenpa.

Dzogchenpas, don't be in a hurry and go straight to the Atiyoga section! As Barron points out in his introduction, it is useful to know the entire Buddhist path, for "it is not sufficient for the teachings to be Dzogchen,

the practitioner must also be Dzogchen. By its very nature a higher approach incorporates the principles and accomplishments of a lower one." He also warns that "with the popularisation of Dzogchen in recent times, there is a danger that the full majesty of the Dzogchen approach, which Kongtrul presents here and which embraces and fulfils all the principles found in the so-called lower approaches, will become watered down to an overly simplistic version that could seem to invalidate them."

What a wonderful book. The scope of topics, the precision of detail, the breadth of view are remarkable, not to say staggering (but to be expected of Kongtrul), as are the care and attention of the translator Richard Barron (also translator of Jamgon Kongtrul's autobiography, "Gem of Many Colours" and of Longchenpa's "Seven Treasuries", from which he quotes copiously and appositely in his meticulous and informative footnotes). The book is full of fascinating information and insights elucidating all approaches and aspects of the Buddhist path, and will prove interesting as a useful additional source of knowledge not only to students of Santi Maha Sangha, but also to all practitioners of Dzogchen. ©

The Three Paths of Liberation

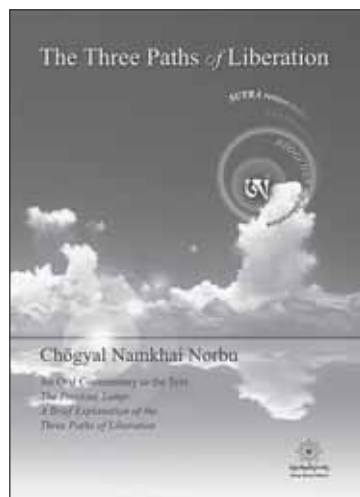
Shang Shung Editions 2011

Nancy Simmons

The Three Paths of Liberation is a straightforward guide to the understanding of the essence of all paths, Buddhist or not, leading to spiritual realization.

This teaching revolutionizes the way of thinking about the levels of dharma to the great benefit of both advanced students and neophytes. Taught by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2006 at Tashigar Norte, it is an oral commentary on his Tibetan text, *The Precious Vase: a Brief Explanation of the Three Paths of Liberation*. Sutra practitioners consider their system to be divided into three vehicles, and Vajrayana also has three vehicles or *yanas*, albeit in different combination, though neither of these divisions of the dharma corresponds to the three paths of liberation: as Rinpoche states in the book, "You need to have a clear idea about these distinctions."

Here we are centered on the basic methods of practice, the highways through the landscape of samsara, which indications, given understanding and determination on our part, show us the way to proceed to best advantage; we are not looking at the differ-



ing internal aspects of Sutra and Tantra, for example, the *sravakas* and the *bodhisattvas*, or *mahayoga* and *anuyoga*.

The book explains that all paths can be described as three main methods, no matter what tradition is being considered. Those three methods, in an approach which is part of Dzogchen knowledge found in a teaching called the *tharlam desum*, are that of renunciation, transformation, and self-liberation. We can recognize that, in Buddhist terminology, renunciation is the method of Sutra; transformation, that of Tantra; and self-liberation, that of Dzogchen. Once released from an ironclad identification with a particular school or current of dharma born from a limited point of view, we become free to take Rinpoche's advice: "We can apply all three paths of liberation, and a practitioner of Dzogchen

who understands the essence of the teaching always integrates all three... I will try to communicate and explain these paths so you can have a clear idea of them and will find no conflict between Sutra and Tantra, or among different schools and traditions."

Constructed on the base of that knowledge, what do the one hundred and eighty some pages of *The Three Paths of Liberation* offer us? So much, one might say, as to make it a very good choice to pack on your next trip to one of our blissful Dzogchen islands, not all of them surrounded by water.

"The Foundations of the Path" is the first of the book's six sections and discusses the three main points found in all teachings, the base, the path, and fruit, according to each of the methods we are seeking to understand. This chapter contains an enlightening dialogue between Guru Padmasambhava and his consort Yeshe Tsogyal in which she asks him, "What is the essence and meaning of refuge?" and "What are the different kinds of refuge?" The second section is devoted to an explanation of the differences among the paths of renunciation, transformation, and self-liberation, as well as to separate discussions of the nature and principles of Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen, and how they can be utilized to further our progress. For instance, in the part called Sutra,

one finds the subtitle, "How to practice the essential points of the Sutrayana."

"Dzogchen Practices" is the title of the third section and, besides recounting the particular view of the role and function of ngöndro or preliminary practice in the Great Perfection, is a convenient handbook of the Khorde Rushen and the Seven Semdzin practices. "Conduct in Everyday Life," the fourth section, speaks for itself. In it the famed Dzogchen awareness which we all seek to maintain is shown to be the basis for discovering the ways and moments in which the wisdom of all the paths can be applied, even though one calls oneself a Dzogchen practitioner. The joyous and healing "Realization of the Fruit, Concepts of Enlightenment in Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen" tells us what to expect, and an amusing "Note on the Real Meaning of Enlightenment" concludes the fifth section. Rinpoche says at this point, "There is nothing left to teach and so this teaching is finished." The book ends with, what else, the "Dedication of Merits," the sixth section, and an explanation of the powerful mantra which guarantees that the merit we dedicate with our good intention reaches its goal.

The book itself, because it contains Dzogchen practices, is meant for those who have already received transmission.

However, an explanation of the universal nature of the methods of the three paths, given the appropriate opportunity, might be a special gift to share with those friends, interested in dharma or other spiritual dimensions but still at the beginning, hesitant and unsure, to clear the plethora of confusions that can beset one at such a crucial moment.

This is one of those classic books every practitioner should have to shore up missing knowledge and to encourage every possible use of the day's and night's events as opportunities for further development of the realization of oneself as the *Great Thigle*. ©

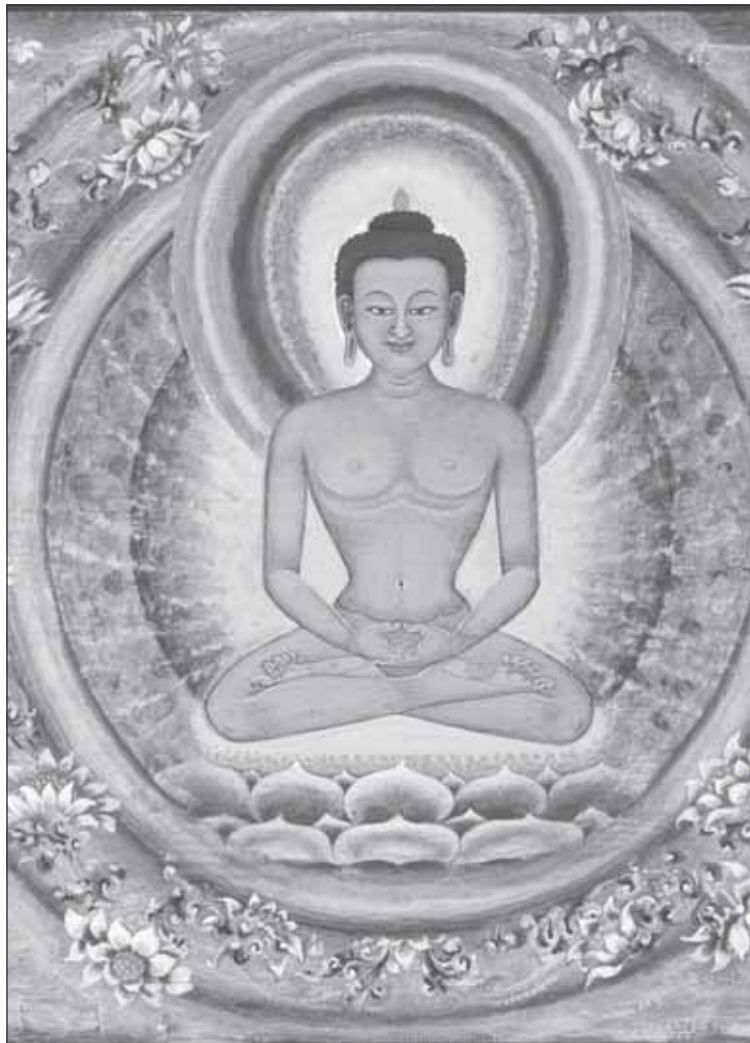
Focus on the Primordial Masters

Traditional texts state that from the most ancient times twelve great Masters or Buddhas have appeared in our world to spread the teaching. These twelve teachers that preceded Garab Dorje are described as *nirmanakaya* manifestations of the primordial Buddha Vajradhara and lived at different times and in different places, starting from an epoch when the life span was beyond calculation up to the manifestation of Buddha Sakyamuni. Thus the primordial Buddha manifested twelve forms to transmit the teaching according to the countless conditions and capacities of beings.

In Longchenpa's text "The Treasure of the Supreme Vehicle" (*theg mchog mdzog*), he lists the Twelve Primordial Masters, the places and times in which they lived and the teachings that they transmitted. Our presentation here is based on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's "The Supreme Source" and "Ati Samten Gongdzöd – The Ati Treasury of Contemplation".

At Merigar West, in the Temple of Great Liberation (Dukhang Thongdrol), paintings of the Primordial Masters are depicted on the west side of the building, on a horizontal panel above the seat that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu uses when he is teaching. The figures were painted by Master Dugu Chögyal who is a reincarnation of Drugpa Chögyal Gyamtso, a famous tertön and Master of the Drugpa Kagyud lineage. Like his predecessors, Dugu Chögyal is a spiritual Master as well as being a highly gifted and well-known artist.

In addition to the Twelve Primordial Masters, the panel in the Merigar Gonpa also portrays the figures of Kuntusangpo and Vajrasattva as well as Shenrab Miwo, the founder of the pre-Buddhist religion Bön. The descriptions that follow also include these three figures.



Chöku Kuntusangpo (Dharmakaya Samantabhadra)

This is the central figure in the panel portraying Samantabhadra, the Primordial Buddha, the essence of all Buddhas, primordial enlightenment beyond *samsara* and *nirvana*. Beyond the distinction between unity and multiplicity, he is present in all beings. He totally transcends all conceptual limits of origin and cessation, eternity and nothingness, being and non-being, vision and emptiness. He

is the principle that contains *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya* within himself. He is presented naked and blue in colour, symbols of his being without attributes, similar to the sky. In the Dzogchen teaching, Samantabhadra is the emptiness of *dharmakaya* that contains all manifestation in itself. The principle through which the infinite possibility that is inherent in the *dharmakaya* starts to manifest as sound and light is *Sambhogakaya Vajrasattva*.



Longku Dorje Sempa (Sambhogakaya Vajrasattva)

In the Dzogchen teaching, Vajrasattva is the principle from which all the diverse divinities of the *tantras* manifest. His body is white in colour symbolizing the source of all colours which then unite to create the visions of *sambhogakaya*. The figure of Vajrasattva is shown seated in the lotus position with his right hand holding a *vajra* and raised

in front of his heart while his left hand rests at his left side holding a bell. His condition is beyond dualistic vision yet his ornaments and jewels are a symbol of the qualities of his potentiality which gives rise to countless manifestations. Vajrasattva is the source of the six million and four hundred thousand Dzogchen teachings that have been spread in the human world by the *nirmanakaya* Garab Dorje.

Khyeu Nangwa Tamba Samgyi Mikhyabpa

At a time when the lifespan could not be calculated, all beings had bodies of light formed of the essence of the elements, were born miraculously and shone with their own light. At this time Buddha Vajradhara manifested in the divine dimension called Joyous Pagoda in the form of a white, eight-year-old child in the midst of a lotus with a thousand petals. He was called Khyeu Nangwa Samgyi Mikhyabpa or Supreme Child Inconceivable Vision. On each lotus petal an emanation identical to the central one appeared, foretelling the coming of one thousand Buddhas in that fortunate *kalpa*. The six million four hundred thousand stars that manifested in the sky represented the arrival of the same number of Dzogchen *tantras* and the seventeen that shone more brightly announced the seventeen *tantras* of the Man ngag sde series.

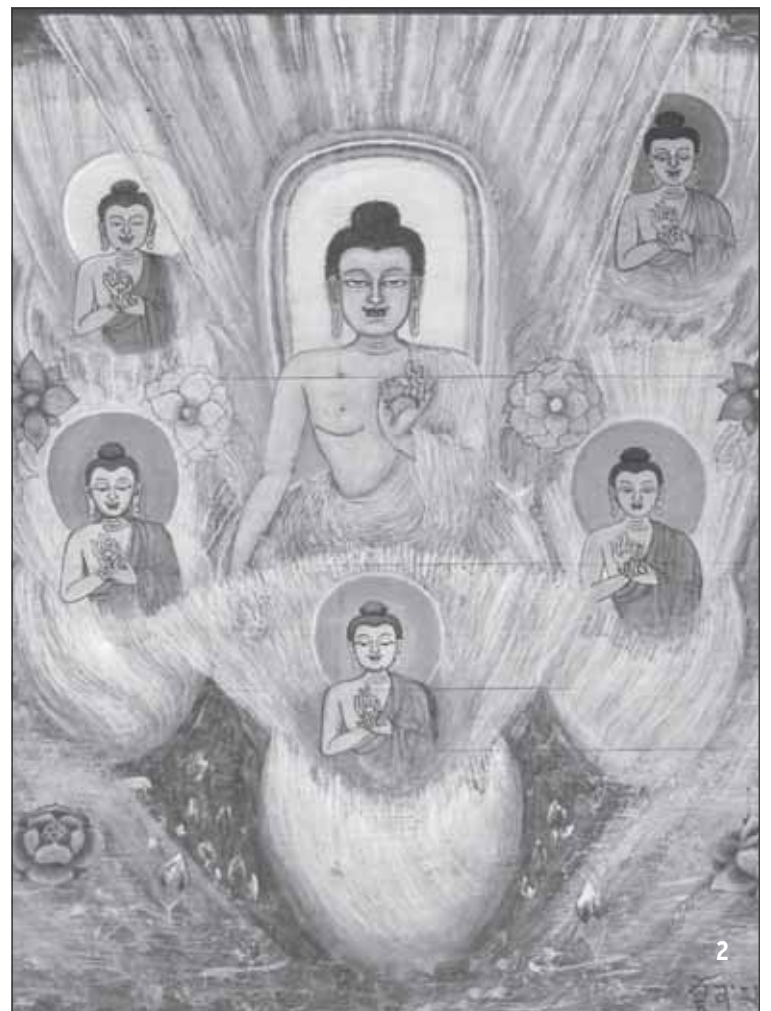
He taught *The All-surpassing Sound (sGra thal 'gyur)* *tantra* and the two *Bodhisattvas Nyima Rabtu Nangwa* and *Gajed Wangchuk* gathered his teachings.

