

# THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community



**Upcoming Retreats** with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

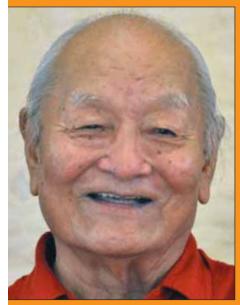


Photo: G. Ho

## 2011

France September 14–18 Visit Laerabling

Paris September 23–25 **Teachings in Paris** 

#### Spain

Barcelona Sept. 30–Oct. 6 **Rigdzin Changchub Dorje's** precious Terma teaching "Lama Zabdon Nyingthig"

Tenerife October 14-23Tibetan Culture Event

October 28–30 Thödgal 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



Photo: P. Fassol

# Yangti Retreat at Merigar West

Jacqueline Gens

etween Tsegyalgar East located in rural Massachusetts US where I currently live and Merigar West in rural Tuscany, Italy there isn't much difference during the month of August. Rolls of hay adorn new mown fields, wild flowers proliferate, and the intense heat ripens tomatoes and other fruits. Perhaps this is true of most lings and gars - at least all over the Northern hemisphere where the last days of summer are waning as the season is poised to change. But, of course, we are not speaking here of the ripening of mundane fruits, lovely as they are, but of the ripening of the perfect moment, the perfect teacher, the perfect place, the perfect students in order to receive the perfect teachings. That is what tradition dictates. I am not sure about the "perfect students" but we all have that intention. At Merigar West, the jewel of our international community, it is easy to aspire to those higher

motivations of behavior in an atmosphere of civility and beauty before our Master's presence.

For those attending the special Yangti teachings taught by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Merigar West, a different kind of ripening seemed to manifest. Rinpoche taught on his Longsal text, KLONG GSAL DUNG RAS MAN NGAG YANG TI'I NYAMS KHRID originating from dreams he received at Tsegyalgar East in dark retreat almost 20 years ago to the date, in order to offer this special teaching to his students with precise clarifications of the methods utilized in the original Yangti text, DUNG MTSHO RAS PA by Tungtso Repa. As these are extremely secret teachings bound by the seal of samaya, what can one say except that we are always the beneficiaries of an extraordinary lineage of our Master's Longsal teachings. His boundless generosity for

the enrichment of his students by providing ever more essential methods which each offer complete paths unto themselves is a unique hallmark of his Longsal teachings. The special Yangti teachings that the approximately1400 participants received at Merigar West were indeed marvelous.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu remains one of the most prolific masters in modern times whose scholarship and teaching is monumental in scope, with a visionary capacity unrivaled among his peers. In the future when he will be a legend, countless beings will achieve realization through his transmission. And to boot, now in the present one can always reach him by email. He is totally accessible and with us at all times both in the transmission and via these marvelous electronic communications systems or in the aftermath of each teaching >> continued on page 26

#### Argentina

January 20–24 **Tashigar South Retreat** 

February 3-7 Tashigar South, 2nd Retreat

February 22 Tibetan Losar

### Australia

March 16-22 Namgyalgar North Retreat

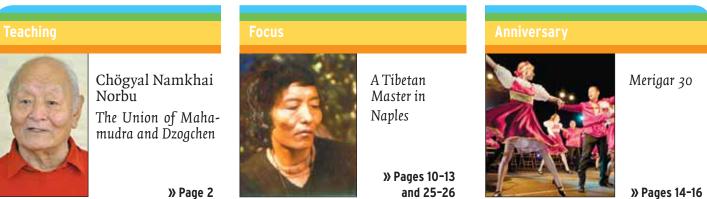
April 6-12Namgyalgar South Retreat

Asia April 27 Leave for Singapore

May 10 Leave for Hong Kong

May 16-20 Hong Kong or Macao Retreat

>> continued on page 26



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

# The Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen, by the Great Kagyudpa Master Araga Karma Chagme

MA

Excerpt from the third day of the retreat given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 26th June 2011, Merigar West, Italy

#### Purification

f we don't purify when we have done something wrong, even if we only did a slightly negative action L that has a very small potentiality of negative karma it nevertheless becomes heavy because, not having been purified, it associates with other thoughts and increasing more and more it becomes very serious. This is just like the example I told you about the monks and nuns, when they have taken complete vows. Even if they have only done one of the ninety different kinds of least serious negative actions, if they do something wrong every day of course they can accumulate many of them. This doesn't mean that when you become a monk or nun you never do anything wrong. It is normal and it can also create many problems. But they then do purification twice a month. They not only purify their bad actions, they also repair any damage they have done. Doing that twice a month, they are purified. Of course monks and nuns need to do that with the Sangha. Maybe you have seen this in a film. His Holiness the Dalai Lama does this ceremony every fifteen days. There are two small groups of monks: one group is the elder group and the other is the younger group. They pay respect to each other and then they do purification of each other. Even if you have accumulated only one small bad deed and you don't purify it, after one month, or two months or a little longer time, that one of the ninety least bad deeds becomes just like one of the thirteen heavier ones. Now it is more difficult to purify. That is an example showing that we need to purify everything frequently and immediately. This is not only for monks and nuns in the Vinaya. This is an example for everybody.

Also in Vajrayana teaching, as well as in the Dzogchen teaching, we know very well we have Samaya commitments, particularly commitments of paying respect between sisters and brothers of Vajra. This is one of the heavier problems we have in the Dzogchen community. Many people ignore this and when they are angry they no longer remember that this is their Vajra brother or sister. For example, when husband and wife or engaged couples fall in love they are very happy and they come together to a retreat. Even when receiving teachings they sit very close together, in Italian it is called 'appiccicato', clinging to each other. As soon as they feel tired of each other or if they are jealous of each other, these husbands and wives say, "Now we have so many problems". Then they begin to fight each other. Even though what they are fighting about is not so important, they don't remember they are Vajra brothers and sisters. This is very, very bad. Our relationships in the normal human condition are maybe relatively a little important if we are paying respect to each other, but they are still in a very worldly situation. For example, some husbands and wives remain very faithful. If for instance the wife has died and the husband is still alive, he takes flowers to the cemetery every Sunday and talks to her somewhere. This is all we can do in the worldly situation; we couldn't go beyond that. He believes he is talking to his wife there in the cemetery. Her body was put there and then he is talking to her: "Oh! I am very sorry and I still have these feelings ..." but no-one is listening there.

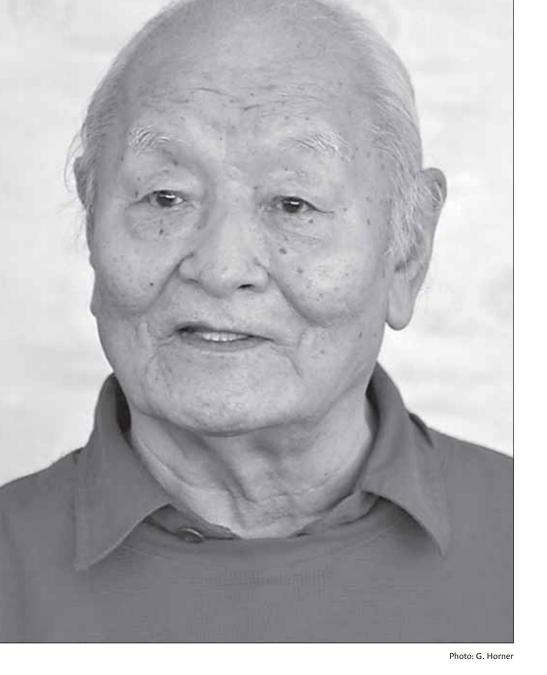
I am not saying that husbands and wives should never separate. If you can't get on well together, of course you can also separate paying respect to each other. But it is not necessary to fight and create so many tensions and problems. Your relationship of Vajra is much more important than money, house and everything. You know very well that when you die you won't be able to take even one euro or dollar with you. What could you do then, if you are too attached to those things? They are relative; they are not so very important. What is very important is your relationship of the Vajra. We really must be careful of that. I have always found that is the most difficult thing.

Some people say, "I have a good intention and a good relationship and I keep my Samaya between my teacher and me." There is no difference between your relationship with your teacher and your relationship with your brothers and sisters of Vajra. Try to remember to read the Marmei Monlam (mar mei smon lam), Invocation of the Butter Lamp. It says how important this relationship of Vajra is. For that reason, if we did something wrong we should purify it. For example, we do Ganapuja regularly. Each time we do the One Hundred Syllable mantra in the Ganapuja we purify our samaya. purification and after we have done it, to be present in that way, keeping that in mind.

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If we have not purified, even if only one day passes, it continues to develop. Why does it develop? Because we are always thinking and judging. Mind is always associated with those kinds of problems and they develop continually.

If we purify concretely with our intention, there does not exist anything we couldn't purify. For example, if there are very dirty things on our clothes or something, if we wash them with water we can clean them. In the same way, we can eliminate and purify all our thoughts and these kinds of tensions. If we did something wrong, we know it is very bad, it is not good. Now we want to liberate it immediately. For example, maybe you ate some kind of poison by mistake; you thought it was some kind of food but later on you discovered it was poison. If you were to discover you had eaten poison you couldn't remain indifferent. You would try to do something straight away to purify it otherwise you would die. In the same way, if we did something wrong, then we need to purify it immediately. If you notice you did something wrong and you are very sorry and want to purify, if you purify in it that way you will a find it easier to do.



But the relationship of Vajra lasts until we have total realisation; nobody can ever break that. If we create problems they become obstacles for our realization. So we must have the presence of that; we must keep it in mind. However some people did something wrong and they think, "I did something wrong but now I did a Ganapuja and it is purified." But if you had some tensions with someone and you are still keeping those tensions in you and you believe you have purified them, what does that mean really? What you should purify is your tensions. If you observe well you will see that your different kinds of tensions have no importance whatever. They are only a kind of invention of your mind. You are following your mind and your mind is developing more and more tensions. Observe everything very well and you will see there does not exist anything.

When you have any of these kinds of tensions you never feel good in any moment; you never enjoy your life.

If you have some tensions, if you don't like someone, eliminate your tensions! When you have freed your tensions there is no longer any problem and you become friends. Now you can enjoy your life. So it is very important to do But sometimes we have pride. We think, "Oh! I can do this easily." When we are conditioned by pride it is not so easy to purify, even if you are doing purification.

Or if you are thinking that even if you do purification you won't be able purify, if you don't have confidence in your purification, also in this case it is not so easy to purify.

In particular, if you think, "I have done something wrong so I want to purify and from today I don't want to apply and commit this kind of thing anymore," and you take a commitment by yourself, even if you do this kind of purification thinking, "There is no problem, I can just purify it", that means you are not considering your negative action is very serious. Also in this case, even though you are doing purification it is very difficult to purify. Also Buddha said that.

Transcribed by K. McDonald, edited by N. Robinson

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Ma

at the General Assembly at Merigar West August 25, 2011

First of all, we are the Dzogchen Community.

#### Working with Circumstances

R inancial things are very relative. This is not the principle. When we have to present something legal, we must work with circumstances and do legal activity. This means working with circumstances. We live on this earth, in this relative condition, so we must do this. But we must not forget we are the Dzogchen Community. I always say the Dzogchen Community is not just any organization. Also we live on this earth, we are aware, we respect laws and everything, but we do not forget who we are.

We are called the Dzogchen Community. First of all we are the Dzogchen Community and we have presented ourselves as a cultural association. What is culture? The main point of this culture is the Teaching of the Dzogchen Community. What do we teach and apply? We are not thinking day and night about how to make money. This is relative. So whatever is necessary relatively, we should do. We should not forget this principle.