Khyeu Wöd Mitrugpa

When the life span diminished to ten million years, the light of beings decreased and the first passions appeared, in the dimension called Saha beings were born from five-coloured eggs made up of the substance of the elements. They were surrounded by a luminous aura, possessed miraculous powers and few passions, did not meet material obstacles and fed off the substance of the four elements. Buddha Khyeu Wöd Mitrugpa (Child Imperturbable Light) appeared as one of them to two hundred thousand *dakinis* to indicate that the same number of female beings would be liberated in the future thanks to his teachings. He taught the five *tantras* of the Body, Voice, Mind, Qualities and Activities.

Jigpa Kyobpai Yid

When the life span decreased to one hundred thousand years and the light continued to diminish because of the passions, beings were born from heat and humidity. They started to eat plants and became subject to the first illnesses caused by imbalances of the elements. Buddha Jigpa Kyobpai Yid (Mind that Protects from Fear) was born in a place called



Trödshe Düpa Wödkiyl Pungpa (Mass of Light that gathers Humidity). He taught *The Emptying of Samsara ('Khor ba dong sprugs)*, *The Peacock's Entwined Neck (rMa bya mjing snol)*, *The Exhaustion of the Four*

Elements ('Byung bzhi zad pa) and other *tantras*, whispering them to six hundred thousand *bodhisattvas* to show that an equal number of male beings would be liberated in the future thanks to his teachings.

Focus on the Primordial Masters



Zhönnu Rolpa Nampar Tsewa 4
When the life span had diminished to eighty thousand years and passions had become even stronger, the bodies of beings lost their light and the sun and moon appeared. Due to desire and attachment, the sexual organs of beings developed and while at first looking at each other was sufficient to satisfy their desires, finally beings started to come together and procreate. They would dress in cotton or the bark of trees and feed from the ‘fat of the earth’ but were so greedy that this was all consumed. When they started to eat rice, their growing feeling of ‘I and mine’, their hatred and pride made this food disappear as well. Buddha Zhönnu Rolpa Nampar Tsewa (Young Manifestation of Compassion) was born from the uterus in the form of a ten year old child at this time in the place called Chagjung Ngaldu Nangwa (Apparition in the Womb of Conception). He taught eleven tantras: the five root tantras and six secondary Semde tantras to one thousand yaksas.



Sixth Vajradhara (Dorjechang) 5
When the life span had become sixty thousand years, the Buddha Sixth Vajradhara was born as a divine bodhisatta in the dimension of the Thirty-Three Gods. In the garden of the Young Doctor (Tsho byed gzhon nu) he transmitted teachings on the six, three and eighteen paramitas that encompassed methods with and without effort, including the tantras of Dzogpa Chenpo, to the seven heroic Buddhas of our times. He spent seventy-five years with the devas and left his testament to his disciple Norwang, entering parinirvana where he remained in samadhi for seven thousand years.

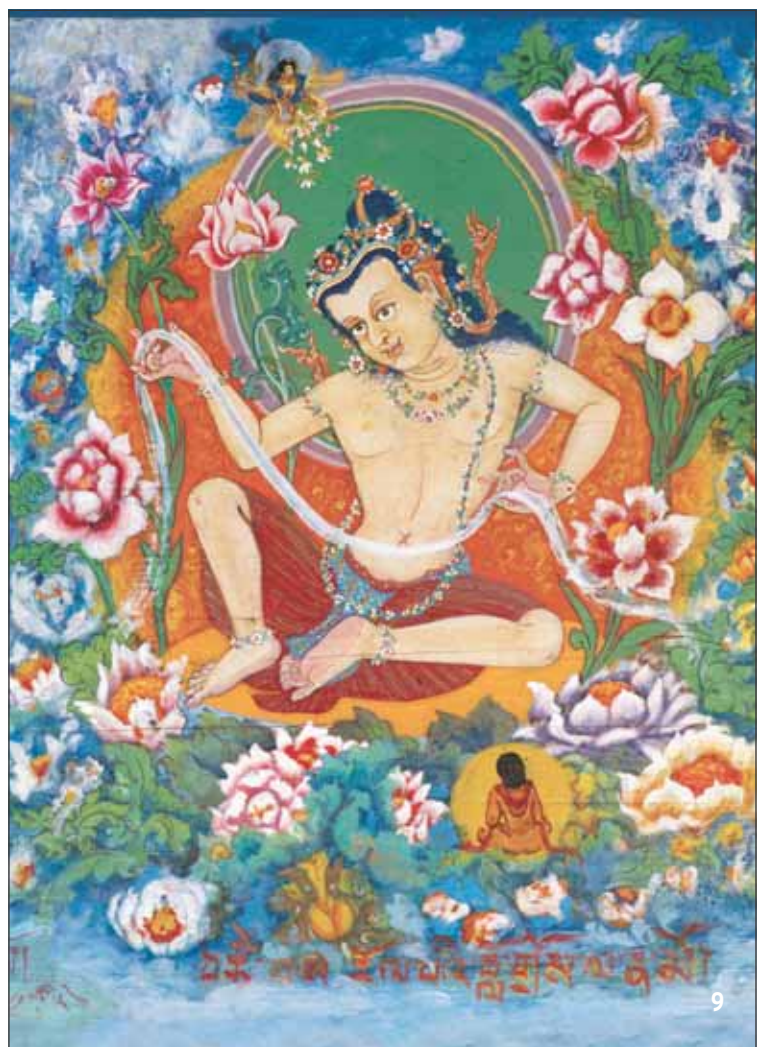
Zhönnu Pawo Tobden Chenpo 6
When the average life span had diminished to sixty thousand years, Vajradhara reawakened from his samadhi and, stirred by compassion towards beings, was reborn as the son of a yaksa and a ferocious dakini in the dimension of the Cemetery of the Secret Manifestation, in the frightening place of the yaksas northeast of Mount Meru. His name was Zhönnu Pawo Tobden (Young Powerful Hero) and he appeared as a frightening dwarf with three faces and six hands holding the worlds of the six classes of beings, the devas, asuras, humans, animals, pretas and hell beings. He taught the Tantra of the Spontaneous State of Pure Presence (Rig pa rang shar) and other tantras to the seven bodhisattvas, who listened immersed to the navel in clouds, and to countless dakinis, devas and nagas. After staying with them for a thousand years, he left his testament to the yaksa Lechöd and entered parinirvana where he remained in samadhi for one hundred thousand years.



Trangsong Tröpai Gyalpo 7
When the life span had decreased to ten thousand years, Vajradhara awakened once again from his samadhi to be reborn as Trangsong Tröpai Gyalpo (Wise Wrathful King) in the dimension of the raksas on earth, in a western region where there were many bodhisattvas. He transmitted the “ten tantras to subjugate negativities” and other teachings to ten million raksasas in a cave that radiated the sound “rulu”. He did not leave a testament and at the end of his life was reabsorbed in samadhi where he remained for fifty thousand years.



Serwöd Tamba 8
When the life span had become five thousand years, Vajradhara was reborn in the place on this earth called Vulture Peak. He was born into a royal family and named Serwöd Tamba (Supreme Golden Light). When he was twenty-five, he cut off his own hair and took the vows by himself in front of a stupa. He taught the Vinaya and Prajnaparamita teachings to innumerable sravakas.



Tsewe Rolpai Lodrö **9**
When the life span was reduced to one thousand years, Tsewe Rolpai Lodrö (Intelligence Manifestation of Compassion) was born in northern Mongolia, in the land called Yui Minmachen (With Turquoise Eyebrows), near a bodhi tree growing next to a self-arisen stupa. He transmitted the “seven special tantras”, including *The All-creating King* (Kun byed rgyal po) and *Total Space* (Nam mkha’ che) to countless bodhisattvas who were his disciples, remaining there for one hundred and twenty years.

Wösung Drepo (Kasyapa the Elder) **10**
When the life span became five hundred years, Buddha Kasyapa the Elder came from the world of the Thirty-Three Gods and took birth in the human world to reduce the suffering of old age. He gave many teachings including the *anuyoga* scriptures to seven disciples in the place called Vulture Peak. He stayed there for seventy-five years after which he

went to practice asceticism remaining seven years in the lotus position. At the end of his life he dissolved into a body of light, leaving no mortal remains. His testament remained with the Brahmin Gön Sem.

Ngöndzog Gyalpo **11**
When the life span was three hundred years Buddha Ngöndzog Gyalpo (Perfected King) was born at Vajrasana (Bodhgaya) as the son of a brahmin. Not far from the tree under which the Buddha of the present era, Sakya-muni, would attain enlightenment, he came before the council of the Lords of the Three Families (Manjusri, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani) and transmitted all the teachings concerning the real condition as well as other tantras. He taught for twenty-five years after which he entered *parinirvana* displaying the ordinary signs of death in order to show his disciples of lower capacity the truth of the suffering of birth, old age, illness and death.

Shenrab Miwo
Shenrab Miwo (The Great Supreme Man of the Shen) was the founder of Bön, the tradition of pre-Buddhist Tibet. According to biographies, he was born as a prince of the Shen clan around eighteen thousand years ago in the land of Olmo Lungring, the sacred land of the bönpos, probably located northwest of Tibet. At the age of thirty-one, he renounced the world and dedicated himself to spiritual life and soon started teaching the bön doctrine. His biographies describe his ‘twelve great deeds’, paralleling symbolism commonly found in tales of the lives of the Buddha, which include the spreading of the bön teaching and the subduing of its main enemy, the demon Khyabpa Lagring who eventually became one of his disciples. On the only occasion that he entered Tibet, he transmitted some ritual instructions but considered that people were not ready for his teaching, prophesying that it would flourish there in the future. According to his followers, his teaching which was broadly subdivided into Nine Vehicles and the ‘Four Doors plus the Fifth, the Treasure’ spread in the kingdom of Shang Shung as well as in India, Kashmir, China and Tibet.

Buddha Sakyamuni **12**
When the life span became one hundred years, the Buddha of our era descended from the heaven of Tushita into the human world to spread the Dharma, tak-

ing birth as Gautama Siddhartha. He was born to Mayadevi and Suddhodana, king of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, lived a sheltered joyous life at court and as a young man married Yasodhara, who bore him a son, Rahula. Se-


cretly leaving the palace that had been his sole abode, Siddhartha encountered a man afflicted by old age, a sick person and finally a corpse. These encounters showed him that no person is free from the suffering of existence. When he met a monk begging for food, he decided to leave his life at the palace and search for a spiritual path that would lead to liberation from suffering.

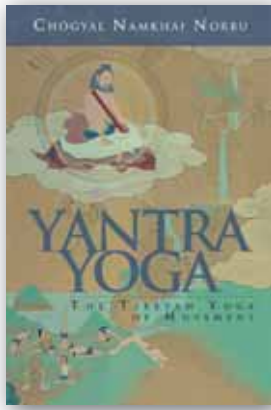
Siddhartha practiced extreme asceticism on the banks of the Nairanjara river for six years but without attaining the fruit he hoped for. Then he came to the seat of Vajrasana and decided to remain under the bodhi tree until he reached enlightenment. In this place, Mara, the lord of demons, tried to trap Siddhartha with the three main passions of ignorance, desire and hatred but without success. Then, purified of all obscurations, Siddhartha obtained the Awakening, knowledge of the real condition of all phenomena and became the Buddha.