For example, I want to thank the Gakyil and all the people in charge because they have been working very hard this year. I have already said this. We have had collaboration from all over the world and with whom do you do this collaboration, with only one organization? We collaborate like this because we are all in the world and there is the Dzogchen Community. Everyone knows the principle of this Teaching. That is why we decided to have this 30 Year Anniversary Celebration and not only for Merigar, but for the entire worldwide Dzogchen Community.

Day after day, Rosa and I, Rosa who is always with me – it could look like I was not involved because above all I do not use a telephone – but remember we were in communication and collaborating day by day with members of the Gakyil. Whatever I asked them to do they tried to do. They tried to implement what we asked with sacrifice and this is how we succeeded; not because there was one organization here and everyone was interested and came here.

I always say Merigar is important because I started the Dzogchen Community here. The Gakyil system started here. And this is the place from which everything developed. This is why we did the anniversary for everybody, not only for Merigar.

Remember there is a Chinese teaching of Confucius that says: First of all there is oneself, then it develops to the family and then to the region and then to the nation. Also

# The Importance of the Shang Shung Institute

the Dzogchen Teachings go in this way. We above all try to discover our condition and then try to collaborate with all our dimensions. From Merigar everything developed and Merigar became a kind of example.

So I try to do my best so that all that is done in Merigar is done perfectly. I am not saying that everything is perfect yet. There are many things I think can be improved. And about the budget I also have some ideas; maybe you used some money that was not so necessary, but this can always be improved. I am talking about the condition of Merigar as it is. Even though I am not living at Merigar, Rosa and Fabio are close to me, and they know very well how I work and what I do. I am not always here but I am always where there is the Dzogchen Community all over the world and certainly I do not forget Merigar as the first Gar.

It is better not to forget these words of Confucius. So maybe you should do some communication and discover things, but not in a bureaucratic style. And we should not go outside our principle. This is all I want to say, nothing else.

#### **Gakyil Commitment**

In general if someone works for some time on the Gakyil I always thank him or her, but it is strange that after one year people are so sick and tired of it. I have been working for 30 years, we just celebrated the anniversary, and I am not sick of it yet.

Being in the Gakyil means doing a service for the Community, for the people who are interested in the Teachings. And for sure one has to do one's best and this everyone can do. Also the people from the "old" Gakyil should still be involved - just because they are from the old Gakyil should not mean they are not involved anymore. I always ask the members of the old Gakyil to collaborate for just one year with the new Gakyil; otherwise the new Gakyil does not know what to do.

The people on the Gakyil should work as if they were working in their own home. You did not come here to be a chief or a functionary. You have a responsibility. Someone might think the Community has money and they want to work and make money from the Community. If you want to do that you should go outside. The Community is not an association of rich people or a bank, for example. Look at the way we make money, we do it by working day by day and everyone should do this way, all the people in charge. If we have a family of 10 people everyone is responsible, not only 2 people. If the family does not have enough money for something to eat, it is a problem for everyone in the family, not only 1 or 2 people.

That is why I always say to try and see our Dzogchen Community as a family. I don't feel that only at Merigar, but for the whole Dzogchen Community we have been establishing on this globe. But if you cannot dedicate in this way at least you should dedicate in the place where you live.

#### Transcribed and edited by N. Zeitz

only at the Institute but also with the Community. Right from the beginning when we started with the very first retreat in Subiaco, from that time, behind this there was responsibility and the transmission and I couldn't leave it indifferently so we went ahead in that way and for years and years I have dedicated myself and worked.

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Closes the Thirtieth Anniversary Celebrations

At the end of the Thirtieth Anniversary Celebrations for Merigar, the festivities concluded at the Temple of Great Liberation at Merigar West in Tuscany, Italy. During the closing ceremony on July 19, 2011, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave the following message.

want to say thank you to everybody, all Dzogchen Community people, everywhere, and also to local people in the area. I am very happy about everybody's participation and I also want to say thank you to everybody because it is very important that we collaborate so that everything manifests in a positive way.

The aim of the Dzogchen Community is, you know very well, that everybody in this world becomes a little more aware and responsible in that way. We know how our human condition is – we have so many kinds of limitations, the limitations of the individual that we call ego and that develop in our country, in our family, in everything, in aspects of politics, of economics, even in the spiritual path. In the real sense that is the source of all problems.

For example, we say the Dzogchen Community. The Community doesn't mean a group of people in general. Community means people who have awareness and collaborate together, knowing what the main point is. We say Dzogchen Community. What is Dzogchen? It means our real nature. Everybody has their real nature and we are trying to understand that and trying to do our best. This is what is called Dzogchen Teaching and is what I have tried to teach for thirty years. Many people already have that kind of knowledge. When we have this knowledge it means that we go a little beyond our limitations.

Everybody always says we need peace and if there is no peace we cannot find happiness. But how can we have peace? There will only be peace when there is the evolution of the individual. What does evolution mean? Evolution means that we know how our condition is and how many different kinds of limitations we have relatively. If we are not conditioned by them, it means finally we are getting into our real nature. This is the principle of the Dzogchen teaching.

Dzogchen means our real nature and teaching is for discovering that and being in it. Anyone who is in this knowledge is in evolution. It is not like revolution, which means we are thinking and judging and making a programme. We think that there is something wrong, something negative that we have to change and think that revolution is the solution. In the real sense that is not the solution because 2500 years ago Buddha explained the teaching of the four noble truths. The root of the noble truths is cause and effect. When we have a problem it is an effect, not a cause. If we fight against it, we will never win. But if we are aware, we can learn that its cause exists and that there is a possibility to modify and change that. This knowledge is already the base of evolution. Even if only one person has that knowledge, gradually it will develop.

For example, when I arrived in Italy the first time, there was not a single person, not even a university professor, who knew what Dzogchen was. But if you observe today you can see how many people know about Dzogchen teaching in the Western world. This means that evolution has started and is going ahead. When I arrived I was alone, but today I am not. We are in time and time is going ahead. After 100 years probably not one of us will still be in this world. But if there is evolution it will go ahead until the end of our globe. This is something very important for generations and generations. We cannot only think of ourselves. We must also think about our families and about future generations. For this reason it is very important that we know and are in this knowledge. This is the reason I am very happy that you are collaborating and many people have made sacrifices and come here from far away. So I want to say thank you to everybody. And I am also very happy that people from the area around Arcidosso have been participating in our festival. They know that this is something useful and positive. This is very important for us. So I want to say thank you to everybody. And there is not much more to say. \*\*

Rinpoche spoke about the importance of the Shang Shung Institute during a little party held at Merigar on July 11 to thank Luigi Ottaviani, the outgoing director, for his dedication to the Institute over the last years.

want to thank you for more than eight years of commitment working for the Shang Shung Institute. It is something very important because the Institute is important for us. When we talk about the Community, its principle is things like practice and spirituality, but this is linked to Tibetan culture. For example, we have the teaching – all the tantras and all the texts are in Tibetan. This is one example. Then we know very well what the current situation is like in Tibet. So the Institute has become something very important in the Community and I am really grateful to those who have been involved in this, not only for what has been done but what will be done in the future. We must continue the Institute and the Dzogchen Community. If someone considers that the Institute is not at all important then nothing will go in the right way. So I really want to thank those who have dedicated themselves for many years.

Sometimes things are easy. Sometimes they are not. I know very well how the situation is in the Community, not

But every now and then people annoy me when they are not aware of what I am doing, of the sacrifices I am making, and they come out with all their egoistic ideals. They really annoy me. But even understanding the situation that we are in samsara, we all live in our limitations, it is all right to go ahead. And even though it is, at times, discouraging, we are not abandoning anything. Rather than abandoning I actually feel a bit stronger than before because I know the value and importance of the Community and that it should continue.

Transcribed and edited by L. Granger

Transcribed and edited by L. Granger

## The Story of Jamchog **Desmond Barry**

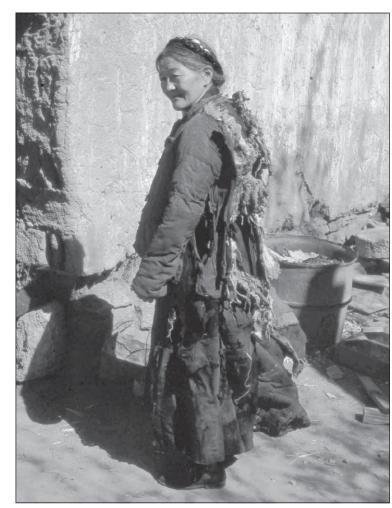
amyang Chodron was born in 1921 and died in 1985. Her extraordinary life broke all western stereotypes of Tibetan women. In the West, there is a tendency to project a kind of quietism and subservience that grows out of a romantic notion engendered in part by James Hilton in his book The Lost Horizon with its fantasy of Shangrila. It's been perpetuated by popular naïve fantasies that seek to present Tibetan culture as a proto-New Age paradise.

The culture has an extraordinarily sophisticated psychology of mind, body and energy but this does not detract from aspects of Tibetan culture and history, which are rather more prosaic and hard-edged and grounded in the mundane suffering common to all human experience. Jamyang Chodron's life embodied this cultural richness and complexity in her activities as poet, lover, as a resister of injustice, and as a Dzogchen practitioner.

She left a legacy of a large body of poetic works some of which have been translated by Iacobella Gaetani and Adriano Clemente, to whom I am indebted for their helping me to access to these invaluable materials. I am deeply indebted to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for granting me interviews to discuss his sister's life and for asking me to write her biography.

Never having met Jamyang Chodron, and the source material on her life being limited to her writings and interviews with those who met her, it has been necessary to consider whether her memory would be best served by a conventional non-fiction biography or as a novel based on her life story.

The late twentieth and early twenty-first century has seen a growth in nonfiction biographies increasingly dependent on writing techniques used by novelists. It has always been the case in writing biography, or autobiography, that the author chooses what to leave in or what to leave out. The approach used in the writing of this biography of Jamyang Chodron in progress has been to make a collage of Jamcho's own work, the information provided by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and imaginative reconstructions of some of the major incidents in Jamcho's life based on that information and the autobiographical poems left by Jamcho herself.



Jamchog wearing the clothes she had to repair for years while looking after the pigs.

What I propose to do in this brief presentation is to outline a number of incidents in her life and then finish with an imaginative meditation on her reunion with her brother and his family in which factual events are woven into a dramatic or poetic narrative.

Jamcho was born in Derghe in East Tibet in 1921. Derghe is a small kingdom on the border of Tibet and China, which had struggled to maintain its independence from both governments for hundreds of years and had been traditionally ruled by a king. The nineteen twenties are known as the Warlord Period in Chinese history. Armies of various ideologies were fighting among themselves to gain political power. The kingdom of Derghe was dominated militarily by the Chinese Nationalist Kuomintang, although the king still had nominal control.

Jamcho grew up in this political maelstrom. At an early age, she became a nun, and learned grammar, the traditional Tibetan sciences, Sanskrit and poetry from Kunu Lama. In addition she received teachings and initiations from Jamyang Dragpa. But at the age of sixteen, Jamcho gave up her robes. Not long after, she became the lover of Tse Wang Du dul, the king of Derghe. After the King's arranged marriage to a woman from another noble family, Jamcho continued her relationship with him in secret until discovered by the Queen Mother.