He gave his first teaching, the First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma, at the Deer Park in the vicinity of Sarnath, near Benares. At Varanasi and other places he taught the Four Noble Truths and the different gradual paths. Later in his life, in order to show beings the impermanence of all phenomena, the Buddha became seriously ill, lay down on his right side and entered *parinirvana*. ©




Books by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu






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



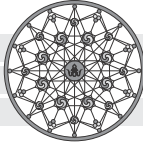
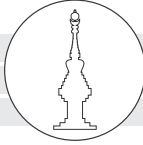
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MERIGAR 30

"The Joy of Being Here"

30th Anniversary of Merigar July 15-18, 2011

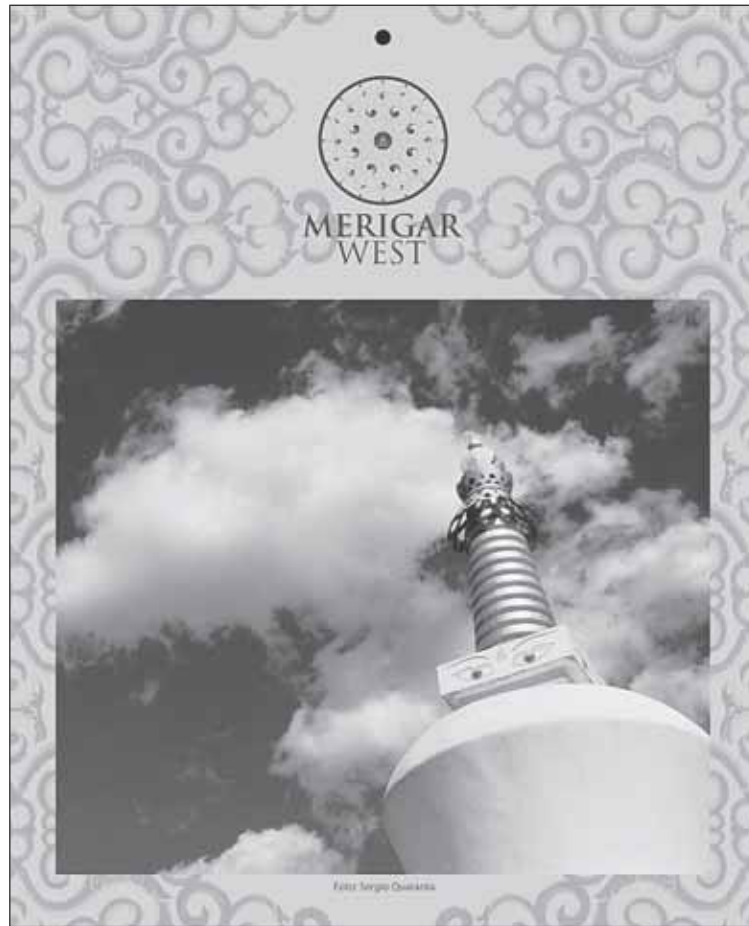
Merigar 1981-2011

Alfredo Colitto

When His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama visited Merigar in 1990, it was a cold windy day as it often is on Mount Amiata. And the Dalai Lama said, with a smile, "Here it feels like being in Tibet ...".

An ancient volcano. People who are sincere and friendly. And a place for meditation: Merigar, founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1981 in order to teach and spread the Dzogchen teaching. The word Dzogchen does not mean a faith or a spiritual path but a "state" that it is possible to discover within ourselves and integrate in our daily lives. For this reason it does not come into conflict with any belief, or with any social norms or with any type of lifestyle.

Over the years, the mutual respect between the local people and Merigar has become closer and closer, in terms of human relationships and economic ones. The Dzogchen Community has spread all over the world with the



creation of other Gars on each continent. Merigar, however, the meeting place (gar) of the fire mountain (meri) remains the centre, the fertile seed from which everything started. And it is here

that we have chosen to celebrate our thirty years, with a great meeting of the worldwide Dzogchen Community and the community of Mount Amiata. To simply celebrate, "the joy of being here".

Amiata - A Scenic and Human Treasure to Discover

Elisa Copello

When I was asked to help with the organization of the thirtieth anniversary to find people who were competent and willing to give short talks on the subjects that had been proposed, I thought that my research would have taken a lot of time and involvement and that it would perhaps be complicated to find these speakers.

My search was actually easier than I thought it would be thanks in part to personal contacts but also most of all to friends and acquaintances who, realizing how important the event was, provided me with a precise idea of who to contact and the specific qualifications of each of them. In this way I was able to discover the situation in the area of Amiata which I actually didn't know about in spite of the fact that I had been coming to the area for 30 years.

The area has a variety of different facets and aspects: the scenery is fascinating and beautiful, there is a wealth of different wa-

ter sources, a variety of flora and fauna as well as enchanting places of incomparable artistic and historic value nearby, but I had completely underestimated the existence of a lively human factor made up of various associations and prominent people involved in the cultural, musical, theatrical, spiritual and artistic scene or devoted to a social commitment of solidarity and assistance for the weakest fringe of society not only locally but also throughout the world. Thus for me it was a wonderful discovery and a stimulating opportunity to meet and get to know people different in age and cultural background, but all extremely enthusiastic to be involved in the celebrations for the thirtieth anniversary of which they had understood the importance and its reverberation beyond the border of Amiata.

All of them know Merigar and many of them have had the opportunity to have personal contact with Rinpoche during various public events and show great respect for our distinguished

Master not only for his fame as a great internationally known spiritual leader but also for the generosity with which he transmits an ancient and, in many ways, mysterious and fascinating culture.

They appreciate the fundamental role that our community has had and continues to have in the area. In fact, our growing presence over the course of the years has had a determining impact on the area from a cultural and economic point of view and has permitted the local people to come close to the different cultural backgrounds of the many practitioners coming from every part of the world.

Even after 20 years, many people still remember the visit of His Holiness and have asked me if Arcidosso would be lucky enough once again to host him. Even those who for reasons of shyness or difficulty in speaking publicly did not accept to give a talk, they showed that they wanted to contribute to the success of the event or guarantee press coverage of the event at the local and national level, as one journalist from the area proposed. Or they suggested names of musical groups or painters, sculptors and artists who could appear during

The Joy of Being Here

Luda Kislichenko

How can we present the International Dzogchen Community in all its richness and variety to the public? How can we share THE JOY OF BEING HERE celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of Merigar with the whole world? The language that is most international is art and for this reason, in addition to a cycle of talks called "Friendship Meetings" in the programme, we have organized permanent art exhibitions, concerts offering different kinds of music and the INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FOLK DANCES.

When we started preparations for this festival, an important reference point was a film that Rinpoche showed us in which there were representatives from different regions in Tibet wearing colourful costumes and ornaments and presenting dances that were typical to their region. In the same way we would like to present the different countries in which the Dzogchen Community is located with practitioners contributing to the festival with the richness of their own folklore.

Our invitation to participate in this event was met with enthusiasm by the gakyils, by the Vajra Dance instructors and by practitioners in general who are ac-

tively collaborating in organizing groups of dances to represent their country. Since the Community has many people with different skills and talents, some of whom are active professionals, choreographers and dancers, they have offered their help. With great joy they are preparing the choreography that has been adapted in a way that everyone will be able to participate in the liveliest performances possible. Everyone, even non-professionals, will be able to participate in the dances and what's more the folk dances are not too complicated and so with brightly coloured costumes and the simplicity of movements, it will really be possible to convey the JOY OF BEING HERE.

Can you imagine the scene at dusk in the main square in Arcidosso, lit up by coloured spotlights, with the music and the colours of costumes from different countries: Australia, China, Kalmykia, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil and the USA? They are already preparing their dances and there will be other countries that will be joining them for this celebration.

Let's come together for this very special event of the thirtieth anniversary of Merigar so that we can share with all our Vajra brothers and sisters and our neighbours in our area THE JOY OF BEING HERE. ©

the exhibitions organized for the event in the three Amiata villages.

The topics proposed by the 11 speakers who were contacted for the talks are very interesting and fit in perfectly with the themes of the three 'paths'.

The following talks are planned:

Personal accounts of solidarity regarding the elderly and children of non European immigrants in their country of origin or in the area here, such as the case of children from Chernobyl who have been invited to spend long periods on Amiata.

The introduction of Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga in an Arcidosso primary school.

Educational activities with young people of Amiata: reflections and experiences.

The spiritual message of Davide Lazzaretti. Native of Arcidosso and famous 18th century preacher, he wanted to guide humankind towards "The era of the Holy Ghost". He was called the Christ of Amiata and strangely prophesized that the sun of the east would rise over the valley opposite Mount Labro, home to his community.

Ernesto Balducci, the civic sense of the village, the culture of peace. A native of Santa Fiora,

Balducci was a very controversial figure and became a leading figure in the Italian Catholic world during and after the period of the Second Vatican Council.

From the theatre of life: my everyday experiences on the stage, a first-hand account of several years of work in the area in producing various valuable theatrical works and training local actors.

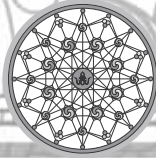
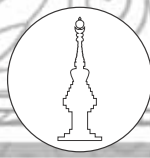
Museum events in the territory or the impact of the network of Grosseto museums on the area with particular reference to activities at Palazzo Nerucci in Castel del Piano, which, among other activities, will also host one of our exhibitions organized for the thirtieth anniversary in collaboration with ASIA.

Choosing places for physical and spiritual wellbeing: an account by a famous Italian journalist who, not by chance, chose Amiata as her place of residence in the summer where she spends periods of time to relax.

The magic of Amiata, its flowers, mushrooms and plants, an excursion to discover the botanical treasures in the Amiata environment.

The Aquilaia cultural association and the impact that it has had in the area: the experience of

>> continued on the following page



Developments at Merigar West

Gonpa and Stupa

This is a special year for the Gar, a year of great change in order to prepare to celebrate Merigar's thirtieth anniversary but also to lay the foundations for the future.

At both the Gonpa and the Great Stupa renovation work has already started both internally and externally. In particular, at the Gonpa, under the guidance of Migmar, the precious paintings of the Masters on the panels above the doors need to be restored. This will be done in karma yoga and you can find more details on a separate announcement on this page.

A new path will be created running from the Temple of Great Liberation to the Stupa so that people will be able to enjoy the natural beauty of Merigar on foot rather than moving everywhere by car. It will be a rustic type of path, probably of beaten earth and will pass through the fields between the two structures without passing in front of the Golden House.

The path that turns around the Great Stupa will become the Path of Presence and will be decorated with semi-precious stones. A new online project has been launched inviting donors to choose and donate the stones for the Path while sponsoring the restoration works at the Gonpa and the Stupa at the

same time. You can read about the Path of Presence on this page.

The Library

We will shortly start works for the library and the archives so that Merigar will be able to offer a service that will be open to all those who are interested in studying Dzogchen and Tibetan culture. The large room at the Capannone that is currently used as one of the offices for the Shang Shung Institute will become a spacious reading room complete with an upper gallery to house the Tibetan texts and DVDs. The library will have special fireproof shelves to protect the precious texts that are there. The reading room will also be available for small conferences and courses.

Other works

At the moment the gakyil is preparing a project to create a small Tibetan museum that will be housed in part of Gadeling, the Master's residence.

Then due to the copious amounts of rain that fell last autumn, the earth around the water cistern at Gadeling moved and so the cistern was broken. Work will be done to install a new one.

The new parking area that has been planned for quite a long time will finally be ready for the summer retreat and July celebrations. Since the area is, at the moment, a small hill, the earth will have to be removed, flattened and then beaten. This parking area will be used for internal parking. During the big retreats, we hope to be able to of-

fer space for parking as usual in the big field, which is rented.

At Merigar Two there will be some light work to fresh up the dormitories after the winter, which will include painting them and making them a little nicer.

Finally, there is an enormous amount of maintenance and gardening work to be done in and around all the buildings at Merigar and the gakyil would like to invite all those who are able to give a hand to get in touch with them to find out further details.

Please contact the Red Gakyil:
mwred@dzogchen.it



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 partici-

pating 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 ©

>> continued from previous page

an association in charge of organizing various events concerning culture, well-being and entertainment, that over the years has become very attractive for local people and tourists.

The biodiversity of Amiata, a topic that is very popular at the moment.

All these contacts and daily dialogue with the local population made me understand how the word "integration" with the area around our community is no longer an aseptic, Utopian term without substance but is

an actual fact of complete acceptance and reciprocal respect, due to commitment on our part and to the openness of the Amiata people towards us. For this reason the thirtieth anniversary celebrations are an opportunity that should not be lost and we should organize as best we can with the efforts of us all in order to discover and show everyone the 'richness' and the value of our community and continue to reinforce even more indispensable links with the area by following the guidelines that our Master has been giving us for years about this. ©

The Path of Presence

Join our new online activity, full of color and creativity! With your participation you will enhance the beauty of Merigar just in time for our Thirtieth Anniversary celebration!

With your gift you are sponsoring the restoration of the Stupa and the decoration of the recent enlargement to the Gonpa, as well as the creation of The Path of Presence, a new beautiful path around the Stupa!

How does it work?

The multicolored semi-precious stones you will find on our website, recalling the colors of the Five Families and the five elements, and of spheres in the blue, red, and white of the Three Vajras,

will be used by Migmar and his team to decorate the inlay surrounding the Stupa, the result of which we will be able to admire this summer. At the same time the funds raised through your generous offer will be used to restore the Stupa and decorate the Gonpa.

How can I participate?

Easy! Go to our website:

www.thepathofpresence.com

Simply click on the one or more stones or spheres which you wish to offer Merigar, and thus our precious Master, each of which represents a specific characteristic (see description). Then indicate the number of stones you are offering, and proceed to payment.

Everybody can afford to participate!

We look forward to your enthusiastic participation, and please join us on facebook and receive updates about the ongoing works.

- 1. Rock crystal sphere:** Thigle Chenbo, the Great Thigle, symbol of the State € 500
- 2. Blue Sphere** – sodalite: HUM, symbol of the mind € 300
- 3. Red sphere** – red jasper: AH, symbol of the voice € 200
- 4. White Sphere** – howlite: OM, symbol of the body € 100
- 5. Blue Stone** – sodalite: Vairochana, symbol of clarity € 90
- 6. White Stone** – white onyx: Akshobya, symbol of wisdom € 70
- 7. Yellow Stone** – citrine: Ratnasambava, symbol of beauty and spiritual riches € 50
- 8. Red Stone** – red jasper: Amitabha, symbol of compassion € 20
- 9. Green Stone** – aventurine: Amoghasiddhi, symbol of power and activity € 10

THANK YOU!

Traditionally Tibetan Buddhists would circle a stupa (chorten in Tibetan), representation of the realized mind of the Buddha, clockwise, paying homage to the significance of the sacred structure and its contents, holy relics, images, and texts. Thus with their good intention and the recitation of mantras, the faithful would accumulate merit, sometimes walking around the structure hundreds of times, an act called "doing kora." Kora here can be understood to mean cyclical existence, ritual circum-ambulating on foot, in short walking through ordinary existence with a special intent. As we all know, from the Dzogchen point of view we need to walk through samsara with awareness so that this life can become a path to the realization symbolized by the Stupa. This is how we have come to name our beautiful path-to-be the Path of Presence or "Kora of Awareness." Please join us in making this project a reality. ©

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:

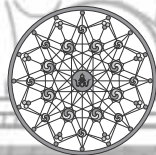
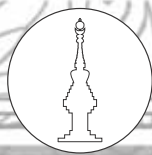
Christina von Geispitzheim

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.



The Essence of Abhidharma and Longde Teachings

Merigar West, December-January 2011

Mandarava Bricaire

When Khyentse Yeshe held his teachings at Merigar he was sitting on the throne next to that of his father. During the teachings we learned about Namkhai Norbu's health; luckily it seemed from Yeshe Namkhai's updates that Rinpoche was reacting positively to his many cures.

Many people came and the Gonpa was comfortably full. There were a few completely new people, flowering from the screenings of *My reincarnation* (Jennifer Fox, 2010), the documentary on his life and that of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The two retreats followed one another and while the first was a retreat of teachings, the latter was aimed at having direct experience of the state of Dzogchen through specific practices of the Longde series as explained by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

In the teachings on the essence of Abhidharma, Yeshe spoke of concepts like the warehouse of the conscience that was transferred through each reincarnation of a sentient being and how it is connected to each person's mental habits, and general atti-

tudes related to behavior in daily life and the "behavior" of one's own body and feelings. Although his teachings were touchingly deep and sometimes extremely synthesized in form, Yeshe made sure to refrain from asking us to grasp anything at all, and to observe our own reactions to the simple presence of the teachings and the experience that the retreat in itself brought. On this point he touched on the relativity of words and the importance of the experience of enjoyment, which is essential for the discovery of the state of Dzogchen. As a matter of fact Yeshe talked of the natural state of oneself and how this naturally manifests more easily during states of enjoyment and pleasure. He also underlined the importance of the understanding of a teaching method based on the circumstances of a gathering of people listening to a teacher, and what this implies in terms of the correct perception/reading of oral teachings themselves.

When speaking of the 'creation' of a warehouse of the conscience I understood this at a very basic level, where the formation of tensions in a person very of-



Photo: L. Gräf

ten come with the acquisition of a specific mental attitude, when this – whether good or bad – influences a person's actions. Often these traces of tension are kept till the moment of death and come to the surface as 'unsolved' issues.

For example Khyentse Yeshe commented on the mental attitude of an environmentalist or someone who is concerned about the environment. In the perception of the world's problems, very often this comes not so much from a direct experience of them, like a direct connection with the Amazonian forest which needs to be saved, but rather from publicity campaigns that speak to us about our "duty"

as human beings. But rather than an actual concern for the animals in the forest, this very simply has to do with a person's idea of himself. Aside from the fact that we all need to feel that we are "good", especially if we feel a little bit "Buddhist" as well, as long as the perception of the self simply corresponds to the perception of ego, then, aside from our intension, it will necessarily be erroneous.

On the other hand Yeshe expressed the way in which we "choose" to be good and how the rest of our true and spontaneous feelings are kept aside, as if rejected because they do not belong properly to the idea we have of ourselves. These ways of con-

stantly restraining and shaping ourselves into the perfect "self" will manifest sooner or later, if not in this life, for sure during the moment of death and in later incarnations. For this reason Yeshe went on to explain the importance of Longde teachings on the balancing of the elements (fire, water, wind, etc.) in bodily and behavior tendencies and how these are traits that we were born with but which can be balanced through the practice.

During the teachings on Longde practices Yeshe introduced us to the basic experience of pleasure through visualization. He explained that people who naturally felt pleasure connected to this visualization (if it arose spontaneously and "makes sense" in our mind) are probably connected to this practice from previous lives, or have a cause for feeling it more naturally than other people. Yeshe said this is true for every practice that every person feels connected to. He also gave us direct introduction to the state of Emptiness (and how the natural state arises from it spontaneously). Finally I recall Khyentse Yeshe's words on the importance of feeling completely confident of the state of Dzogchen, and also how this confidence is not connected to our change in attitude (mental attitude) since the knowledge of Dzogchen is not concerned with action. ©

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 100,000 euro.

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

SMS meditation and contemplation according to Dzogchen

with Jakob Winkler
April 8–10 in Dargyaling, Cologne
Registration Jil Self
jil.self@dzogchen.de

Vajra Dance for advanced students

with Prima Mai
April 22–25 in Hamburg
Registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

Song of the Vajra beginners course Parts 1 and 2

with Karin Heinemann
April 30–May 11 in Höfen
Registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

Yantra Yoga advanced course third series

with Elke Glander
May 13–15 in Munich
Registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

The way of dealing with the five emotions from the Longsal

with Elio Guarisco
May 20–22 in Dargyaling, Cologne
Registration Jil Self
jil.self@dzogchen.de

Jnana Dakini and Vajra Dance practice retreat

with Karin Heinemann
June 17–22 in Höfen
Registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

Yantra Yoga Pranayama and Kumbhaka

with Elke Glander
June 22–26 in Höfen
Registration Viktoria Gershevskaya
viktoria.gershevskaya@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
Sept. 9–11 in Dargyaling, Cologne
Registration Jil Self
jil.self@dzogchen.de

'Dzogchen Without Buddhism'

with Jim Valby
Nov. 23–24 in Dargyaling, Cologne
SMS Base Level Study & Practice
with Jim Valby
Nov. 25–29 in Dargyaling, Cologne
registration Jil Self
jil.self@dzogchen.de

France

Retreat of explanations and practice of Long Life of Mandarava with Chudlen and Tsalungs

Led by Nina Robinson

In Paris (France) from Friday, April 22nd (6pm) to Monday, April 25th (6pm)

In Dejamling (South of France) from Tuesday, April 26th (5 pm – time to be confirmed) to Sunday, May 1st (1 pm).

Information and registration for both retreats: dejamling1@gmail.com

Germany

Mandarava Tsalung course

with Sasha Pubants

March 4–6

Practice retreat

March 6–19

in Höfen

Registration Barbara Schwesig

barbaschwe@web.de

Yantra Yoga beginners course

with Saadet Arslan

March 25–27 in Dargyaling, Cologne

Registration Viktoria Gershevskaya

viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

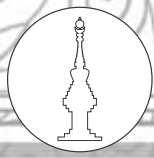


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Italy



Introduction to Buddhism and Dzogchen with Fabio Risolo at Dribselling, Milan in January 2011.

Rome Inter-Religious Conference

On Sunday, February 27th a conference on “The values transmitted by ancient religions (that we often forget)” was held in Rome, organized by the inter-religious group in which our Dzogchen Community in Rome has participated since its creation four years ago. Representatives of the Bahaj religion, the Shambala Buddhist tradition, the Jewish, Christian and Muslim religions and Fabio Risolo representing our Dzogchen Community spoke around the subject in the beautiful “Pietro da Cortona” hall in the Musei Capitolini on Capitol Hill.

About 150 people were present and followed with real interest as they demonstrated at the end of the meeting



when everybody had the chance to ask the speakers questions.

It was an interesting event and a good opportunity to exchange views and open up to the city. ©



SMS Base course with Fabio Risolo held at Gyamtsholing, Venice, January 29–30, on chapter 5, the points of view.

Switzerland

Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat

with Dr. Jim Valby
June 13–19, 2011
at Schweibenalp near Brienz

During this retreat, participants will get a deeper knowledge of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. Like a huge carpet, a map of the practice will unfold. We will learn both practice and theory and come to know a lot about our practice as well. We will be able to receive advice from one of the most competent SMS teachers.

Dr. Jim Valby has been a student of Dzogchen Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982. He participates in Dzogchen Community projects helping to prepare English translations from Tibetan texts. He has taught the essence of the theory and practice of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen in more than 115 retreats at 43 locations in 26 countries. He lives in Western Massachusetts, USA.

The retreat will take place at Schweibenalp, situated high over the magnificent lake of Brienz in the Alps of Berne, Switzerland. The place is surrounded by high mountains and is extremely beautiful.

The teaching starts Monday June 13 at 4 pm and ends June 19, at midday. The cost of the retreat is SFr. 360.00 with the usual discounts for members. Lodging should be booked directly at Schweibenalp (www.schweibenalp.com). The Center has full board with vegetarian meals, rooms with two and more beds. Camping is possible.

Please register for the retreat at p.eisenegger@gmail.com ©

UK

News

The Dzogchen Community UK are very happy to announce that Rinpoche will again visit us again from 9th – 12th September this year. He will be a key note speaker at the international conference on ‘Bon, Shang Shung and Early Tibet’ at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), this will also mark the beginning of a formal relationship between SOAS and the Shang Shung Institute UK: London School of Tibetan Studies. Other guests include Lupon Tenzin Namdak and Samten Karmay. Rinpoche will also give Dzogchen Teachings at the Camden Centre.

We have also launched a very interesting Santi Maha Sangha programme based on the Precious Vase in London, UK for 2011, and our new schedule for this years events at Kunselling. In addition, we have just launched a great new website that we hope will be of benefit to everyone www.dzogchencommunity.org. Here you will find further information and booking details for all of our courses plus much more.

London Santi Maha Sangha Course 2011

An Exploration of Refuge & Guru Yoga

(Based on Chapter 3 of ‘The Precious Vase’) with Des Barry
March 20th, (Sunday, 10 am–5 pm)
Venue: To be announced

An Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy

(Based on Chapter 1 of ‘The Precious Vase’) with Gianni Pellegrini
(in assoc. with Shang Shung UK)
April 16th–17th (Sat & Sun, 10 am–5 pm)
Venue: To be announced

What is Tantra? The Importance of the View in Mahayana, Vajrayana & Ati

(Based on Chapter 5 of ‘The Precious Vase’) with Elio Guarisco
May 28th–29th (Sat & Sun, 10 am–5 pm)
Venue: London Drukpa Center, Leeder House, 6 Erskine Road, Primrose Hill, NW3 3AJ.

Semzin Practice: The Direct Practices for Discovering the Nature of Mind

(Based on Chapter 6 of ‘The Precious Vase’) with Jowita Poniewska
June 12th (Sun 10–5 pm) – check, date may change
Venue: London Drukpa Center, Leeder House, 6 Erskine Road, Primrose Hill, NW3 3AJ.

A Study Day: Exploring Inner & Outer Tantra through an understanding of Tara Practice

(Based on Chapter 6 of ‘The Precious Vase’) with Julia Lawless
July 3rd (Sun, 10 am–5 pm) check, date may change
Venue: To be announced

Pranayama & Yantra Yoga: a Means of Integrating Practice & Behaviour

(Based on Chapter 7 of ‘The Precious Vase’) with John Renshaw
Sept 24th–25th (Sat & Sun 10–5 pm)
Venue: London Drukpa Center, Leeder House, 6 Erskine Road, Primrose Hill, NW3 3AJ.

Dzogchen Without Buddhism

with Jim Valby
(In assoc. with Shang Shung UK)
Nov 5th–6th (Sat & Sun, 9 am–6 pm)
Venue: London Drukpa Center, Leeder House, 6 Erskine Road, Primrose Hill, NW3 3AJ.
NB Saturday 3–6 pm To be announced

What is Enlightenment? – The Fruit of our Practice

(Based on Chapter 8 of ‘The Precious Vase’) with Dr. Jim Valby
Nov 12–13th (Sat & Sun, 9 am–6 pm)
Venue: London Drukpa Center, Leeder House, 6 Erskine Road, Primrose Hill, NW3 3AJ.

A Study Day: Chod: Cutting through the Ego’s Control over our Mind

(Based on Chapter 7 of ‘The Precious Vase’) with Judy Allan
December 4th (Sunday, 10 am–5 pm)
Venue: To be announced

Kunselling Events Programme

Karma Yoga with Sang Practice

April 23rd–1st May

Tara Practice

The Guru of Arya Tara & the 21 Praises to Tara with Julia Lawless
May 7th–8th

Mandarava Tsa Lung Retreat

Practice and explanation led by Elio Guarisco
31st May–5th June

Dance of the Vajra Part 1

with Cindy Faulkner
6th–12th June

Kunselling Summer Party

Weekend of 18th–19th June
(party Saturday night)

Goma Devi Retreat

Practice Retreat with Explanation led by Enzo Terzano
5th – 10th July

Karma Yoga with Mandarava Practice

30th July–7th August

Personal Retreat Time

7th–27th August

Dance Practice Retreat

28th August–3rd September

Karma Yoga with Xitro Practice

1st–9th October

Santi Maha Sangha Level 1 Teaching & Practice Retreat

with Jim Valby
9th–10th November

Open Period for Families

21st December–2nd January

Personal Retreat Time

2nd–31st January 2012

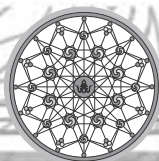
Chod Retreat

with Judy Allan
18th–25th February



Passages

Born: Bair Fjodorovs of Merigar East and Kathy Cullen of Tsegylgar East would like to announce the birth of their son, Theodore Fjodorovs, on January 27, 2011 at 20:58 in St. Thomas’ Hospital in London, United Kingdom. They would also like to send congratulations and a warm welcome to all the many new parents and babies in the community!



Merigar East



Merigar East

Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen

23 August 907005

Constanta

Romania

phone: 0040 746 26 08 61

office@dzogchen.ro

www.dzogchen.ro

Update from Merigar East

by Lune Jazudekova

At the end of January we had the first gakyil meeting of the New Year, 2011, but at the same time it was the last meeting in which our old gekö couple was also present. Mira and Greg were leaving the wide horizons of the Merigar East Gar after two and a half years of giving all their qualities and hearts to the service of this growing new Gar.

They were present at the birth of the Gar and did a lot of work on the raw land, leaving an impressive big piece of work behind them.

Their departure was in some way symbolic, since the Gonpa was just about finished and all of us, together with Giovanni Boni, who was essential for all the construction at the Gar, had the chance to end the gakyil meeting with a Ganapuja, sitting on the brand new heated floor, enjoying the powerful sensation that filled this sacred place. We all felt that this moment was really special. The powerful atmosphere was enforced with the beautiful sound capacity of the new Gonpa.