Photo courtesy of ChNN

father that she would deal with the situation. She waited until the barley crop was ripe on the land and then set fire to it.

When the minister demanded legal compensation, her argument was that the land was hers to do with as she pleased. The dispute was taken to court and Jamcho showed up with a pistol in her waistband and two young bodyguards armed with rifles. She litigated the case over two years when a compromise was reached that she should pay compensation for the crop but she was to take possession of the property.

Soon after this incident, she fell in love with an impoverished nobleman called Sichu Dorje. They had a child, a young daughter. A smallpox epidemic broke out in the region and her father acquired the means to vaccinate the family. The young child was overcome by the strength of the vaccine and died. This left Jamcho devastated. Any account of this loss would be inadequate but here is an extract from the biography in which I have tried to imagine a telling of the story:

box she transcribes the words that she has composed.

Invocation for my daughter who has gone beyond

#### 'A A Ha Sha Sa Ma

My beloved child who is beautifully wrapped

in an iridescent shroud of Padzalika weave.

You are now resting in peace. And relentless time has sent this hard message to me.

Even though the pollen of the dzampaka flower hasn't blown into my eyes, a luminous necklace of pearls has fallen from them

For as long as you are beyond this life I'll always hold you in my mind And I'll wish that in the next life, we'll be together again

She takes the child's body and lays it in the tiny coffin. She packs handfuls of salt around the lifeless form within the wooden box. She packs the salt around the body until the box is full, white and brown crystals, jagged and powdery, hiding the baby. She fits the lid to the tiny coffin and lifts it into the niche in the wall of the house. The words of the poem she has written are like a plaque high on the wall.

With the death of their daughter, Jamcho and Sichu Dorje ended their love relationship. Jamcho number of local villagers forced their way into the jail and released him. Pursued by the army, they escaped onto the grasslands and lived among the nomads for many months. They were finally captured on the banks of the Yangtse while Khyentse was practicing the rituals of the dead for Dzogchen Rinpoche who had been killed.

With Khyentse in jail, Jamcho was condemned to forced labour. She could however get messages to her teacher and take messages from him to those with whom he wished to communicate. He asked her to get a message to two other teachers who were in the same prison. The message was one phrase. Jamcho delivered the message. On the following morning, all three teachers were found dead in meditation position.

Her teacher, whom she had served loyally, and for whom she had endangered her life; and accepted imprisonment; had passed on. Jamcho served the rest of her sentence and on her release, she travelled to Lhasa to look for her family. When she arrived after a lot of hardship, she discovered that her father and one of her brothers had starved to death in prison; Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had found his way to Sikkim.

Jamcho was rearrested in Lhasa and spent years under house arrest. Cut off from her family



Jamchog second from left with her sisters and Jacobella Gaetani.

Photo courtesy of ChNN

decided to receive meditation again, she continued to write her teachings from her uncle Khy- poetry and to practice meditation. Much of this poetry is in the library of Merigar.

And such s the nature of these friendship meetings, Iacobella and I decided last night to work together to integrate this biography with Jamcho's poetic works in one collaborative volume.

Banned from the court, Jamcho's family was seen as an easy target by an unscrupulous minister. He offered to sell the family a piece of land. The money for the land was handed over but the minister refused to hand over the property. Outraged, Jamcho declared to her She sits at a table with pen and ink and parchment. She traces the loops and lines of the letters to spell out a last message to her child. She waits until each verse forms clearly in her mind and then commits it to paper. She has exhausted herself in her grief, her rage against the world, the hard brutal lesson of sickness and death that has taken her daughter away from her. She doesn't blame her protectors or the deities she has invoked for days. The turning of a relentless wheel has crushed the life from her frail daughter. Now, that she has the final words on paper, she takes the wooden box in which she will entomb the child's body. On the end of the entse Chokyi Wangchuk and to practice those teachings in retreat for a year.

Khyentse Rinpoche was her main teacher. He was a large man who had difficulty moving around a lot. He was renowned for leaving the monastery of which he was the head, and for spending his time in retreat. With the deterioration of the military and political situation in Derghe, Khyentse and many others were in danger. Jamcho's family, including the young Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, decided to leave for the relative safety of Central Tibet.

Khyentse didn't want to leave. Jamcho decided to remain with him to look after his day-to-day needs. Not long after, Khyentse was arrested. Jamcho and a

In 1970, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his wife, Rosa, had a son whom they named Yeshi. Yeshi was recognized by Sakya Trizin as the reincarnation of Jamcho's teacher, Khyentse Chokyi Wangchuk.

In Tibetan culture, and among Buddhists in the west who practice Vajrayana, the concept of reincarnation is an important one. Imagine now, in Tibet, Jamyang Chodron having devoted her young life to her teacher Khyentse Chokyi Wangchuk, having been present and helped him to pass from this world in a way that appears to be quite awesome for ordinary people, having spent time >> continued on the following page

## **Does Lightning** Strike Twice?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu teaches in London, September 11-12

#### **Dominic Kennedy**

oes lightning strike twice? September 10–12, saw Rinpoche return to give teachings at the Camden Centre in London following his warmly received teachings there in 2011. Arriving at Biggin Hill with Fabio on a private jet, Rinpoche beaming sunshine on an otherwise grey day was received by a small gathering of Community members and then whisked off to his temporary abode in Belsize Park.

The public talk which preceded the teachings was at one hour fifteen minutes short by Rinpoche's standards, but an extremely clear and precise exposition of Dzogchen in context. It was perfect and no further words could have made it more so. There was nothing more to be said.

The teachings were clear, precise, illuminating. As Rinpoche said, whenever he gives Dzogchen teachings he always gives a direct introduction, although this can be given in different ways. He expounded on how he had received a direct introduction from Changchub Dorje. After the formal initiation, Changchub Dorje actually gave the direct introduction by explanation. Yes, there are many ways in which Rinpoche gives a direct introduction. Doing the Guru Yoga and singing the Song of the Vajra together was as always very special and for many it was their first introduction to it.

There were some five-hundred people or more who attended the retreat, many of these were newcomers or those returning after receiving teachings in 2011. There were also a few old friends, including John Driver, Sanskritist and Tibetologist who first met Rinpoche in Sikkim in 1958 and who introduced Rinpoche to Prof Giuseppe Tucci and the rest as they say is history.

returned to Biggin Hill on a day suffused with early autumn sunshine, but clouds always threatening to produce a rainbow or two. Rinpoche's private jet soared through the sky, leaving us all suffused in the light he arrived with and wondering if lightning will strike a third time soon; will there be a triple rainbow? Wherever Rinpoche goes we will follow as far as we can and pray that he has continued good health for his enjoyment and for the continued spread of the precious Dzogchen teachings.

## "Evolution Not **Revolution**"

Gaynor O'Flynn

y recent Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche experience started in a flat in East London where members of the Dzogchen Community were meeting to organize the 2011 retreat. I was impressed by how well they worked together and how trusting, friendly and welcoming they were to a 'stranger'. My time spent on retreat with this great Dzogchen master explains why!

Though the Tibetan language, culture and practice can seem daunting, Rinpoche explained the core Dzogchen teaching with clarity, directness and awareness. He spoke of the many different Buddhist teachings, Hinayana, Mahayana, Vajrayana and Dzogchen: teachings for different human beings, with differing abilities at different times.

I learned that Dzogchen is about relaxing and realizing our own nature, a nature that is like a mirror, pristine through space and time, unblemished by the myriad of reflections that constantly appear and disappear there. In Dzogchen there is noth-

Photo: R. Portas

ing to renounce or transform. Through awareness of our mind we develop the clarity to work with the conditions we face in birth, life and death. Dzogchen is a 24/7 practice, any time, any place and anywhere!

Rinpoche explained the meaning of Guruyoga, the importance of an authentic teacher and the role transmission plays in realizing our innate nature. I learned that the symbol and sound A is the essence of these teachings and that all my teachers, teachings and transmissions are unified in this practice.

The retreat ended with a Ganapuja, seeing the Community coming together in body, speech and mind to practice, relax and enjoy life inspires me to do my best to help others!

But the greatest inspiration was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Watching his dedication to teaching us, the essence of these precious teachings there in this living master's energy, the sound of his voice and his perfect closing words, "Evolution not Revolution". ©



#### >> continued from previous page

in prison, and suffered with her family while always maintaining her devotion to her teacher and his teachings, imagine how she would have felt when her brother Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and sister in law Rosa, appeared in Lhasa, with a young boy who had been recognized as the reincarnation of that teacher with whom she had such a deep and experiential connection.

She has been waiting for this moment for almost thirty years: her beloved brother whom she calls Bhutan's Dharmaraja in her poetry, is due to arrive any moment in Lhasa. The last time she saw him she was as a young woman

smooth-skinned, tough-minded, hardened by sorrow. Now wrinkles on her face crease her tanned skin. Her plaited hair is grey. Her bones are wracked and arthritic but she can still haul pails of water from the well to the house. One hand is tight and painful from old tortures but they couldn't stop her writing the words of joy and pain, condemnation and accusation, love and devotion with which she filled her poetry.

She is no more that notorious horsewoman who burned the crops of those who thought to cheat her. Now, she's ridden out years of suffering. The joy of anticipation at seeing her brother

and the young form of that teacher to whom she dedicated her life brings an almost uncontainable joy. Here is her witnessing. Here is her evidence of life enduring beyond worldly suffering, even beyond death.

The whole of the street and the house and the courtyard is permeated with a sense of light and joy that isn't due to the sun in the sky. She senses a presence that fills the space around her even before she sees these bodily shapes whose shoes kick up the dust of a Lhasa street. Her brother has those same high cheekbones that she has. His dark eyes open onto the depths she shares with him in her naked and raw perception.

And this little boy, his body full of mischievous energy, voice calling, 'Pa-pá, Pa-pá,' with a presence there that she sees is timeless. This meeting in present time and space, she could never have anticipated during all those years in prison. Her tight and painful fingers grip her brother's strong and smooth hands. She turns and takes those of the child, her teacher come back from the great expanse. This is how she sees it.

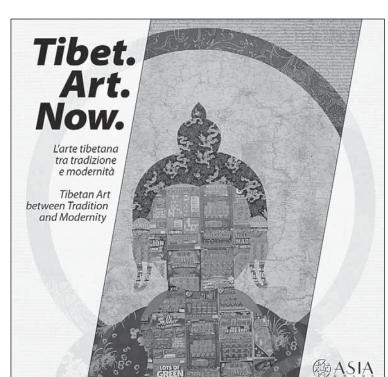
Hearing about Jamcho's life is like listening to an adventure story: it's a life full of emotional intrigue, spirited and wild acts of love and arson, poetry, meditation, suffering and imprisonment. And within it, is a story of an experience that transcends death: that of her devotion to her teacher Khyentse Chokyi Wangchuk which resulted in her imprisonment in Tibet, Khyentse's death in prison custody, and Jamcho's reunification with the young boy who had been recognized by Sakya Trizin Rinpoche to be the reincarnation of her teacher. In her poetry, and the stories of her life, this extraordinary woman has left a legacy of uncompromisingly truthful account of her life: a true inspiration.  $\bigcirc$ 

# Tibet. Art. Now.

Tibetan Art, Between Tradition and Modernity

n 2003, in Lhasa, twelve Tibetan painters founded the 📕 Gendün Chöpel Artists' Guild, the first gallery of Tibetan contemporary art. Since then, the gallery, named after one of the greatest Tibetan artists of all time, has become the focal point of a new artistic movement. Today, the gallery boasts twentyseven members, including internationally renowned artists such as Gade, Benchung and Tserang Dhondup. Simultaneously with the creation of this hub, in Europe, the United States and the Tibetan diaspora in India and Nepal, many other galleries have sprung up through which Tibetan artists have been able to show the world their art, their philosophy, their unique and personal way of living their traditions and assimilating them.