It was just the most perfect welcome and goodbye that you can imagine.

We had a great time, as always, but this time the delicious Italian cuisine of Giovanni and a really special tea ceremony, which was performed for us by Mira, made the quite intense work a bit lighter.

Also our new administrator, Adrian Bivoli, and geko, Anatoli Carp from the Republic of Moldova, were pretty busy, receiving all sorts of important advice from Mira and Greg and getting into full force ready for their new ME experience.

It isn't always easy to make things happen here, so we wish them all the best and, at the same time, on behalf of all the Gakyil want to express our appreciation for the amazing work carried out by Greg and Mira. They are my personal heroes. They started from scratch hardly speaking a word of the Romanian language, blended with the local culture and dealt with never ending challenges. And we always found them with smiles on their faces and a great dose of humour, grateful for this very special life opportunity, integrating the teaching in the rough but powerful task of building the vision of our Master.



Photo: A. Carp

For me personally Merigar East is very special place with a strong energy that forces you to be in your naked presence. Opening your heart and stripping all the long time veils of spoiled self, bringing you back to your free nature.

It is great to see how these qualities merge into the vision of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Khyentse Yeshe and the trees, the Longsal roads, the Mandalas for Vajra Dance, the flowers, the Gonpa and our famous Meribarn slowly manifest, transforming the place bit by bit,

yet still keeping you in the experience of the wide open space of the mind.

It is not perfect or comfortable... but there is this special, really special ingredient to it, the open free and powerful wide horizon of Merigar East, of yourself ... come to live it with us. ©

Sponsor a Tree in Merigar East

Dear Vajra family,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who donated to our tree planting project. Thanks to your generosity we were able to purchase and plant over 70 trees. At the moment the Longsal road outline is completed and soon we'll plant small evergreens around it.

The 'Sponsor a tree' project is still running and following the feedback we have received we have added more options. Future benefactors can choose between 50, 35 and 20 euro. We have also added the option of bank transfer or payment to your local Gakyil.

Visit: <http://romania.dzogchen.nl/> to leave a permanent mark at the Gar.

Thank you so much for your generosity, and we hope to see you all at Merigar East.

With warm regards,
Your Merigar East Gakyil



Events at Merigar East

Losar celebrations and tree planting
March 4–6 in the Gar

Vajra Dance course, Six Spaces of Samanthabadra
led by Rita Renzi
March 11–13 in Bucharest

Guru Dragpur practice retreat

March 18–20 at the Gar

Yantra Yoga course

led by Zsolt Somogyvari
March 18 – 20 in Oradea

Mandarava chudlen practice retreat

led by Nina Robinson
May 14–22 at the Gar

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Summer Retreat
June 10–16 at the Gar

Ganapujas for the full moon and dark moon held at the Gar start at 19:00 EET



Photo: A. Carp

Croatia

We wanted to inform everybody that we have formed a Gakyil for the first time in Croatia.

Blue: Boris Turnsek
dhakkini@gmail.com
Red: Ines Dosen inesd97@gmail.com
Yellow: Danica Mirkovic-Vejvoda
dan.mirkovic@gmail.com

We are having a retreat with Oliver Leick on the topic of Secret Rushen 18–20 March in Zagreb. Everybody is welcome. For more info contact us by e-mail.

Czech Republic

The Czech Dzogchen Community would like to announce the upcoming retreats, courses and events organized in spring and summer 2011.

Losar celebration in the New Town Hall in Prague

March 5
The Dzogchen Community is organizing it as public event, the goal is fundraising for ASIA to help in Tibet. This time

with Tibetan monks from Gamden Monastery (Tibetan Dance, Mandala making), a musical called Bardo and much more.

Kunye Massage Level I (1st part)

with Aldo Oneto
March 20–26 in Prague
registration for the course here:
<http://bit.ly/gBRyaN>

Yantra Yoga for beginners

with Fijalka Turzikova
April 1 – 3 in Prague

Vajra Dance – Six Spaces of Samanthabadra

with Margit Martinu
April 9–11 in Phendeling

Jnana Dhakini Thugthig

with Enzo Terzano
May 12–15 in Phendeling

Kunye Massage Level I (2nd part)

with Aldo Oneto
August 26–September 1 in Phendeling

Vajra brothers and sisters from abroad are very welcome. Sometimes the capacity of the courses is limited, so please contact blue@dzogchen.cz in advance, if you wish to participate.



Public Yantra Yoga retreat in Brno, January 29–30, with Fijalka Turzikova.



Dance of the Song of the Vajra retreat in Brno, February 3–6, with Rita Renzi.

MerigarEast



Hungary



Prima Mai supervised the Three Vajra Dance course with Monika Alakatos in Budapest, Hungary, January 21–23.



The Song of Vajra Dance course with Zoltan Cser supervised by Prima Mai in Budapest, Jan. 25–30.

Latvia

Yantra Yoga First Level course
with Zhenya Rud
April 8–13, 2011 in Riga

Programme:

8–10 April: Open course YY 1st level:
Tsigjong, Lungsang, Pranayama
“Rhythmic breathing”

11–13 April: Course YY 1st level for advanced:
Pranayama and Yantras Tsadul, Pranayamas 1st–2nd group
More information regarding exact time, place, registration procedure, accommodation and recommended offering will follow soon.

Contacts:

Artur Geisari

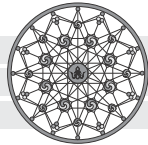
mob: +371 297491 01

a.geisari@gmail.com

Padmaling, Riga

<http://dzogchen.lv>

KunsangarNorth



The Sun of Dharma at Kunsangar North

Mikael Kazaryan

In January 2011 at Kunsangar North (Russia) Khyentse Yeshe gave extensive and clear instructions on Semde and Longde Teachings. Over Kunsangar, almost used to parting with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the Sun of Dzogchen Teaching rose again. This Sun, shining with infinite wisdom, was Khyentse Yeshe, perfectly showing the profound meaning of the spiritual name given to him by His Holiness Sakya Trizin – Jamyang Chökyi Nyima. Chökyi Nyima is translated as “the Sun of Dharma”. Indeed, on the last day of the Teaching the warm rays of the sun shone through all the windows (a rare and wonderful event considering the cold severe Russian winter) - an auspicious sign of the revival of the Transmission of the Dzogchen Teachings at Kunsangar North. The Sun of Dharma – Khyentse Yeshe Rinpoche showed incredible spiritual generosity, bestowing in sequence two Teachings from the Longsal series.

The first one – “The Upadesha of Introduction to the State of Ati” – is an essential Upadesha that precisely and clearly describes the key points of the Four Contemplations of Semde. After opening the Teaching with direct introduction to the State of Ati through three types of transmission (direct, symbolic and oral), the Teacher started giving commentaries on the root text consistently, removing all doubts and confusion in the minds of the students. All the retreat corresponded perfectly to the First Statement of Garab Dorje – “to discover



Photo: D. Ibragimov

one’s own primordial state”. In the presence of the blessing flow of liberating instructions from the Teacher it happened simply and spontaneously.

The unique style of Khyentse Yeshe’s explanations allow the student to get into the state of primordial knowledge and understand the essence of the Four Contemplations of Semde without any effort. Applying skillful means in instructing the students, the Teacher prepared the flow of their minds for the Longde Teaching.

The second Teaching was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s commentary on the text “The Root Upadesha on the Vajra Bridge of Longde” named “The Bright Moon”. Commenting on this profound and comprehensive text, the Teacher disclosed the real meaning of the Four Da, identifying the most essential and key points of the View, Meditation, Behavior and Fruit of Longde. Simple and illustrative examples, distinctive of Khyentse Yeshe’s

style, easily deepened the understanding which arose spontaneously in the hearts of the happy students. In this way Knowledge of Garab Dorje’s Second Statement, “not to remain in doubt”, was perfectly transmitted. The atmosphere of happiness and joy

was everywhere – we couldn’t believe that we were so fortunate to receive such a profound Teaching.

The Teaching was divided into morning and evening sessions. Igor Berkhin, experienced Santi

Khyentse Yeshe on Kunsangar North

At the end of his teachings on “Introduction to the State of Ati” in January 2011 at Kunsangar North in Moscow, Russia, Khyentse Yeshe spoke about the unique situation of the Gar. The following is an excerpt from his talk.

I think it was a nice opportunity and everything was perfect and I’m very happy because we succeeded in organising something in a simple way without losing too much effort on organisation, but understanding that if we have an opportunity then we try to do our best always. Normally we have very much

ideas of belonging, we have the idea “I belong to this, to that” and so on. But as the Dzogchen Community we are slowly-slowly trying to go beyond this, learning to go beyond names. Today we still have the idea of names but tomorrow we will not have the possibility for names. So it becomes an important training for us to understand how we can collaborate beyond names. Also not only in the field of lings and gars of the Dzogchen Community, but in all that connects with the principle of Vajrayana. Right now this place is a unique opportunity for us because in other lings and gars we did not succeed very much in having a kind of program connected with other Vajrayana groups. Here, an effort

Maha Sangha instructor, assisted the Teacher in all ways, translating his Teachings and leading the practices of the evening sessions.

After each session, students who were eager to communicate with Khyentse Yeshe, surrounded him and asked questions. The Teacher listened very attentively to every question, looking intensely at each student. Sometimes the answer took about 15–20 minutes – the Teacher would explain for as long as was necessary for the student to reach understanding of the deep personal instructions, with great patience. Only after being sure that the student had understood would the Teacher stop his explanations. Such generosity and attention to the students made them very happy and joyful.

During his stay at Kunsangar North the Teacher paid attention on all aspects of the life and functioning of the Gar. Having clarified all the principles of the

>> continued on the following page

has been made to be balanced from all points of view. And anyway this aspect of being Kunsangar North does not change the aspect of being Kunphenling, because we don’t change the nature of things. Instead we learn and we have this great opportunity. Then if we have time and opportunity I will also meet other groups so we’ll have a more stable relationship, eliminate worries and understand that we are normal. At least I try to be as normal as possible. When we meet each other, we understand that we have a common interest and we respect each other, and then we have something. And when we have something we also have the opportunity to do retreat, to become more active. ✿

Kunsangar North

>> continued from previous page

existence of Kunsangar North, he gave a lot of instructions about the direction of its future development. The Teacher also indicated the great importance

of maintaining the connection with other existing local Buddhist Communities. He gathered all their representatives at the Gar and suggested that they should all have close collaboration, giv-

ing them an opportunity to invite Teachers of their traditions and organize their retreats at Kunsangar North.

The Sun of Dharma has shone at Kunsangar North! Khyentse Yeshe, our precious Teacher, your grateful students hope that you will spread the Light of Dharma in Russia again and again! ©

Kunsangar South

Kunsangar South is completing the Gonpa

The new Gonpa at Kunsangar South is now completely protected from the rain. The windows and doors that can be easily opened during the big retreats to provide the possibility for people to see Rinpoche are already installed.

Due to the weather conditions all construction works have been suspended. To continue we need not only better weather but also additional funding. We had to postpone several expensive projects such as connecting to the

electric grid, the heating system and plastering and decorating the Gonpa. We are currently reviewing the budget and prioritizing expenses.

Completing the Gonpa for the arrival of the Master is our priority task and we will do our best. Additional funds are really needed now as well as ideas for the financial survival of the Gar. We want to organize a kind of fund of ideas, then choose the most realistic ones and implement them in order to take care of the Gar and other projects organized by our precious Teacher.

During the wonderful retreats with Khyentse Yeshe at Kunsangar North we clarified current issues on construction, financing, retreats with Rinpoche and generally on collaboration and the development of the Gar.

Khyentse Yeshe also mentioned that he cannot announce the exact dates of his Russian and Ukrainian tour yet. We will wait until the situation with Rinpoche's health becomes more stable. Nevertheless Khyentse Yeshe said that the tour will take place. Also this summer he is planning a retreat in Crimea after the big retreat with Rinpoche. This will be a wonderful opportunity to receive Teach-

ing, to practice and to enjoy a great time together with the Teacher, and we invite everybody to Kunsangar South! Details will be announced later.

In Crimea at the moment it is frosty and the weather is really winter-like, but we were ready and all goes well. Now the Gar has three inhabitants who protect it, practice and enjoy harmonious winter evenings. The New Year holidays passed successfully and we were 'gifted' with a dog that surprisingly recently gave birth to a puppy. We have made a little doghouse and provided this family with comfortable conditions. ©

Ukraine

Kharkiv DC "Karmaling" has elected a new Gakyil.

Common mailbox:

gakylkharkov@gmail.com

Blue Gakyil: Nataly Plotnichenko

utpalamag@gmail.com

Red Gakyil: Dmitry Kiktenko

shroamer@gmail.com

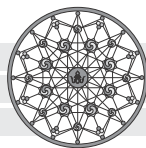
Red Gakyil: Oleg Kovalenko

hudozhnik.o@gmail.com

www.karmaling.com.ua

Namgyalgar

and Pacific Rim



**Namgyalgar
Dzogchen Community in
Australia**

PO Box 214 Central Tilba

NSW 2546

Phone/Fax: 61 02 4473 7668

secretary@dzogchen.org.au

www.dzogchen.org.au

The Arrival of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to Australia

Julian King-Salter

It seemed unbelievable that our precious Master could really travel all the way to Australia so soon after his serious health problems. Yet he was completely determined and on Monday February 21st, 2011, he was due to arrive at Brisbane International airport at 4:30 in the afternoon, after a stopover in Auckland, New Zealand.

On the same day, we were beginning to set up the venue for our Sunshine Coast retreat with Rinpoche – the last time we will need to hire the Ewen Maddock Dam centre for that purpose, we hope (lovely though it is!)

As we drove south towards the nearby Brisbane airport, we saw gathering black tropical storm clouds ahead, sheet lightning flashing. Torrential rain began, traffic slowed – would we be late?

Others were already gathered at the Customs exit – our Master too was delayed by the storm, allowing us to meet and greet each other, gathered from near and far on this vast continent.

At last the doors opened and there was Rinpoche in his wheelchair. As soon as he saw us, his face burst into a radiant smile, and in a flurry of moments he and Rosa were festooned with flowers of welcome! It was hard to believe



Photo: J. L. Giblin

that here was someone who had been gravely ill in hospital only weeks before.

Between the Arrival terminal and the car park, was a walkway with a high roof but no sides –

torrents of rain gusting almost horizontal through the space. Someone ran to get to get umbrellas, came back with a couple of plastic ponchos, one blue, one yellow, and between squalls we

made our way across to the waiting car.

The drive back up to Caloundra was lit by forks of lightning – there were 80 strikes recorded in Brisbane centre in one hour! He had arrived!

Our retreat was scheduled to begin only two days later, with very little recovery time after the journey. Even so the Master let us know that he would arrive to teach from 4 pm on the 23rd. He announced no topic, saying there had been no time to prepare. He simply said that he would teach spontaneously, whatever came to him on the day. No names, no titles, teaching from the Essence.

From the moment he strode into the Gonpa (no wheelchair now) his radiance and vitality filled the Gonpa; and then 20 or so practitioners and newcomers applauded his welcome back to Australia! ©

Namgyalgar's Joyful Update

The Namgyalgar Gakyil are happy to announce that settlement for the purchase of the land for Namgyalgar North was completed on December 24, 2010. A wonderful addition to the worldwide mandala! We look forward to welcoming you to the new Gar in the future!

Photos of the property can be found here: <http://picasaweb.google.com/julian.kingsalter/NamgyalgarNorth?authkey=Gv1sRgCNLjrvVg-mLgQE#>

This is a wonderful new addition to the worldwide community, and will be therefore available to all to share and utilise, and to this end we invite donations either one off or ongoing, to help us cover the purchase payment.



Rinpoche surveys the new land.

Photo: R. Friend

We now owe the bank \$750,000 USD and are continuing to raise funds to meet the ongoing repayments and also

additional monies for further developments. We already have private monthly donations of \$900 USD per month, and

we are hoping to increase private contributions to assist Namgyalgar's loan repayments of \$4,500 USD per month. This is easily achievable if many people give just a small amount on a regular basis.

Tax Deductible Donations (Australia only) should be made to the following account:

Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar Building Fund Trust
BSB 062 000
Account No 1055 3035

Please email treasurer@dzogchen.org.au so you can be sent a receipt for tax deductions.

People outside Australia are invited to make a donation into the following account:

Commonwealth Bank of Australia
Account Name: Namgyalgar North
BSB 062652
Account No 1012 1517
BIC/ SWIFT Code: CTBAU2S

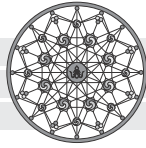
For any queries about an international money transfer, please contact Catherine Horner treasurer@dzogchen.org.au

For information about upcoming retreats in Australia: www.dzogchen.org.au

Namgyalgar Gakyil

©

Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



Forty Degrees and Still Dancing

by Jan Cornell
Sydney Blue

Sydney Dzogchen Community is dancing again on a brand new lightweight mat recently purchased from China. Record summer temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) did not deter the dedicated crew who turned up to our Saturday afternoon sessions eager to try out the mat and put their collective memory to the test. For some of us it's been a while, and if our moves were rusty at first, with the help of dance pro Tony Laurent and the Prima Mai (on DVD) we were able to sort out our memory lapses in no time. Even Mark Farrington jetted in from London to join us and led a sortie to Bondi Beach for an après Om A Hum swim. It was wonderful to see him again and hear news of his travels following Rinpoche around the globe to so many different Dzogchen communities, including Isla Margarita which we all dream of visiting one day soon.

In other news; the pre holiday period was busy with fundraising dinners, which we hope to keep happening throughout 2011. Our Monday night collective practice sessions are well at-



Sydney Community Full Moon Picnic.

tended with South Sydney and Central Sydney groups meeting on special days. In April (8, 9, 10) we will run an advanced Yantra Yoga weekend with Emily Coleing and later in the year the Six Spaces of Samantabdra Vajra Dance course with Lynne Geary. But for now the excitement is building as we await the arrival of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on Aussie

shores. For those of us unable to follow our master around the world, following him around Australia is a little more realistic and doubly exciting as we welcome him for the first time to our new Gar, Namgyalgar North. We hope you will come soon for a squiz (look) and visit us in Sydney on the way. There's always lots of Dzogchen (and other) things to do! ©



Passages

Born: Ian and Shakti Samantha would like to introduce you to our new daughter, Suraiya Grace Draaisma. She was born at 11:49 am on February 26, 2011 in New South Wales, Australia, after somewhat of a journey out of the womb!! At 6 days old she is growing strong and slowly adjusting to the world around her. She is as you can imagine the cutest thing we have ever seen and we are in Love !!!!

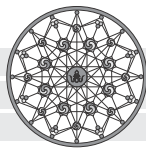
Blessings and infinite love,
Proudly parents,
Shakti and Ian

New Zealand



Yantra Yoga Retreat held in Auckland New Zealand the weekend of February 18-20, 2011 with Patrizia Pearl.

Tsegyalgar East



DCA Tsegyalgar East

PO Box 479
Conway, MA 01341 USA

Phone: 413 369 4153

Fax & Bookstore: 413 369 4473

secretary@tsegyalgar.org

www.www.tsegyalgareast.org

Calendar of Events

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu World Wide Transmission

March 18

11 PM ET at your nearest local center
The World Wide Transmission is available by live open webcast here.

Newcomers need to attend a preparatory explanation with a senior practitioner at a local center.

Visit Tsegyalgar.org to find a center near you!

March 17-21

Public Talk, Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Training and World Wide Transmission Explanation

with Jakob Winkler

March 17th: Free Public Talk on Dzogchen Transmission
7-8:30 pm in Northampton, MA at 16 Center St. Suite 527

March 18th: View, Meditation and Behavior of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen according to SMS
10 am-Noon & 4 pm-6 pm at the Tsegyalgar East Gonpa, Conway

March 18th: Free Explanation of World Wide Transmission
9:00 pm at the Tsegyalgar East Gonpa, Conway

March 19th-20th: Guruyoga and Semdzins, the gate to Dzogchen according to the Base of Santi Maha Sangha
10 am-1 pm & 4 pm-6:30 pm at the Tsegyalgar East Gonpa, Conway

Cost:
Free for public talk and WWT Explanation
\$ 180 for whole SMS Training (with membership discounts)
\$ 30 for individual sessions (no membership discounts)

Please contact secretary@tsegyalgar.org to pre-register and matthews108@gmail.com for more information or call (413) 369-4153

April 8-10

Dream Yoga with Michael Katz

Friday night 7:30-9:00 pm
Sat from 10 am-12:30 pm and 2:00 pm-5:00 pm
Sunday 10 am-12:30 pm
Venue: First Churches 129 Main Street, Northampton, MA, 01060
Please enter through the side door on Center Street. Northampton Center Bring: Sunglasses, writing materials, pen and paper
Price: \$ 120 for the workshop/discount with Dzogchen Community memberships
Contact: secretary@tsegyalgar.org

Apr 30-May 1

Vajra Breathing with Jim Valby

Ongoing Programs

Yantra Yoga

Monday
On going Yantra Yoga evenings in Northampton
Upstairs Studio, upstairs from Fitzwillie's
5:30 pm-7:30 pm

Wednesday

Yantra Yoga Group Practice: Breathing and Slow Yantra Yoga for the Less Active

Vajra Dance

Weekly practice Wednesday evenings at 7 pm
Sunday mornings 11 am

Collective Practice

9:30 am at Tsegyalgar East Gonpa determined by participants

For more information for any programs related to Tsegyalgar East please contact: 413 369 4153
secretary@tsegyalgar.org

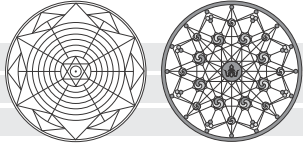


Guru Dragphur Retreat with Jim Valby January 29-30, 2011 at Tsegyalgar East.



Mandarava Retreat with Nina Robinson from February 6-10, 2011 at Tsegyalgar East.

Tsegyalgar East



Passages

Died: Randall Franklin Titchener-Smith
Samten Wangchuk
August 4, 1948–January 24, 2011

Our long time sangha member Randall Titchener-Smith passed away peacefully during Khenpo Sonam Rinpoche's visit to his apartment on Monday January 24th.

Many of us know him or have seen him working on the sound system at the Temple. Randall was very dedicated in his mission to put in place a recording system that could capture the very important teachings of our Lama Khenpo Sonam Rinpoche, HH Phakchok Rinpoche and other visiting Lamas who have bestowed their blessings through the spoken word. He was instrumental in laying down this foundational archive for students of Dharma to access today and in the future.

One of Randall's gifts was building relationships both within our sangha and the broader community. True to Randall's nature, he insisted that both his long term friends Ed and Keith, accompany him to various empowerments and teachings, to 'let the dharma rub off on them'.

He made the effort to develop a relationship with the owner of a neighbourhood dog who had been chained up most of its life, eventually convincing this fellow to let him 'take the dog off his hands'. His real intention was to give 'Linda' a better life. Life with Linda gave Randall the opportunity to express his deep love and caring nature, something that was not always easy for him to display with humans. She really was the love of his life. After many years of tramping through High Park on a daily basis, Randall arranged Linda's passing with Dharma



protocol. Shortly after her death he learned of his own terminal illness.

One of Randall's joys of this past year was his road trip across Manitoulin Island with his longtime friend Eric. He was delighted to be in the open air, under the stars, enjoying the freedom of movement after months of weekly medical appointments.

Randall was a whiz in the kitchen concocting up brews of all sorts. One of these really excited him as it required having champagne for breakfast. He had an eclectic taste in music. He was a professional recording engineer and he shared his love of music with friends in his original compilations of tunes they just had to hear.

With the same integrity and diligence that he approached anything of importance, Randall arranged for his medical, physical and spiritual care during this past year. As he wished, Randall died at home in the presence of his root guru Sonam Rinpoche performing the ritual of Phowa. Even through his death process Randall is teaching us how to approach Dharma practice. ©

New York City
Kundrolling
2011 Spring Calendar

The New York Dzogchen Community is pleased to present our 2011 Spring calendar of events. Join us at Kundrolling for Dzogchen meditation practices, Yantra Yoga, and much more.

Worldwide Transmission
Friday, March 18, 11 pm
Explanation, 8.30 pm

Practice Exploration:
Shine & Lagthong
led by Mariano Gil
March Mondays, 6.30 pm

Weekend Retreat:
Guru Yoga of the White Ah
with Jim Valby
March 11–13

The Guru Yoga of the White Ah Weekend Retreat is a wonderful opportunity to learn the appropriate mantras, mudras, and melodies correctly.

Friday Night at Kundrolling:
A Presentation of the Lukhang Temple Paintings
with Tibetologist, Jakob Winkler
March 25, 7 pm

Weekend Retreat:
Santi Maha Sangha
with Jakob Winkler
March 26–27

Practice Exploration:
Ganapuja Tunes
led by Adriano Clemente
April Mondays, 7 pm

Weekend Retreat:
Yantra Yoga for Beginners
with Naomi Zeitz
April 15–17

Friday Night at Kundrolling:
Auction Fundraiser
April 29, 7 pm

Practice Exploration:
Odzer Chenma
led by Michela Martello
May Mondays, 7 pm

Weekend Retreat: Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
with Kyu
May 27–30

Friday Night at Kundrolling:
ASIA Presentation
Friday, May 20, 7 pm

Practice Exploration: Six Lokas
led by
June Mondays, 7 pm

Weekend Retreat: Chöd
with Costantino Albini
TBD

Ongoing Courses & Practices:

Intermediate Yantra Yoga
led by Naomi Zeitz
Thursdays at 6.30 pm

Yantra Yoga Saturdays
Breathing & Deepening the Eight Movements (no transmission), March 19 2nd & 3rd Series of Yantras (no transmission), April 23
Breathing and Kumbhaka (transmission required), May 21
(10 am–12 pm & 2–4 pm)
\$ 12/session, \$ 60/complete Saturdays

Dreamwork and Lucidity Exploration
with Dr Michael Katz
Tuesdays, May 10 & 24, 31
and June 7 & 14 from 7–9 pm
\$ 20/session (members \$ 18)
\$ 72/complete course (members: \$ 64.80)

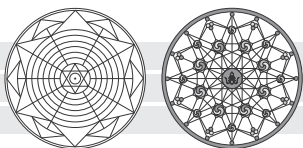
Dance of the Vajra Practice
Wednesdays at 6 pm
Transmission is required for the weekly practice.
For a general explanation, please see the December Weekend Retreats.

Kundrolling
The New York Dzogchen Community
151 West 30th Street (near 7th Avenue)
4th floor
New York City
212-564-1024
nydzogchencomm@gmail.com
www.nydzogchen.com



Dream Yoga Retreat with Michael Katz at Tibet House, NYC, a 4 part series on Nov. 9, 16 and Dec. 6, 13, 2010.

Tsegyalgar West



Tsegyalgar West
Baja California Sur, Mexico

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

Vajra Dance Retreats
with Anna Neyman
The Vajra Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas
March 24-25-26.
The Vajra Dance of the Three Vajras
April 1-2-3.

Retreat costs: 100 USD (each course)
with discounts for members
160 USD (for both courses) with discounts for members

Yantra Yoga Retreats
with Patrizia Pearl
Yantra Yoga course for beginners: Preliminaries, Tsigjong, Lungsang
April 8-9-10.