Standing in front of the Buddha made of stickers by Gonkar Gyatso, an artist who is well known internationally, you cannot help wondering what relationship the artists have with their Tibetan



112 X 103 cm; ASIA Collection

2008; painted on silk,

Lo Stupa della Bodhi,

Nyima Dhondug

ASIA Onlus

00185 Rome, Italy

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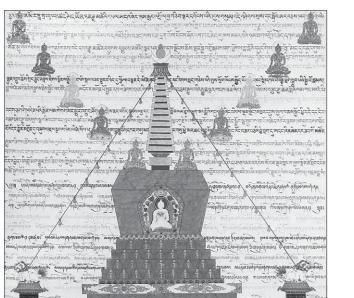
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Via San Martino della Battaglia 31

cient and contemporary sections respectively. The exhibition, held at the Nerucci Palace in Castel del Piano (Gr), presented ancient and contemporary periods of Tibetan art with as many as 77 works from around the world on loan in exceptional cases from not only private collectors but also prestigious and internationally acclaimed galleries of ancient and contemporary art such as Renzo



digitally modified by Losang Gyatso. The religious theme has been revised and reinterpreted in numerous works - the philosopher Santideva is depicted through the verses of his writing which is in a valuable painting on silk by Nyima Dhondup. The viewer cannot avoid being dazzled by the extraordinary brightness of the brocade that frames the head of the Buddha made of "scratchcards" by Tenzing Rigdol, nor can he or she not admire the triptych by Penba Wangdu, depicting the three poisons of Buddhism, in perfect conformity to tradition.

The religious theme, however, is not the only one followed by contemporary artists. There are not only Buddhas, bodhisattvas and great teachers, but also men with sunflower heads by Benchung, the moving portrait of an elderly man with his face furrowed by wrinkles by Tserang Dhondup, simple scenes of everyday life portrayed by Tseren Dolma and gouache sketches of the fruit of meditation by Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche. Association for International Solidarity in ASIA, Inc. ASIA, Post Office Box 124, Conway, MA 01341-0124 USA Phone: 413.369.4153, Fax: 413.369.4473 andreamnasca@yahoo.com www.asia-ngo.org/en/

4 USA 82131 Gauting ax: 413.369.4473 Tel.: 089 / 127 6 po.com info@asia-ngo. n/ www.asia-ngo.

Förderverein ASIA Deutschland e.V. c/o Gisela Auspurg Königswieser Str. 2 82131 Gauting Tel.: 089 / 127 630 32 info@asia-ngo.de www.asia-ngo.de



Besides being a great sports champion, Cadel Evans is also a champion in life, deeply committed to social work. In 2007 he chose to support the Tibetan people and their culture with ASIA through distance support of Tashi Norbu, a child in exile in Nepal.

## How did your fondness for Tibet come about?

My interest in Tibet started with a curiosity of different cultures and places through books, mostly 'Seven Years in Tibet'. That was followed by an increasing interest in Buddhism and its beliefs.

What values of Tibetan culture have you integrated into your life and your sporting activities? And what do you think are the Tibetan values that can and should be welcomed by the West?

Above all, the Buddist belief that we are altogether in this World, that we should respect and tolerate all living things.

How did you come into contact with ASIA? Why did you choose our organisation to support Tibet? My wife made contact with ASIA on my behalf. Thanks to her, I was introduced to what for me is a beautiful and personally very satisfying contribution to a small part of Tibetan culture. I have always had an interest in Tibetan culture, and thanks to what I have learned from that, I find my small contributions to ASIA personally very satisfying.

#### In 2009 you visited one of our projects and met little Tashi. How did you feel about that experience?

It really was a wonderful and very memorable experience. I would strongly recommend anyone to do the same if they have



this project at heart. Could you make an appeal to the general public to support education in Tibet?

Yes, especially after seeing the whole project first hand, it is a project I hold closely to my heart. Please, if anyone has the capacity to help and contribute to such a project, with just a little, you can make an enormous difference to a Tibetan child's life. And that in itself, as Buddhist teachings remind us, brings its own personal rewards.

In 2009 you were the world champion in road cycling. Now that you have won the most important victory of your career by winning the Tour de France, could you tell us what your secret is for maintaining your drive and determination?

Always work hard, especially in the difficult moments. There are many many others in the world who are suffering far more than I.

Thank you Cadel for sharing your experience with us!

#### You, too, can give your contribution to Tibetan children!

The Manasarovar Educational Foundation is going through a very difficult moment. The children are at risk of losing the school building where they have their lessons and this would mean a serious loss for the future of the new generations.

6



culture, with its roots, with the history and traditions of their homeland. In some cases, them seem almost slavishly to follow the ancient traditions that have made Tibetan artistic forms some of the finest in Asia. In other cases, however, they seem to depart from them altogether.

To bring this wonderful art to Western audiences, on the occasion of the celebrations for the thirtieth anniversary of Merigar, ASIA organized the exhibition "Tibet. Art. Now. Tibetan art between tradition and modernity", with Paola Vanzo and Philip Lunardo, who took care of the anFreschi – Oriental Art (London), Rossi & Rossi (London), and the Joshua Liner Gallery (New York).

In this exhibition majestic thangkas of Shakyamuni, refuge trees, mandalas and phurbas contrast with reinterpretations made by contemporary artists. Thus it is impossible not to observe the ancient statues of Buddha and compare them to the statue made of melting ice in the Kyichu River by Gade. Similarly, the viewer cannot help but contemplate the figure of Tara, traditionally portrayed in an ancient thangka, and then glance over, almost spontaneously, to the Tara that has been Given the diversity of styles and variety of techniques, it would be wrong to "give a label" to this artistic movement and would also be meaningless to search for a common thread for all the artists who are part of it. What is certain is that all these artists, in their individual styles, have had to face a process of cultural uprooting or hybridization.

Their individual experiences, the life of each artist, have led each of them to establish a more or less strong tie with Tibet itself. Many of them have always lived in Tibet and many others were born there but live abroad, and others were born in a foreign land to Tibetan families. Each artist has, therethe opportunity. Seeing and experiencing the area around the Manasarovar Accademy in Kathmandu, Nepal itself was an eye opening experience. Seeing the great work, and starting a personal friendship with the Accademy Pricinciple Tsultrim Sangmo was very pleasing. They really are doing a lot for a lot of children. Tashi? He is one of the sweetest children I have ever met.

Distance support is a fundamental tool for safeguarding Tibetan culture. We know that you have

fore, his own personal intimate way to experience its culture, its "Tibetaness". For this reason, these artists cannot and do not want to be recognized as Tibetan artists, but simply as artists.

## Learn more on www.asia-onlus.org

Support the Manasarovar School with a donation: by bank transfer to ASIA onlus IBAN: IT 27 M 01030 721600000 00389350; BIC/SWIFT: PASCITMMXXX Or by credit card on the website www.asia-onlus.org

Distance support a Tibetan child by contributing to his/her schooling and maintaining his/her cultural roots: You can start up distance adoption through our website **www.asia-onlus.org** Or by writing to **adozioni@asiaonlus.org** ©



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## Shang Shung Institute UK

An Interview with Judy Allan and Dominic Kennedy about Developments of SSIUK

The Mirror: Can you give us some background about SSI UK?

Judy Allan: The initiative and inspiration for the SSI in the UK came from Oliver Leick. [Director of SSI Austria.] Oliver had the idea of setting up a University of Tibetan Studies and went to Rinpoche. Oliver suggested a number of cities for this project and Rinpoche said, "London", without hesitation. So Oliver came to London two years ago with this ambitious undertaking. At the first meeting late in August 2009, about thirty people turned up. By early 2010 meetings were much smaller and we agreed to set ourselves up legally. A not-for profit charitable company was established by May that year.

The initial project was very ambitious, aimed at covering the traditional Five Fields of Knowledge: Language, Arts and Crafts, Logic and Philosophy, Medicine and Buddhist Studies. In reality, we realized that we had to start slowly. Rinpoche gave the first talk on 'Light of Kailash' at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) in June 2010. At the start of the academic year in September, we started doing courses and talks in collaboration with SOAS but maybe Dominic can say more about this.

Dominic Kennedy: Having studied at SOAS in the 1980s I had a few contacts there. I worked with one of these, Dr Ulrich Pagel – a former fellow student – for Rinpoche's 2010 'Light of Kailash' presentation held at SOAS as a collaborative event. In the meantime I had made contact with Dr Nathan Hill, who has been senior lecturer in Tibetan at SOAS since 2008. Nathan attended Rinpoche's teachings at the Camden Centre in London in 2010 as well as the Light of Kailash talk at SOAS. He was very keen to collaborate with Shang Shung UK on areas of mutual interest and has emerged as an extremely helpful link for us with SOAS. After the Light of Kailash talk, we got together and planned the 2011 "Bon, Shangshung and early Tibet" conference as a joint SOAS-Shang Shung venture to follow up the Light of Kailash presentation; this will be held at SOAS in London in September this year. He has also attended some of our meetings to discuss areas where we can work together.

ects of mutual interest and benefit. In addition to the conference, Nathan has made SOAS facilities available to Shang Shung UK for the purposes of our evening lectures. We in the meantime are bringing Shang Shung based scholars and resources as well as extra students to SOAS. A coincidence of mutual interests has come about due to some good timing and Nathan's interest in establishing meaningful outreach links for Tibetan studies at SOAS. Dr Ulrich Pagel also continues to take an interest in our activities. This situation offers us another way to establish SSI UK so that, in addition to the weekend courses we are offering, we are also able to hold lectures, which has given us a closer link to the University. Personally my interest with the academic side was to try and get Rinpoche's work recognized, and that was my original reason for inviting Rinpoche to SOAS in 2010, so that Tibetologists, Buddhologists and others in the UK could access and be aware of him and his work. There is also some possibility of developing courses through Dr. Nathan Hill. For example there could be a Shang Shung input on a future diploma in Tibetan Studies at SOAS, in which the Shang Shung Institute could provide one of the modules. This would go some way to further establishing our academic presence as well as in offering our resources to SOAS. We are also beginning to extend out links with other interested UK-based Tibetologists and Buddhologists, most

co spoke on Tibetan Medicine and Dzogchen; Rob Meyer from Oxford talked on newly revealed early sources on Padmasambhava; Jim Valby is also coming this year and will give a talk on 'The Five Aggregates and Primordial Wisdom'.

#### M: All of these are in collaboration with SOAS?

JA: Yes. It is a big plus for us that SOAS offers us their lecture facilities. The link with SOAS has given us a level of credibility and raised our profile in a way which we would not have enjoyed otherwise.

#### M: What are your plans for the future?

DK: We have established a pattern of weekend courses as well as lectures at SOAS, which seems to work well and we are going to repeat and expand on it this year building on our experiences of last year.

JA: As far as the courses, they include not only Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance (Liberation of the Six Spaces), but we also had a very successful calligraphy course this year and the majority of people came from outside the Community. So through SSI UK we are reaching out to a much wider audience than we can reach inside the Community; that is absolutely wonderful. And then of course people might become interested in the Teachings and so on. We are going slowly step by step to see what works. Elio Guarisco will come this year to do a Moxabustion course, we will have more calligraphy courses, and Fabian wants to do an online Tibetan course.