Yantra Yoga course more advanced. Tsadul, First Series
April 22-23-24.
Retreat costs: 100 USD (each course)
with discounts for members
160 USD (for both courses) with discounts for members

Lodgings per day:
Shared casita (2 pers) 30 USD
Casita all to yourself 50 USD
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Food: 15 USD/day
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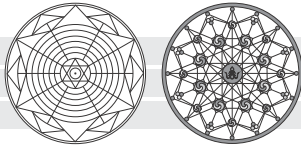


Mandarava Retreat with Nina Robinson at Tsegyalgar West, Baja Mexico.



SMS Retreat with Jakob Winkler from December 27 2010–January 2 2011.

Tsegyalgar West



Berkeley

Yantra Yoga, Third Series

taught by Paula Barry

April 8–10

Participants will review Pranayamas and Yantras of the First and Second Series and learn the Yantras for the Third Series as well as the Secret Breathing for Directing the Prana into the Central Channel.

Friday, April 8 6:30–9 pm

Saturday, April 9 10 am–1 pm &

4 pm–7 pm

Sunday, April 10 10 am–1 pm

To register please contact

logan.mikyo@gmail.com

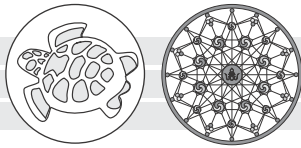


Intermediate Yantra Yoga with Oni McKinstry at Dondrubling, Berkeley, California from January 21–23, 2011.



Dzogchen Without Buddhism Weekend with Jim Valby at Dondrubling, Berkeley California, February 12–13, 2011.

Tashigar Norte



Tashigar North /Finca Tashigar

Prolongación de la Calle Bolívar

Valle de Pedro González

Isla de Margarita

Tel: 0058 0295 2580332

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www.tashigarnorte.org

... And a Hard Sphere of Limitations and Judgements Becomes a Source of Nectar – Course of Seventh Lojong in Tashigar Norte, January 2011

by Paola Civile

If you know somebody as a reserved, almost cold, seriously concentrated in his music and private practice and time in time socially, person, you cannot imagine the surprise that can manifest from his soul, when the circumstances permit it.

Steven Landsberg gave us his time and effort generously trying to explain the practice of the Seventh Lojong which our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has transmitted several times.

The Seven Special Mind Trainings are from Dzogchen Upadesha and we find them in the study program of the of the Base level Santi Maha Sangha, the system of study and practice in nine levels devoted to achieve and deepen the knowledge of Dzogchen. They are considered part of the preliminary practices of Dzogchen and pursue the aim to calm body, speech and mind.

The object of the course was presented in its context of all seven lojongs, and also in the context of SMS study, and of



course, the bigger context of Dzogchen Teaching. In particular, each session concentrated also on one of the six special mind trainings, and it looks so concrete – the relationship between the technique and the spiritual meaning of all.

The exercises were very gradual wherein we worked with some physical exercises and the rhythmic breathing before the practice of the 7th Lojong and we feel we have understood and experimented something useful.

Also Steven, as the Gakyil requested of him, explained the practice of Marme Monlam, the invocation of the Lamp, and all the words and meanings help us to understand the interdependence between all the methods.

In December, the Gompa (and village) of Tashigar Norte suffered a terrible natural disaster, at the same time that Rinpoche entered the hospital of Sao Paulo; it was so hard for those living here. Slowly, first of all, we reclaimed the mandala, happy to discover it did not suffer any damage; after which, all activities returned to normal. And now,



Yantra Yoga course on the Lunsang with Marisa Alonso at Tashigar North, Margarita Island, February 26 and 27, 2011.

with this course, in which 25 people – ancient and new – participated, we feel that the GOMPA, in its real meaning of attitude and behaviour, is working and living with energy and love. And, as is said in the invocation of the lamp, may all, Master, Brothers and Sisters of Vajra “realize the state of unification with the Glorious Heruka” which is not other than our primordial state!!! ©

Costa Rica

Yantra Yoga in Dekyitling

with Marisa Alonso

May 3–5, 2011

Open course to all focused on the 8 movements

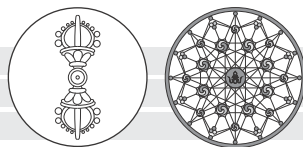
May 13–15, 2011

Tsandul and Yantras of the first and second groups for people with at least a little experience in the 8 movements.

More information contact:

glorianabrenes@yahoo.com

Tashigarsur



Tashigar South

Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar

Calle pública S/N

Tanti 5155

Pcia. de Córdoba

Argentina

Phone & Fax: 0054- 3541- 498 356

tashigarsur@gmail.com



Breathing Course with Fabio Andrico at Tashigar South February 2011.



Breathing and Kumbhaka with Fabio Andrico, assisted by Carolina Mingolla and Naomi Zeitz February 2011 at Tashigar South.

Reflections

26

Hindo-Tibetan
Cosmology

Elio Guarisco

Hindo-Tibetan cosmology is not the study of the origin and development of a separate universe as a phenomena occurring externally and unrelated to the individual. It is not a science that just brings together observational astrology and observation of particle physics. Hindu-Tibetan cosmology addresses the question of why we are in this world, particularly how the individual is related to the so-called 'external' world or universe. Thus, Hindu-Tibetan cosmology addresses a spiritual and existential question.

The question is basically one of how spirit or mind is related to matter. Matter, in this regard, is viewed as a compound of five elements, namely, earth, water, fire, air and space. These elements are descriptive of basic properties or functions of matter. Earth stands for solidity, water for cohesion, fire for ripening, air for movement. Space is a special element, in that it exists within and outside matter and yet it is not matter, but simply the absence of matter itself. Space is what provides room for the existence and growth of everything. These five elements are the 'building blocks' of both the body of the individual as well as the universe that surrounds the individual.

With this as preamble, we can say that within Hindu-Tibetan cosmology we can find four different trends: the numerically definite cosmology of the Hinayana, the cosmology of infinite pure realms of the Mahayana, the Cosmology of the Kalachakra Tantra and the non-cosmology of Dzogchen or Great Perfection. (There is also an ancient form of cosmology of the Bon, the pre-Buddhist shamanic religion of Tibet, but this will not be discussed here). Although they represent different approaches, these various cosmological systems do not contradict one another; instead they are inclusive of one another, like Chinese boxes. Each corresponds to the level of spiritual maturity of the individual for whom it is intended, and thus one is built upon the foundation of the other, the higher transcending rather than negating the lower.

The Numerically Definite
Cosmology of the Hinayana

In the numerically definite cosmology, the genesis of beings and their environment, take place in relation to four ages, each comprised of millions of years. These four ages are known as the age of vacuity, the age of arising of the world, the age of abiding of the universe and the age of destruction of the world, each having twenty intermediate ages. Eighty of these are called a cosmic age.

When the age of vacuity came to an end, wind arose from the

ten directions. The convergence and powerful compression of these winds created a configuration of wind in the shape of a cross - solid, extremely hard, and indestructible. In the space above the configuration of wind, a thick cloud resembling a golden yoke formed. From this cloud, rain fell continuously over a long period of time. The size of the raindrops ranged from large raindrops to raindrops as big as the diameter of the shaft of a chariot. This deluge produced an immense mass of water, supported by the wind. At the center of this great ocean, a thousand lotuses appeared, indicating a fortunate era.

The churning of this great mass of water by the winds produced a golden foundation that appeared above the water, while rain continued to fall uninterrupted. As a result, a great ocean that contained various elements formed above the golden disk. Intense churning of the ocean by winds arising from various directions gradually developed the three grades of the elements - superior, medium and base. The superior elements became the central, massive Mount Meru, which is made of four precious substances. The elements of medium qualities formed the seven ranges of golden mountains while the base elements formed the four continents, surrounded by eight neighboring islands and many other islands, as well as the outer rim of iron mountains.

This idea of the configuration of the world with Mount Meru as the axis-mundi, and four continents in the four directions, reflects the way people of the Indian subcontinent viewed the world. In this simple picture of the world, Mount Meru appears to be an idealization of Mount Kailash, a mountain sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists. The continents appear to include various regions in south Asia. Below the surface of the world the hell realm and the realm of the hungry ghosts are mainly located. Above the earth, the realm of the gods and that of the jealous gods are located. With the animal realm found on the earth inhabited by humans and the ocean, the full picture of the six realms of existence unfolds. This occurred during the age of formation that has twenty intermediate ages, one was required for the formation of the environment and nineteen for the genesis of beings.

If we multiply this 'world', comprising Mount Meru and the four continents etc., by a thousand times a thousand times a thousand, adding up to one billion, we have the so-called 'great thousand third-order thousand world system. This is the finite universe as envisioned by the numerically definite cosmology.

Beings, who come to dwell in this universe once it has formed, have always existed. Because of their instinctive unawareness of their basic nature, they continually wander, taking birth in the cycles of existence. Since certain higher realms of existence do not

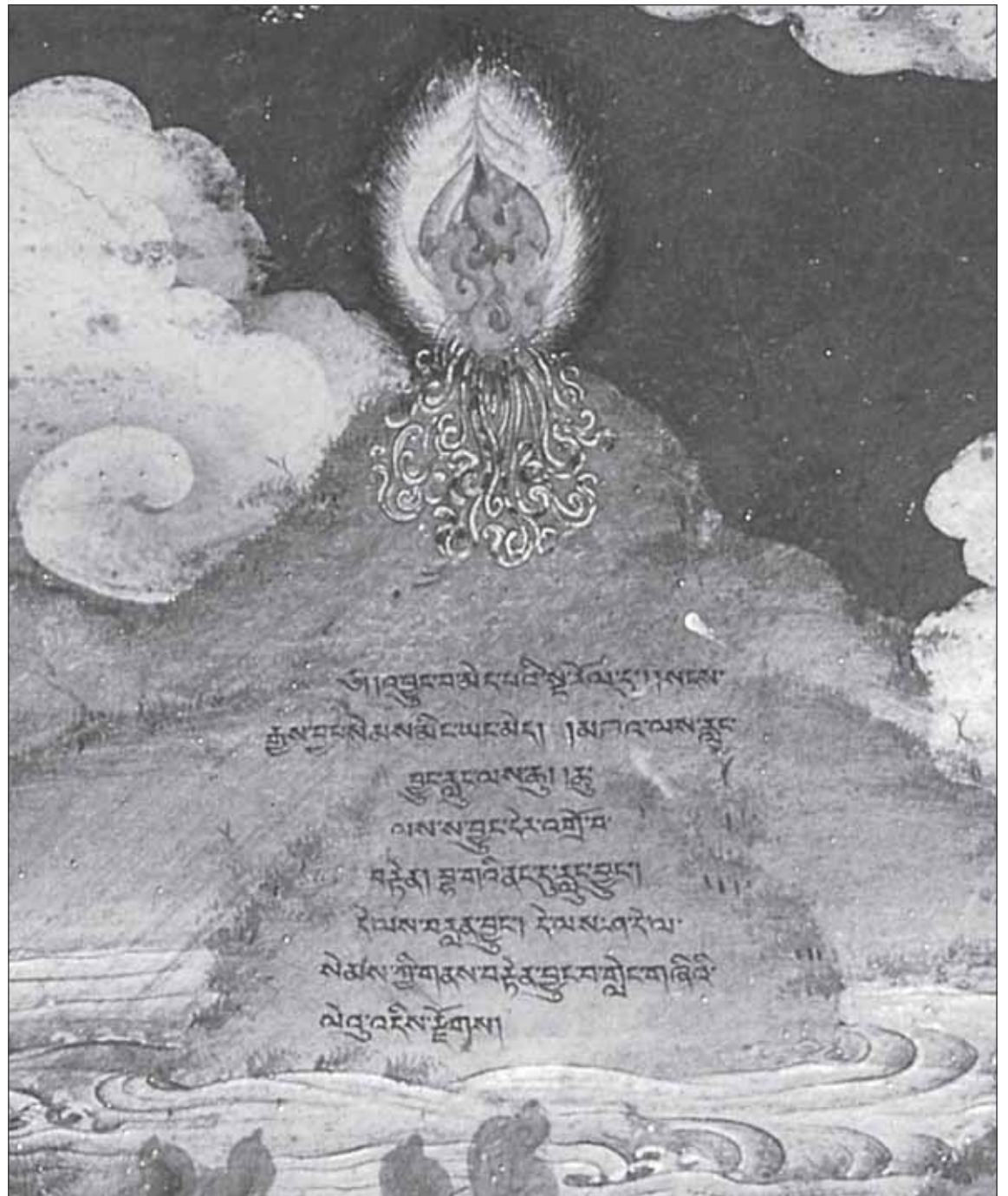


Photo: J. Winkler

disappear during the age of the destruction of the universe, beings start to diffuse from there, and through a process of degeneration of their emotions, life etc., they spread to repopulate the newly created universe.

'The various worlds arise from the evolution of beings'.

This statement summarizes the sense of the numerically definite cosmology of the Hinayana. The universe is not created by a God, or by a transformation of a primordial substance (*prakriti*). It is the result of the collective force of evolutionary actions of sentient beings; therefore all beings contribute to the creation of the world. Evolutionary actions in this context refer to the cumulative potential that remains in the mind-stream after the performance of any physical, verbal, or mental action that is based on the underlying impulse of clinging to the idea of a self. This cumulative potential is able to produce specific results within the continuity of the subjective experience of each individual being, as well as producing the environment that beings inhabit. Thus beings are related to their environment by causality, because the world is the result of the evolutionary actions of beings.

This creative relationship between mind and matter is the crucial point in the creation of the world. As we have seen, 'winds' or energies are considered to be the potent agents of creation. These energies arise from the

cumulative potential of the past actions of beings that are about to take birth. Thus, these energies form the bridge between mind and matter; they are the miraculous elixir that can create matter. Exactly how the cumulative potential of action becomes energies capable of contributing to creation constitutes the great

mystery of how mind can create matter.


In this system of cosmology, as the world is created by evolutionary actions which, for ordinary persons, are based on the concept of self and thus conditioned, the world is seen as a world of impure phenomena. It

>> continued on the following page

b o d h i

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Dzogchen Cosmology, from the Lukhang.**Below the Tibetan text explains the origination of the elements:**

byung ba med pa'i snga rol du !
 sangs rgyas byang sems ming yang med !
 mkha' las rlung byung rlung las chu !
 chu las sa byung der 'gro ba brten !
 bha gai nang du rlung byung !
 de las brlan byung !
 de las sha de la sems kyi gnas brten !

Prior the existence of the (five) elements
 even the name of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas didn't exist
 from space arose wind, from wind water and
 from water earth, which became a support for sentient beings
 Wind arose within the womb
 from that manifests moisture
 and from that flesh, the abiding place of the mind.

>> continued from previous page

is an arena for the experience of suffering which begins the moment one takes birth. It is a prison from which one needs to escape. Therefore, this cosmological system reflects the ongoing drama of cyclic existence and the possibility of salvation from that existence. This is the so-called perfect-peace or nirvana, sought by Hinayana followers by virtue of their spiritual path of renunciation.

The Mahayana Cosmology of Infinite Pure Realms

In the Mahayana cosmology of infinite pure realms, the world is not created solely by the evolutionary actions of beings. Oceans of realms are said to have arisen and still arise from the relationship between those to be guided to enlightenment (sentient beings), and enlightened guides. That is, between the compassion of realized beings and the inclinations of various sentient beings.

Since sentient beings are unaware of the pure nature of their mind's expanse of reality, characters and inclinations begin to manifest and through craving, beings form a connection to the realms of existence. In response to this, inconceivable configurations of realms manifest spontaneously and effortlessly.

Thus, it is through the convergence of the enlightened beings' compassion, the aspirations of bodhisattvas and the evolutionary actions of beings, and natural law that oceans of realms appear. In these realms, a great cosmic place unfolds: enlightened beings continuously teach, demonstrate supernatural feats, so that all beings may realize their true nature of mind. In this amazingly wonderful scenery, the universe is Akhanishta or 'unsurpassed realm': a place made of pristine wisdom, without directions or divisions, and not localized anywhere. In this place, the expression of complete enjoyment of all enlightened beings dwells in the form of Vairochana, the illuminator. His very body contains

hundreds of billions of realms. Moreover, within each atom of these, there are other infinite realms, beyond the range of the rational mind. And within the body of Vairochana infinite other forms manifest, and each form appears as though it were pervading all the oceans of infinite forms and realms that exist by virtue of a great miracle that transcends the sphere of ordinary experience. An absolute beginning of the universe is not posited, for the universe is conceived as a cycle without commencement that repeats itself until all beings are liberated. Beings see the worlds in which they live according to their level of inner purity, but the realms in themselves are pure from the very beginning.

Our world is just one of the many world systems contained in a minute particle in the hand of Vairochana. The way our world is described, with Mount Meru, the four continents etc., is not much different from the numerically definite cosmology mentioned above. What differs is the greater scope of this vision of the universe. In stark contrast to the Hinayanists' intention to escape the world, here highly realized beings actually contribute to the creation of new worlds in which they may fulfill their heroic vow to liberate all beings. Moreover, beyond ours, there are infinite world systems

Beyond our world, lie an infinity of realms, which appear in all conceivable as well inconceivable size and shapes; some resting on lotuses and jewels, others supported solely by the blessing of enlightened beings. These worlds suffuse the ten directions, million of worlds interpenetrate one another, and each world contains billions of others. A billion or more worlds are contained in an atom of each world. This is a cosmology whose monumental scope serves to open the mind to the unlimited, unfathomable, non-rational aspects of the universe. As a result the mind breaks out of the cage of fixed concepts of space and time and enters the open dimension of myriad

worlds, without beginning or end.

All that is described by this cosmology is contained within



Kalachakra, Mongolia 1800–1899.

Collection of National Gallery in Prague

the expanse of reality: the ultimate condition that contains everything that exists. This expanse never changes, is neither empty nor filled: all world systems arise, dwell and are destroyed in that. In a true sense nothing has ever existed beside this expanse, yet, in relative terms, infinite realms arise as phantom apparitions based on interdependent connections, and serve the purpose to awaken unenlightened beings who inhabit them and grasp them as ultimately true, to realize that that expanse of reality is also their true enlightened nature.

The Kalachakra Tantra Cosmology

The peculiarity of the cosmology based on the Kalachakra tantra is that of setting forth correspondences between the outer, inner and secret 'worlds'. Our particular world system is explained as Mount Meru and six concentric rings of continents encircled by different mountains, which are given names dissimilar from those of the numerically definite cosmology. Also the details of the continents etc., indicate a more advanced knowledge of our planet.

The various parts of this 'outer' world are set in correspon-

The Non-Cosmology of Atiyoga or Radiant Great Perfection

Atiyoga or Dzogchen is primarily concerned with the mechanism of the arising of conditioned existence and the way to become free from it, not about the details of cosmology for these are understood to vary according to the subjective perception of different beings. The Dzogchen presentation of the genesis is unique in that it defines the universe as primordial purity: non-existent from the first moment it is perceived.

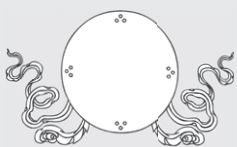
In Dzogchen, the primary creative cause of the universe is neither the evolutionary actions of beings, nor the interrelation between the compassion of enlightened beings and sentient beings, but the primordial condition of the individual. The cycle of existence of beings and the world are simply the manifestation of that state. When manifestations arise from the ground of being and are not recognized as such, the delusion of cyclic existence begins. Failure to recognize the primordially pure nature of one's state leads to ignorance. Thus, what manifests is just one's Self, yet how that manifestation is perceived depends on one's habitual tendencies.

But how do manifestations occur? The primordial state, in its creative energy aspects always bursts forth its manifestation. This first occurs through five lights, that, when unrecognized as one's nature, are seen as concrete and thus the dream like personal perception of cyclic life occurs. Therefore, the manifestation of one's primordial state, unrecognized, can be the cause of the deception of the world and beings; when recognized they become the ground for liberation. The manifestation of one's primordial state is not actually deception, but as a white conch shell is seen as yellow when one has a serious jaundice, in the same way, due to non-recognition, the manifestation can serve as a cause for deception.

If in the first moment the perception of an object or a thought arise, one does not apprehend them as something else, but recognizes them as one's inner radiance, the movement of constructive thoughts ceases by itself, and realization dawns on oneself. This is reawakening into one's primordial enlightened state. ©

dence with parts of the human body, and the movements of the astral bodies, discussed with great detail and precision, which parallel the movement of the energies within the subtle channels of the human body. Moreover, these two 'levels', outer and inner, are also set in correspondence with the 'secret world' of the yogins' meditative praxis.

This cosmology also discusses four different kinds of 'four eras'; the first related to the Buddhist teaching, the second to the kings of the mythic land of Shambhala, the third related to or world system, and the fourth era of the planets entering vacuity. Of particular importance is the four eras of the kings of Shambhala, which closely describe the situation of our world. These four eras last 21,600 years, 5400 years each. The last of these four is known as the age of conflict whose final 1800 years sees the domination of barbarians in the world, who are then conquered by the Hidden Omnipresent One. Some say it will ascend to the throne in 2327.

THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International
 Dzogchen Community of
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How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Migmar Tsering

My story about how I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu goes back to when I was seventeen and living and working at Zangdogpalri monastery, in Kongpo, east Tibet. This is the monastery of Dudjom Rinpoche, but during the cultural revolution the original monastery had been destroyed and so Chod nyid Rinpoche and his wife, Kha-dro Dechen Rinpoche, the daughter of Dudjom Rinpoche, started to rebuild it. Chod nyid Rinpoche had already employed a lot of builders and carpenters for the work and in that period he was looking for painters to decorate the monastery. Since he was my mother's master, she decided to send me there to paint.

I worked for several years at that monastery in the same way I work here at Merigar. There the work was all karma yoga. I used to work in the mornings and in the evenings painting and designing and I would follow teachings in the afternoon although I wasn't a monk. In fact there was only one monk there. All the other people were lay people. I lived and worked there from the age of seventeen until I was twenty-three.

While I was there, that was the first time I painted a Ugyan kha-dro nor lhaibumpa, a vase that brings wealth. On the outside it is decorated with flowers and wish-fulfilling gems, fire jewels and eight symbol of benefit. At the beginning of my time at the monastery, I used to do these types of things. Then I would get a bit bored from time to time and I would go along with the builders and give them a hand so I learned a bit about building. Then at a certain moment I also used to go with the carpenters. So I learned a bit about all these things including design. All through the summer I would work at the monastery then in the winter we would have to go home because it was too cold to work there during the winter. A few people would stay there to do *nondro* retreats but the rest of us would leave.

From the age of thirteen I had already studied painting on furniture with a Master called Gyantsnlags who was very famous for his designs on furniture. Then when I

was fifteen I changed teachers and studied house decoration with another master and then a couple of years later got involved in the rebuilding of the monastery with Chod nyid Rinpoche.

When I was about twenty I studied *thangka* painting for a while with a very famous master called Kunsang Namgye, and then continued with his disciple, Pembala, who was very good. In the winter I studied with them and then would return to the monastery in the summer.

When we had finished the work at that monastery, I went to several other monasteries to paint and create designs, usually in the same area, sometimes a bit closer to Lhasa.

Then when I was twenty-seven my mother introduced me to Phuntsog Wangmo [the daughter of Rinpoche's sister, Sonam Palmo, and currently resident Tibetan doctor at Tsegvalgar East] who was a friend of hers. At the time she was living with her family in Lhasa. Phuntsog told me that they needed some help with the decorative painting of Galenteng Monastery in Derge, Sichuan Province. [This is one of the oldest and most important Tibetan cultural centres in east Tibet and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has a special connection with it because he spent part of his childhood there studying with his uncle, Khyentse Chökyi Wangchuk, who was the abbot at that time. Rinpoche had asked ASIA and the Merigar Dzogchen community to participate in helping to preserve and develop Galenteng.] One of the jobs that needed doing there was the renovation of Khyentse's house, the *la-brang*. That was in 1997. So I went to Galenteng. There were also a lot of builders and carpenters there who were working on the Master's house. I spent four months working inside the house painting and decorating the house and also the furniture.

When I finished the work at Galenteng, Phuntsog Wangmo asked me if I would be able to cook for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who would be coming there shortly.

I had already taken some cooking lessons in Lhasa in the wintertime when there



wasn't much to do and knew how to cook quite well and there was nobody at Galenteng who knew how to cook very well.

The Master arrived with a group of Italian people from the Dzogchen Community who were travelling with him. He had come to visit Galenteng to start up the procedure for the building of a hospital by ASIA in Kangthog. He had already been to Qinghai to inaugurate the Tibetan school that had been built there.

So I cooked for the Master and also accompanied him all around the area of Kham during the different trips that he made. I remember in particular that we went to Khroru Gumpa, which had invited him, but there were also many other monasteries that we visited that had invited him. We would travel to most of these places on horseback sometimes for several hours because there were no roads. When we travelled back to Lhasa I continued to cook for Rinpoche.

Then my mother asked Rinpoche if it would be possible for him to take me out of Tibet and he immediately replied that it would. That period in Lhasa the situation wasn't very easy and politically things were quite difficult. It was also almost impossible to find any work such as painting or *thangka* painting in Tibetan style and so there was no way to develop anything there and not much future. Leaving Tibet would mean a possibility to develop and grow. So when Rinpoche asked me if I wanted to go with him I was very happy to say yes. And from that moment I have followed him.

Shortly after, we travelled with Rinpoche to Nepal where he gave a retreat for a few days in Kathmandu. There was an Italian consulate in Nepal and Rinpoche thought it would be easy for me to get a visa to Italy, but when we got there, the consulate had closed down.

Then I spent some time with the Master travelling to many places of Buddhist pilgrimage in India such as Bodhgaya and Varanasi in the east and then Dharamsala where Rinpoche met His Holiness the Dalai Lama and gave a talk at the Tibetan Children's Village. We also spent a few days in Himachal Pradesh at the sacred lake of Tso Pema. There were many people from the Dzogchen Community who also travelled to these places by bus at the same time that we were there.

After these weeks of pilgrimage I accompanied Rinpoche to another retreat at Tibet House in New Delhi. Unfortunately I wasn't able to get a visa to Italy in Delhi and they sent me to the Italian embassy in Calcutta. But even there, I didn't manage to get a visa so I finally went back to Tibet on my own. Rinpoche said that Merigar would prepare and send an invitation to me to visit and work in Italy and that I should wait for this to arrive and then re-apply for the visa.

Back in Lhasa, Phuntsog contacted me on behalf of ASIA because I had already worked with them at Khangtog. They asked me to go to Kham to help with the work of decorating the hospital. I stayed there working for two or three months.

Finally one day I received a phone call from Enrico Dell'Angelo, who was working in Lhasa at the time. He told me that the invitation letter had arrived at his office in Lhasa and that I should go there straight away and get it. When I got to Enrico's office, he told me that I should go to Beijing for the visa, that he had a contact there, Tsering Thar, where I could stay and he gave me the name and number.

I arrived in Beijing and on my second day there I went to the Italian embassy with all sorts of documents. Enrico had already contacted them and made an appointment for me so when I got there I gave them the documents and they said I should come back on Friday. When I went back the visa for work was waiting for me. That day Andrea Dell'Angelo arrived from Tibet and we travelled back to Italy together. My first evening in Rome I stayed at Costantino Albini's house and then he brought me up to Merigar where I have lived ever since. ©

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