DK: The conference level seems to be working very well. The "Bon, Shangshung and early Tibet" conference is a major international event and people are coming from all over the world. We are planning two more conferences. One in 2012, will be on a relatively smaller scale, but in 2013 we intend to organize another major conference and hopefully an exhibition as well. We have not yet decided on a theme, but we are collaborating with the International Shang Shung Institute and ASIA and we will see what we can do, particularly in terms of linked exhibitions. We intend to make good use of the time to plan a successful event.

The academic lectures are held at SOAS and for the courses we rent places. We don't need our own space at this point in time.

JA: There are the three of us codirectors (Dominic and myself, together with Oliver Leick). Richard Steven deals with areas of communication: publicity, website and marketing as well as administration but we all work very closely together. Our biggest expenditure is the publicity and administrative budget and we need support to cover these costs.

Mandarava Bricaire has also been very helpful with courses. And of course, John Renshaw is part of the team, teaching Yantra Yoga; fortunately he now has Olga Komendantova working with him.

DK: We also benefit from creative and practical advice from Julia Lawless. We all work very well together without friction and that is a big plus.

#### M: How do you finance the activity of SSI UK?

JA: We had the original start up money from Oliver Leick (Shang Shung Austria) and he also agreed to finance the publicity and administrative costs for the first year so now we have to look elsewhere. To create an income stream, this summer we set up an online shop; podcasts of the talks and courses are proving very popular but we shall still require further funding.

#### M: Would you like to sum things up?

JA: We are going to have a pretty exciting year at SOAS this coming year. For example, Robert Beer will speak on 'Wrathful Deities and their Symbolism'; Fabian Saunders will give a talk on 'Termas and Tertons', Paola Zamperini on 'Female Tibetan Masters' and Martin Boord on 'Nourishment for the Dead: early Buddhist funeral rites in Tibet.' And there are more.... DK: Another thing to mention is that we have started to collaborate with the UK ASIA people, currently Des, Helen and Yvonne. Andrea Dell'Angelo will be addressing the conference at SOAS on Bon related projects. We also plan that there will be an ASIA aspect to some of our forthcoming evening lectures and ASIA will be invited to be involved in our 2013 conference event. JA: I think I would like end by saying that there are a number of people who are very interested and quite excited by our program, so I think it has been a very good first year. We are also very fortunate in the UK in that the people we know are top notch academics

in their field who are interested and want to support us.

M: So basically you are searching for some financial support to keep things going.

JA: Yes we are and we would welcome anyone who wants to help us.

M: Thank you very much for your time.

Contact info and programs: Shang Shung Institute UK London School of Tibetan Studies www.shangshunguk.org 0

## The Archive Transcription Program

**he** International Shang Shung Institute welcomes everybody to collaborate by contributing to the new campaign called The Archive Transcription Program. Most of the recorded Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu have not yet been transcribed. This work must be done in order to make these precious Teachings available in their written form. Everyone is welcome to participate in this new initiative, and thus contribute to the preservation of the Teachings.

#### We are looking for people who want to collaborate

We are looking for collaborators who:

- · have been active members of the Dzogchen Community for at least 2 years and
- have followed or attended at least 3 retreats of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Of course there can always be exceptions.

It is quite clear that we are able to collaborate with SOAS on projother Tibetan masters and who are very close to us in spirit and interest. We have started developing good contacts with them and so we are extending our reach beyond SOAS.

of whom are also practitioners,

people who are often students of

JA: We also have links at Oxford. I think the point Dominic made is a very strong one in that the academics who have presented talks as part of our program are also practitioners. This is a very important point in our favor, because often academics are seen as very dry. We have had some excellent talks in the last year: Cathy Cantwell from Oxford University gave a fascinating talk on 'The Place of Ritual in Tibetan Tantric Practice', focussing on Tibetan Dance in Tso Pema; Fabian Sanders spoke to a packed lecture theatre on 'Tibetan Oracles and Himalayan Shamans', Elio Guaris-

M: So the Institute does not have its own premises?

DK: No we do not but we are very fortunate to have the use of SOAS.

#### Work to be done

The retreats should be transcribed word-by-word, exactly as Rinpoche speaks.

#### How to apply

If you know how to work with a computer and if you think you have enough time and capacity to do this work, please send your CV to the Shang Shung Institute. After you finish the transcription you will receive a certificate that can be used for Karma Yoga.

Please send your replies to Dina Priymak (d.priymak@ shangshunginstitute.org), the coordinator of the Archive Transcription Program.

With Best Wishes, The ATP Team

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## **Ka-Ter Translation Project**

Ninth Training for Translators from Tibetan (TTT) with Fabian Sanders

This year's TTT took place at Merigar West from July 4 to August 5, 2011, and was attended by a record number of about twenty participants in three separate groups (Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced). Several students commented on their experience for The Mirror.

#### Monica Gentile:

A ach year since 2003, Shang Shung Institute Austria has dorganized a multi-week training program for translators from Tibetan. The program is a truly wonderful opportunity for those who want to learn and subsequently perfect their knowledge of scriptural Tibetan.

Real knowledge of Dzogchen comes from the oral transmission of the Teacher, but his work also needs to be supported by accurate translations of root texts and commentaries so that each of us can have the opportunity to read the truly inspiring writings of the ancient masters, the majestic foundations our own Master's

work. If translations are not accurate we have nothing to measure our knowledge against. Shang Shung Institute is consciously addressing this important issue by training translators and giving them the chance to become truly qualified.

In my long and often frustrating experience in attempting to learn Tibetan, I can confidently say that the approach of Shang Shung Institute is both effective and enjoyable. Its instructors are competent and patient, and know both the "letter" and the "meaning" of the language. The focus is on teamwork that favors sharing and comparing against competitiveness.

This year I followed both Intermediate and Advanced group over the Internet, via Skype. Since bandwidth was not always optimal on either side, we generally used audio only, but I was able both to speak and listen to the group, thus working together



Participants in the Ninth Training for Tibetan Translators, Fabian Sanders center.

efficiently. Following by Internet requires a great amount of concentration (and some patience with fluctuating connections), but it made possible something otherwise quite impossible for me. How wonderful!!

#### Sebastiano Ratti Pistoi:

he course was wonderful. We translated some very interesting and inspiring texts that were at a good level for us. I was pleased that we were able to work on three different texts written in different styles, including a Chod commentary

and the "Thirty-Seven Practices of the Bodhisattva." I learned a lot in class as Fabian took care to explain things very clearly. Fabian is a great teacher and has a lot of patience. The pace of the class was very relaxed and enjoyable. I would love to join the program again in the near future if my circumstances are favorable.

#### Chiara Mascarello & Francesco Tormen:

his past July, we attended the Intermediate level of the TTT. It was our first

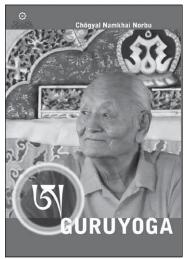
exposure to translation and it was an unforgettable experience.

We found the method challenging, but truly effective: each day we translated on our own translation for two in the morning and two in the afternoon, after each session spending an hour reviewing and discussing our work with Prof. Fabian Sanders.

In the beginning it was hard to find our way through the text on our own, so we sometimes managed to translate only a few lines, and even then our interpretations were often quite far off the mark. Nevertheless, day by day, thanks to the explanations during the review process, we gradually started to understand the Tibetan structures and the work started to become more satisfying.

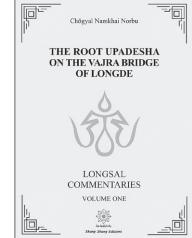
We enjoyed the atmosphere of the entire course and the fact that we could easily debate with the teacher and the advanced students about the more ambiguous passages. The frequent interaction with the advanced students really boosted our study, and so did the good balance between earnestness and entertainment. ©

## Shang Shung Publications – New And Upcoming Titles



## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Guruyoga

n Dzogchen teaching, the practice of Guruyoga is indispensable because it is the root of all practices; if we follow the teaching, the first thing to do is Guruyoga. Some people learn highly complicated methods and are satisfied with that, but they do not do Guruyoga; this is not good, because in that case it is as if the root of the teaching is missing: the connection to the teacher and the transmission. Guruyoga practice according to Dzogchen means going directly to the essence. In fact, the teaching explains that the condition of Buddha or the dharmakaya coincides with our profound nature, so there is no need to look for it outside of ourselves. The word Guru indicates the understanding we receive from the teacher, which is nothing other than the teacher and our real nature. Guruyoga means to actually be in that state with him in the same instant.

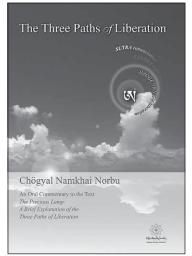


Chögyal Namkhai Norbu The Root Upadesha on the Vajra Bridge of Longde Longsal Commentaries Vol. 1

he Longsal or The Luminous Clarity of the Universe, Heart Essence of the Dakinis (Klona (gter ma) rediscovered by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

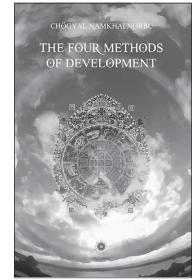
This book inaugurates a new series of publications of Longsal teachings, all of which, besides the histories and root texts, will include commentaries written by the Author, plus additional material whenever necessary, so that all information concerning a specific teaching is contained in one volume.

The Root Upadesha on the Vajra Bridge of Longde (Klong sde rdo rje zam pa'i man ngag gi rtsa ba) was written down in 1983. It offers fundamental guidance on the main points of the practice of the four DAs of Dzogchen Longde, the oral tradition of which is known as the Vajra Bridge (rDo rje'i zam pa). This tradition originated with the Tibetan master Vairochana (eighth century), who transmitted it to Pang Mipham Gönpo, and flourished in Tibet until the fourteenth century, with the result that many practitioners achieved the rainbow body. The dreams through which the upadesha was discovered are connected to Vairochana himself, to Negyab Rinpoche, and to his root guru Rigdzin Changchub Dorje (1826-1961). The auto-commentary, Brilliant Moon: Commentary on the Root Text of the Upadesha on the Vajra Bridge of Longde (Klong sde rdo rje zam pa'i man ngag gi rtsa 'grel rab gsal zla ba), written in 2005, includes many quotations from the traditional texts of the Vajra Bridge of Dzogchen Longde which clarify and expand on numerous topics contained in the root text.  $\bigcirc$ 



#### Chögyal Namkhai Norbu The Three Paths of Liberation

he 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. Here we are centered on the basic methods of practice, which show us the way to proceed to our best advantage. The book explains that all paths can be described as three main methods, no matter what tradition is being considered. Those three methods are renunciation, transformation, and self-liberation, the paths followed, in Buddhist terminology, in Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen, respectively. Rinpoche informs us in a book that is also a manual, "We can apply all three paths of liberation, and a practitioner of Dzogchen who understands the essence of the teaching always integrates all three," and he goes on to explain



### Chögyal Namkhai Norbu The Four Methods of Development The Way to Identify the Birth Year Elements of an Individual and the Elements of the Current Year The Four Development Methods

chen 'od gsal mkha' 'gro'i snying thig) is a cycle of upadesha teachings

There are many practices that go by this name, but the essential meaning of Guruyoga is to be in the state of instant presence that you were first introduced to by your teacher. Guruyoga permits us to find ourselves in that state again.

The first part of this book contains a general explanation of Guruyoga, its meaning and its aspects related to view, meditation and behavior. The second part contains the Guruyogas mostly applied in the Dzogchen Community, the methods for introducing the rigpa state and the empowerments for the Guruyoga worldwide transmission.

Buddha has clearly explained the turning of the wheel of existence by means of the twelve links of interdependence: ignorance, volition, consciousness, name and form, sense bases, contact, sensation, desire, attachment, becoming, birth, old age, and death. Accordingly, in the astrology of the elements taught by Arya Mañjushri, all the aspects of the year, month, >> continued on the following page

how we can do just that. 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. 0

duction compiled by the mas-

## **New Publications**

>> continued from previous page

day, and time, are determined on the basis of the twelve-year cycle of mouse, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, bird, dog, and pig. This twelveyear cycle is also combined with the five elements, wood, fire, earth, metal, and water, with alternate female and male years. On the basis of these astrological periods, one can ascertain both the elemental condition of the present year and the elemental condition of the birth year.

When, on the basis of the mother-son-enemy-friend relationship, conflict exists between the elements of life, body, capacity, and fortune of the year of birth, and the corresponding elements of the current year, it is important to eliminate the negative factors by means of the fourfold method which increase one's life, body, capacity, and fortune.

Shang Shung

Institute USA

September 24th–25th

**Cancer Connection** 

your own relaxation!

Florence, MA

October 7th–9th

Upcoming Events 2011-2012

Massage-a-thon fundraiser for

Benefit Cancer Connection with

**Enlightening Passion: Sexuality** 

and Gender in Tibetan Buddhism

with Professor Paola Zamperini

Florence, MA classroom

October 19th–23rd

A Course with

Amherst College

Khyentse Yeshe

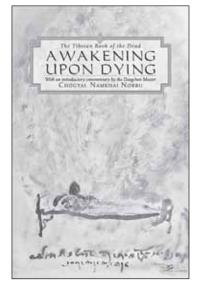
October 22nd–23rd

at Amherst Cinema

The Film My Reincarnation

Completion

The Samadhi of



### **The Tibetan Book of the Dead** A New Edition Available this Autumn from Shang Shung Publications

The subject of this book is the continuity of consciousness and the consequent possibility of spiritual liberation after death, as understood in the Tibetan Buddhist tradi-

November 11th–13th **Tibetan Medicine Hospice Introductory 20 Hour Training** with Dr.Phuntsog Wangmo

January 26th New Tibetan Kunye Massage 750 Hour Comprehensive Certification Program Begins Florence, MA

This Fall Shang Shung Institute is preparing to launch a new Tibetan Medicine Certification Program consisting of online modules and practical intensives.

For more information on our programs please go to: www.shangshung.org or call 413 369 4928 or email info@shangshung.org

Locations for Shang Shung Institute: Tsegyalgar East at 18 Schoolhouse Rd. Conway, MA Florence, MA Space at 140 Pine St. Rm 10

tion, an explanation long famed in Europe and North America as The Tibetan Book of the Dead. A partial rendering of the complete cycle of this extensive work, this volume contains the translation of several of the central texts, the two principal ones of which here included were originally entitled An Elucidation of the Intermediate State of Reality, Great Liberation through Hearing During the Intermediate State and An Introduction to the Intermediate State of Rebirth, Great Liberation through Hearing during the Intermediate State (Part one).

The translation of three invocations (Part Two) which traditionally accompany these teachings and of the Root Verses of the Six Intermediate States (Part Three) are also included. Part Four offers guidelines on how to assist a person at the moment of death and beyond, and is followed by two Appendixes, concluding what can justly be con-

## News from SSI USA

#### Now Hiring!

Are you a current member of the Dzogchen Community and have the desire to contribute to the important task of disseminating Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's precious works? Join the Shang Shung Institute team! We are now hiring a new bookstore manager for the Shang Shung Institute USA Bookstore. This SSI job offers a great opportunity to deepen involvement in the Dzogchen Community while providing a regular part - time paid position. Tasks include: sales, advertising and promotion, bookkeeping, purchasing, and keeping inventory. Applications are due September 16th.

413 369 4928 or email info@shangshung.org sidered a manual for spiritual realization in the afterlife state.

The translation presented in this book is a revisiting of the Italian translation by Prof. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in collaboration with his university students, during a course given by him in Tibetan language and literature at the oriental Institute of the University of Naples in the academic year 1979-1980. The present book can be more properly considered a new translation of the Tibetan text since knowledge contained in editions of the Tibetan text which have surfaced since 1980 has shed light on ambiguous passages and since improvements made in the interpretation of Tibetan texts by recent translations have been integrated.

The profound Introductory Commentary of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu which precedes and clarifies the texts from the Dzogchen point of view is an elaboration based on an intro-

The Shang Shung Institute in

America is looking for a dedi-

cated member of the Dzogchen

Community to participate as

board Treasurer. Information

about the Shang Shung Institute

and its programs can be found

· Attend monthly board meetings

in person or through telecom-

here: www.shangshung.org

Responsibilities include:

· Prepare annual budgets

• Implement fundraising

· Oversee bookkeeping efforts

SSI is interested in someone to

commit one year or more if pos-

sible. Please contact Ed Hayes at

The Shang Shung Institute Board

e.hayes@shangshunginstitute.

org for more information.

munications

Best Wishes,

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**Board Treasurer** 

Dear Sangha,

ter's students from oral teachings given by him at a meditation retreat at Volpago, Italy in 1980 and which have previously appeared in the Italian language (see below). Enriching the present introduction is the addition of material from written works and oral teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, particularly that of an essay on the four intermediate states in Birth, Life and Death, Shang Shung Publications, Arcidosso, 2008. Extracts are also included from transcriptions of oral teachings given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar (Arcidosso, Italy) in January 1992 and August 1998, as well as at other times.  $\bigcirc$ 

These titles are available or will shortly be available at **shangshungpublications.org** 

## Student Clinic Consultations

Consultations are supervised by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, Director of the School of Tibetan Medicine. Consultations are available on Thursdays and last for approximately one hour. They consist of questioning about personal diet and lifestyle, health history and symptoms, as well as pulse diagnosis and urine analysis. In conclusion, Tibetan herbal formulas as well as diet and lifestyle recommendations are given to bring one back into balanced health. Consultations cost \$40. If herbs are recommended there is an additional fee. To make an appointment please call (413) 585-1081 or email

#### ssistudentclinic@gmail.com

Our mailing address is: Shang Shung Institute P.O. Box 278 Conway MA 01341

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## www.melong.com

## Tips on using the new Mirror website

- I, Most Gars include an online Mirror subscription for all members;
- 2, Sustaining and meritorious members can have full access to all back issues available on line;
- 3, Once we receive membership information people will be signed up and receive their user name and password through email as a **new** registered user. If a member was **already** registered, they will get only an update on their subscription and will keep the same login and password.
- 4, People can update their own data such as address, email, and change their user name and password directly on the website after they have logged in, on the login page, where it says "Edit Details";
- 5, Once you have logged in you have your own "**Your Archive**" on the top of the home page with all the back issues that you have subscribed to, which can only be read online;
- 6, If you want to upgrade to receive paper issues you can do so on the home page where it says **upgrade**;
- 7, You can also pay for individual back issues at 4 Euro each once you have logged in;
- 8, Subscribers will be automatically notified one issue before their subscription expires;
- 9, If you have problems logging in, have not received your on line access or have any technical problems, you can write to **subscription@melong.com**.



great amount of material has been recorded and printed regarding the Master's teaching and his activities since the founding of Merigar in the eighties, but there are far fewer sources that actually recount the early days of Rinpoche's life in Naples and his first teachings in the 1970s before the Dzogchen Community was established in Tuscany.

In this issue of the newspaper, we are pleased to offer you some personal accounts by some of his first students from Naples, an interview with Adriano Clemente that covers the time that Rinpoche was in Naples up to the founding of Merigar, a reflection by John Shane on the early days of Merigar and an account by Yuchen Namkhai of her first visit with her father to the land that would become Merigar.

## **A Tibetan Master** in Naples

Some of Rinpoche's first students from Naples spoke to The Mirror about the circumstances in which he first started to give teachings in the 1970s. Nicoletta Liguori, Antonio Morgione, Sergio Campodonico and Bruno Irmici tell us about some of their experiences with the Master at that time.

Nicoletta Liguori: I met the Master in the spring of 1971. A friend of mine had joined a judo club at a gym [in Naples] and through the judo teacher that girl went to see a Tibetan master one evening. She came back really excited and inspired and said to me, "I've met a Tibetan master!" So of course, I immediately told her that she must be mistaken, that he must have been an Indian master because I was absolutely positive that there was no Tibetan master in Naples. But in fact the day after I went to that gym and what did I find – a Tibetan master! It was 'Norbu', and Mr. Proccacini, who was his manager, introduced me to him and after a couple of days I started yoga classes there.

There were already several people studying Yantra Yoga with him including a well-known Neapolitan astrologer who was the most able in doing the asanas. But the most remarkable thing about those lessons was that at the end of the Yantra Yoga sessions while many of the students would leave, a small group of 3 or 4 people would remain and the Master would give teachings to them. For me this was absolutely extraordinary because he would speak about Dzogchen teaching. I had no idea that beyond this physical form of yoga there was something to learn that would work at the level of body, voice and mind, as he explained. Most of the people would ask him lots of questions but I was always silent, trying to understand what he had said. At the time we had a close relationship with 'Norbu', as we called him at that time, who was living with his family in Torre del Greco. In that period his son Yeshi was a few months old. Rinpoche never used to speak

but when I met Roberto, my future husband through Rinpoche, he told me that Rinpoche and his wife Rosa would be having a little girl in August. So in August we went to Rinpoche's home to hang up garlands for the new arrival and after the birth I helped Rosa

The house at Gaiola perched on the cliffs high above the Mediterranean.

with the little girl and we spent quite a lot of time at their home. Then in the autumn, Roberto

much about his own situation,

invited the Master and his family to come and live with us at the Gaiola, which was a wonderful Mediterranean villa that had been built over a Roman villa and previous to that a Greek one. It was also the house where Oscar Wilde used to stay when he was in Naples. In that period there were also lots of young people coming and going at the Gaiola. You were one of them weren't you, Antonio?

Antonio Morgione: I met the Master in 1972 through one of the caretakers of the Faculty of Architecture at Naples University, Felice Garofolo, who was a friend and student of the Master. Rinpoche was teaching Yantra Yoga at the Palazetto dello Sport in Naples. I was a student in my first years and having a lot of difficulty getting used to the university environment and Felice Garofolo was a great help to me. At the time I was really interested in yoga even though I didn't really know what it was. I wanted to understand what thoughts are, what moved inside me when I wasn't speaking, what the world around us means. I come from a middle class Catholic family in Naples and those type of things were never spoken about. It was unthinkable. So I started to talk about them with Felice who at some point said that he knew a Tibetan master – I didn't even

know what or where Tibet was! But Felice spoke to me about him and I felt very attracted to him and asked Felice to ask his master if I could go to him although I didn't have a positive reply for a long time.

Then one day Felice said that we could visit him and we went to this part of Naples called the Gaiola, to Villa Paratori. This was quite close to some Roman excavations and there was a huge wall surrounding it and a large iron gate. There was a long country road to get there and then you could see this red house right above the sea.

I remember we had to climb over the wall and Felice told me that we should be careful not to be seen by the guardian, who was not a very pleasant character. We went through the field to the porch and when we went inside there was a red sofa in the shape of a shell and the Master with his wife Rosa who asked us to sit down. This was the first time I met him. And I asked him if I could come back. After that he became a great friend because at the time I was quite wild. He would ask me, "Do you need anything?" It was a special relationship and for me it was a great lesson in life because I got to know the Master and his family and this was and still is the support of my life. I learned everything from him. Sergio: How did I arrive the Gaiola? My first wife was a friend of Roberto Ventrella and one evening he took me to meet this Tibetan man. I came from an entirely different world, more driven by curiosity and living an alternative kind of lifestyle. We went to this house and I remember this enormous salon and the sofa etc. Rinpoche spoke in a very direct

transparent way. But what impressed me the most was the fact that he seemed to come from another world, and even though he was very young, he would tell us all the things that were right for us with very precise communication. This is something that has always remained with me. At the beginning we were like friends, family friends, part of a group, and Rinpoche would speak about things in such a direct way that you would be very struck. Later on it became evident that he was a Master but at the beginning there were these meetings first at the Gaiola then later at Pozzuoli, which were places that were full of energy.

Then in 1973 we rented a basement in via Palasciano, painted it and set up the first gym for doing Yantra Yoga. And you can see from the early photos that the Master actually moulded us into the positions with his hands. And we started from there.

hold something like what we would call a literary salon with questions and answers. But we didn't have any clear idea about the person we had in front of us so the type of questions we asked came from cultures such as the Catholic one of which we were a part. Sometimes we would come up with all types of different conversations - political, economic, topical things. The Master would answer us by taking us, I would say today, into the Santi Maha Sangha.

At the same time, Rinpoche was a professor at the university where he taught Tibetan and Mongolian language and literature. When I would be at his home, I would often see him scrupulously preparing the material for the exams and his lessons. He was different from the other professors and gave all his attention to his students. In this period a new student from Spain came to the university, Ramon







Yantra Yoga Students in Naples in the 1970's.

Antonio: At the Gaiola we started to have meetings with the Master during which he would give teachings. The Master would Prats who was very interested in the Master and spent all his time with him.

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## Interview with Adriano Clemente

Rinpoche's time in Naples in the 1970's until the founding of Merigar (West)

The Mirror: Adriano, we are trying to put together the story from the early days when Rinpoche was teaching Yantra Yoga in Naples until the founding of Merigar West. We are looking for information from people who were there in Naples up until the early retreats and the time when Merigar West was founded. The history from Merigar [West] on has been written, but the history before has not been written so we are trying to reconstruct it by asking people who were around at that time.

Adriano Clemente: Yes, but I was not there when Rinpoche started teaching Yantra Yoga. I did not start doing Yantra Yoga in the original group in Naples

because I did not meet Rinpoche until January 1975. What I know is that starting from the sixties, Rinpoche was sometimes invited by different cultural associations or by ISMEO to give lectures on Tibetan yoga or tantras, so after some of these lectures people asked if there was a possibility if he could teach Yantra Yoga, and that was the original cause.

There was a person in Naples called Procaccini, who was organizing courses like Japanese martial arts, akido, tai Kwando, etc., and he requested many times that Rinpoche teach Yantra Yoga, so after insisting, at one point Rinpoche accepted and started to teach Yantra Yoga in the palazetto dello sport in Naples. That was 1971. At that time Rinpoche was living in Torre del Greco, a small town near Naples, so he started to teach and some people started to gather, like Nicoletta Liguori and Roberto Vitrella, and he made friends with these people and through that he went to live together with Nicoletta and Roberto in the Gaiola place in Naples.

Rinpoche continued to teach at this palazetto dello sport for a couple of years. In November of 1974, when I had entered the dharma in some way, the first thing I was looking for was to learn yoga and at that time the only kind of yoga in Naples was hatha yoga with an Indian swami called Satyananda. This means that in that year he was not teaching, but he continued in 1975. In January 1975, right after I met him, he started to give a new course on Yantra Yoga. So he taught Yantra Yoga in 1975 from January to June.

#### M: And you took that course?

AC: I did not attend the whole course, but some of my friends took the course and I would go sometimes and ask Rinpoche questions, something like that.

So around 1972 to 1974, especially when Rinpoche was living at the Gaiola with Nicoletta Liguori and Roberto Ventrella, there was a small group that was also starting to receive some kind of teachings, more like explanations and some practice, like Vajrasattva purification practice. It was a small group, maybe 8–10 people around him, like Gennaro Anziano, Antonio Morgione, Sergio Campodonico, Ciro Marolda, etc., and all these people. The time I really entered Rinpoche's circle was October 1975, after the summer. And then I started to go to his house, he was living at Pozzuoli at that time, a place near Naples, so when I arrived there every Saturday we would meet at his house, and he would offer tea and everybody was free to ask any kinds of questions. So usually there was a more or less stable group of 10-12 people and among these people there was Ramon Prats, who had met

Rinpoche in 1973 or 1974. Ramon came from Spain especially to meet him, and to study Tibetan at the Orientale University.

So we would go there every Saturday and Rinpoche was replying to all kinds of questions about Tibetan Buddhism, spirituality, Christ and Buddha... some of these questions and answers Rinpoche wrote down in this book called Introduction to Dzogchen in Sixteen Answers, and eight of the questions of these came from this period. Sometimes when Rinpoche thought the questions and answers were interesting for the future, he would write them down those, so that is how that book was born.

The only thing that Rinpoche was teaching at that time that people were practicing was the Vajrasattva purification practice, so when I got there I learned how to do that practice, and Rinpoche would explain and people would >> continued on the following page

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Sergio: This attention, this love that the Master gave to everyone, just a few of us enjoyed at the beginning. He was a doctor, an astrologer, he did divination, he would ask us about our practice. More and more people came to the gym and there were 2 or 3 courses of Yantra Yoga every week with Eugenio and myself and then Fabio Andrico joined us. This was in 1976. The same year there was the centre with the school of medicine, courses in astrology and massage all taught by the Master.

Nicoletta: But in 1973 something special happened. The owner of the Gaiola asked us to leave the house. If we had wanted to buy it we could have continued to live there but we didn't want to do that even though the Master had pointed out many wonderful places in the garden around that house that were really suitable for practicing with a patio and a terrace overlooking the sea in view of the island of Capri.

The Master didn't lose any time and as soon as he knew we had to leave the house, he did so. His sister was there at the time and she helped Rinpoche and Rosa with the moving. Roberto and I managed to put off moving for a few months and when we did we went back to live in the centre of Naples for a few months and immediately after we started to put into action a plan that we had decided on the year before to leave Naples and get a house in the countryside with some land. And that is what we did. For months and months, we went looking through all the surrounding countryside until we found this beautiful piece of land in Prata with a stone house. The Master found another piece of land adjoining this with a small house. We got this house but it wasn't inhabitable so first of all we had to restructure it. At the time there was no electricity, no water and no road to get there. It was really a wild place and we had to bring water from a well a little way off. The house in Prata was very important for the simple reason that we did the first international retreat of the Dzogchen Community there.

The Community had already been formed in 1976 with the first statue. The first meeting we had was at Antonio's house and we were 12 people and we put down in writing the basics of the Dzogchen Community.

In 1976 the first retreat was



suggested doing a retreat in Prata, which was the first 'official' retreat with 60-70 people from all over the world. It took place for three weeks in July and August in 1977. At the beginning of the teachings Rinpoche told us that although Tibetan teachers traditionally sit on high thrones to teach, he would sit in the middle of us so that there would be no distinction between us. Antonio: When he started the input for the creation of the Community, there was a time when we spoke about the name and he said it would be the Dzogchen Community, that the aspect of culture was very important and so the cultural association came about. There was a need to create a structure with a statute, which had to be perfect. In the discussions at Pozzuoli, the Master was very clear about how the Community was to be structured and that people should have specific skills to carry it forward. There was a great input with the arrival of all the young students who started to work under the guidance of the

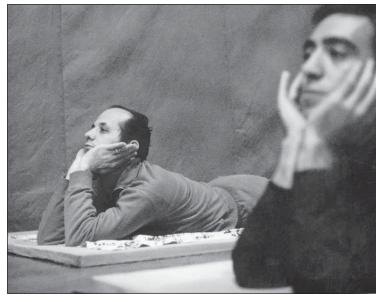
Master and it all started to spread from there.

Bruno Irmici: My story comes a little later. When I was about 16 I was very interested in breathing and understood that if I worked on it I could be calmer because I was a nervous kind of person. Then I learned from friends at art school that there was a Tibetan who gave teachings in Naples and I went straight away to see him. I wanted to learn yoga, I was very serious about it. At the end of my first session of Yantra Yoga with Rinpoche, he started to do a kind of dance like the twist and sing, 'Buddha, Buddha, Buddha', which broke through my rigidity and seriousness right away. So I started to practice Yantra Yoga but then I left. Although I had a very strong connection with Rinpoche, I had some difficulty with the people around him. Perhaps I wasn't ready for what they did and I needed something more regular.

Rinpoche used to teach. One of my ideas in taking that place was that I thought Rinpoche would be able to come there sometimes to rest when he was teaching at the Orientale because it was only 5 minutes away. He would come by 2 or 3 times a week and we would go to eat in the tiny trattoria below the house, often all of Rinpoche's students would come with him. Then they'd go back to the university or he would come up and rest for a while. It was an incredible time and that place was almost like the first Ling. It was in the centre of Naples and had a beautiful big terrace and in the first years, when things were simpler, we would do the practices there and people would bring their sleeping bags and sleep on the terrace. We didn't think about recording Rinpoche's talks or taking photographs so there isn't much material from that time, especially from some of the talks that he gave.  $\odot$ 

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held in Subiaco. It was a small retreat with a few people, mostly Italians. Afterwards, the Master



Yantra Yoga Students in Naples in the 1970's.

Then after I came back from a retreat in the USA I rented a house in Naples that was very close to the Orientale where

Translated, transcribed and edited by L. Granger, trying to maintain the essence of what was said.



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

ask something. From November to February we were meeting in his place, but at some point we shifted the place and the meetings took place and Ramon and Antonio's house at the Riviera di Chaia in Naples. Instead of going to Rinpoche's house we would go there and that was maybe on Fridays and the same thing would go on, asking questions, etc. Then everyone was asking if Rinpoche would start to teach, to give the complete teaching, and every time he would say, "Ok next time I will start." But he would never start and for three months he went on in this way.

Then finally one of these Fridays I could not go there and someone called me and said, "Look, Rinpoche said next time he is really going to start to teach", but he said he would teach to only those who were present that previous weekend, that previous Friday when I was not present. I went the same day with a friend of mine there and then when I arrived someone said to me I could not stay there because Rinpoche said only people who were here last weekend could attend. Of course, I did not move a millimeter from my place, until Rinpoche said, "Ok, we start with the people who are here." He started with a Vajrasattva empowerment and something happened like a vase fell down and there were some signs. That was in Ramon's house and from the next time we met every time at the Palestra Palasciano. This palestra was the place I had met Rinpoche the first time when he was giving a lecture on Bon in January of 1975 and it was the place where Rinpoche taught Yantra Yoga from 1975 onwards; before he was teaching at the Palazetto dello Sport, which is a big a big compound of many gyms, etc.

every Friday he taught Dzogchen Upadesha teaching and that means rushen - outer and inner -

had gone to Rome sometimes to meet with Laura and so at one point he decided to start teaching

was completely beyond any traditional frame. He was completely direct and he did not use any invocation or prayer, not a single word of Tibetan, he was teaching experience through practice, we didn't do any Guruyoga practice, nothing at all. So when I went there and saw all the people chanting all the mantras and using the malas, I thought what is going on here? In fact, I met Rinpoche in the stairs and I said, we used to call Rinpoche Maestro, I said Maestro, so why is this different, why all these things, and he told me the circumstances are different, he said something like that. And then I thought, well maybe these people need this, and this is not how it should really be. But of course I was not right in my understanding, it did not develop that way. But it was like that. When Rinpoche taught the first time it is interesting to see and understand also seeing how Yeshi teaches now, how he is with people, there is something, there is a connection.

After Subicao Rinpoche came back to Naples and then in 1976 some of us started at the Univer-

and he would cook for us. It was one of the best periods of my life.

At the end of 1976 a small group from Sardinia invited Rinpoche to give teachings at Costa Paradiso. I didn't go there. So this was the end of 1976 into 1977, and his dharma activities were that in October 1976 he started to give classes of yoga again and also on medicine and astrology. He gave many different talks and then from February to June in 1977, we had 3 classes a week: on Monday he would teach Yantra Yoga, on Thursday he would teach kumbhaka and tsalung and on Friday he would teach Dzogchen Teaching. The Dzogchen teaching was more or less the same as the year before, upadesha, rushen and all the practices like before. And the Monday Yantra Yoga was the only full Yantra Yoga course I took with him.

He would teach all the yantras and there was a peculiar way in which he was teaching. First we would do warm-ups and then the 9 purification breathings, and after that we would do rhythmic breathing before everything, and then after rhythmic breathing we



Rinpoche and students at the Subiaco retreat in 1976.

tregchöd, bardo, tummo, phowa and at this Karma Kagyu Center which sity of Naples and we enrolled at would do the 8 movements, and the university to study Tibetan, then after that we did different was these people from Rome and some from Milano, like Guliano Giacomella Orofino and I; there positions, yantras, etc., and then Casiraghi and Aldo Oneto, and was a small group, a new group. in the end he would do many also from Sardinia who were Until that time Rinpoche never things like nauli. He was very maybe more Gelugpa oriented, had enough students at the uniskilled, he could do everything, jump into lotus; he could do evlike Mariano and Anna Dessole, versity, and he was not happy erything. Sometimes also Yeshi so they decided to do this retreat about that, because other pro-So we had this teaching that in Subiaco. That was in 1976. The fessors did not consider him was coming, and Yeshi and he retreat at Subiaco, maybe you academic enough. At that time had the same color tracksuit in know, went on for a long time; red. Yeshi was like a miniature. he was happy because we were a So after that in July of 1977 we the group of us from Naples, the group of students and not only 3 or 4 of us went there only for 3 that, but also for those who were had what I see as the real start days. We went because Rinpoche following his teaching. So those of the Dzogchen Community; was giving a Rigpai Tsalwang who were following his teachings all these groups united in this during those days and he told us now came to his lessons and so retreat in Prata. Prata is a small we better come for those 3 days. it went from 3 or 4 people in the place near Avellino, on the hill-There was Ciro Marolda, Antonio seventies, to about 20 people, so side, where Rinpoche owned a Morgione, Eugenio Amico and he was happy about that. So we piece of land, so there were all Enzo Desio; there were 5 of us. started to form this group, we the people from Rome who at-When I went to Subicao I was were really spending a lot of time tended the retreat at Subicao. a little puzzled by the impression together with Rinpoche, especial-Many of them were already fol-I had from these Buddhist pracly a small group of us, and after lowing Rinpoche's courses in titioners, because the way that lessons we would go to his house the university, like Enrico and Rinpoche taught to us in Naples >> continued on the following page

M: Was this in 1975 or 1976? AC: It was in February 1976 when he gave the first complete cycle of Dzogchen Teachings in his life. So from February until June 1976

many like this. I think there were about 12 of us, and there was also a dog. We were just in the center of an old Neopolitan palace, in a courtyard; it was a small room in a building with gyms and the gym equipment, these things.

is a complete teaching, and then in June he said, "Now we have to go and apply something with practice, and we should go with a tent somewhere on a mountain to have some real experience of the practice." In the meantime Rinpoche had been in contact with this group associated with Laura Albini in Rome. Laura Albini was a kind of base the Karma Kagyu Center in Rome, a center for the Karmapa and Kalu Rinpoche. And so they were requesting Rinpoche to teach and he had always refused; Rinpoche



Original Structure of Serkhang, Merigar West 1982.

## On a Rainy Afternoon, Thirty Years Ago

#### Yuchen Namkhai

Translated by Paola Zamperini

Reprinted with kind permission from Merigar Letter no. 12, Year 4, July 2011

I tis amazing how at times it is the simplest things that leave an indelible trace on our memory. Once upon a time, when iPods had not been invented and computers had not yet become a necessity, there was a world in which every new day marked a new discovery, a new adventure whose main goal, for most of us children at least, was to enjoy it through as many of our senses as possible, in the fastest way possible.

I remember that rainy day as if it were yesterday.

Our guide was ready to take us to our mysterious destination. The drive took a long time, and our four-wheel drive advanced slowly. Finally we turned onto a white road, very steep at first, and the time full of potholes, puddles, and bumps. I looked around and everything seemed so new, as I was used to the Mediterranean coastal landscape and to its vegeanimals, and the ruins covered in thorns we saw here and there.

We were surrounded by silence. We could only hear the rain, beating hard at times, the only soundtrack to this almost lunar landscape. It was a harsh land, not yet much scarred by human presence, a land allowed to grow and expand according to its nature.

We finally got to our destination. Majestic trees flanked the main building and framed what must have been once a very dignified farmer's residence. The car came to a stop and we got out.

I am thinking back to the emotion and the physical sensations I felt and I am now trying to describe them in words. I ran around exploring my whereabouts, dashing about aimlessly, my only wish to fill my lungs, and my eyes with what the sights could offer me. I followed my instincts, snuck into narrow passages, and tried climbing a tree, all the while making up plots and obstacles to overcome in order to reach the "mysterious castle." tion, as the only thing that truly captured my attention was the huge fireplace in the kitchen on the first floor. I pictured people who, trying to get warm by the fire, were sucked up into its chimney...

We then started visiting the land, and this spiked my interested. We headed north, so as to have a better view of the land, and then we went south, walking on the path that leads into town. To me everything was absolutely perfect, a perfect combination of mystery and adventure still totally to discover. And I became convinced that this was a marvelous place, even with the rain falling, the puddles we needed to steer clear from, the neglected vegetation, in spite of its at times unfriendly and mysterious isolation.

As a matter of fact there was something very fascinating and charming in the neglected look of this land, almost as if it were a well-executed sketch for a painting yet unfinished. Under layers of threatening thorns we could find traces of man's labor, carried out at time in a very creative fashion. We could see how people tried to bend nature to their wishes. We even saw a herd of goats observing us in total peace, perfectly integrated with this scene.

Rinpoche had visited the property in a very determined manner, led by His clarity, and appeared satisfied with what He had seen. He had even tried to explain to us what were the important issues to keep in mind in choosing a property and how these were to be found here. One could see in His face the pleasure and satisfaction about what would eventually become the first seat of the Dzogchen Community.

It is important to remember that up until that moment Rinpoche, together with various groups of people, had visited other pieces of property in Campania, Lazio, and Tuscany, without however finding the ideal seat for the Community. For years the Community activities had been held in many wonderful locations, all of which were still only temporary. Those had been very positive experiences for the Dzogchen Community and had motivated everyone to actively search for a permanent seat for its activities.

After our first visit to the land, thousands and thousands of people have been able to appreciate over the years the seat of the Dzogchen Community, discovering its hidden treasures, such as the Gonpa hill, the practice woods, the Small Stupa, the Big Stupa, the Sankhang, Zhikang, Gadeling, and so on and so forth. Over time the Dzogchen Community has held, in those very places and with unforeseen success, countless events, activities and meetings.

Today I think back to the rainy afternoon thirty years ago, and I see it as the beginning of a wonderful project created by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to benefit all sentient beings. That day Rinpoche only spoke to me once, to ask me what I thought about the land. "It is perfect", I answered enthusiastically, to which He answered, "Ok, now we can go."

>> Focus continued on page 25



tation of prickly pears, wild lilies, irises, and maritime pines.

We proceeded slowly, though we wished we were already there, to our destination, to explore those Tuscan lands we knew so little. We immediately started to fantasize about the mysterious narrow trails, the little flocks of

The grownups walked around the main building as if it to measure it, then went inside, and I decided to follow them. I was a bit disappointed by my explora-

Playing bagchen at Merigar in 1981.

#### >> continued from previous page

Andrea Dell'Angelo. This retreat in Prata was like the merging of all of Rinpoche's students, so we had like 50 to 60 people, and that was a lot for us at that time and we were all one group. There were also Barry and Nancy Simmons, Fabio Andrico and Tiziana Gottardi. Then right after that Rinpoche went abroad to teach – he went to Austria where he met Andrea Leick who was organizing these teaching courses and then the Dzogchen Community became larger and larger and Rinpoche started to go abroad.

And then in 1977 after Prata, at Christmas time, we had this wonderful retreat of Lu Cumitoni in Sardinia where Rinpoche gave for the first (and last) time in his life the trilung of a whole tantra, the Kunjyed Gyalpo, which is a large tantra, and he gave also many amazing teachings. That retreat was really something special. Of course every time we were more and more people, and then in 1978 Rinpoche went to teach at the university. In the meantime in 1978, Rinpoche went with Andrea Dell' Angelo and Mario Maglietti and some other students to shoot the Arura movie on Tibetan Medicine for the RAI in India and Nepal. After that we had the retreat in Campomolino, which is in the Alps. Then in 1979 Rinpoche was seriously ill with an ulcer and after that a group of practitioners did a retreat in Formia, in the mountains of Formia.

M: Did Rinpoche stop teaching for some time when he was ill? AC: Rinpoche was ill between April and May of 1979, but he resumed teaching that year when he recovered. At that time he was still teaching at the university so he was mainly teaching at the holidays, Christmas, Easter and the summer, so he didn't really stop teaching. In any case it went on like this and every time we were renting places where we had retreats, and then we started to think we should find a land and then in 1982, they started to search for some land until they finally found this place, Merigar.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

© John Shane

M: Thank you very much Adriano.

## Merigar's Thirty Years - What a Surprise!

#### **Christiane Rhein**

Perhaps the greatest experience of Merigar's Thirty Year Anniversary was the surprise.

Surprise at what we can do! Our surprise – and even the lo-

cal people's surprise.

A year ago our Master had asked us to organize a big party for the anniversary of the birth of the first center of the International Dzogchen Community. A celebration for us, but also for the inhabitants of Amiata who have lived side by side with the Community for thirty years, had considerable economic advantages from the tens of thousands of people coming for retreats over the years, yet have always resion of Yantra, demonstrated the purification breathing, the eight movements and some yantras, and finally by the children who performed Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga. "I've never seen anything like it!" said an admiring 75 yearold lady from Santa Fiora. And this could be the catchphrase for the entire Thirty Year celebrations.

It began by decorating the streets with thousands of five colored flags. "How beautiful!" some of the shop owners said. "Can you put them close to my shop, too?"

And it continued with the inauguration of the "Monument to



Vajra Dance Demonstration in Arcidosso.



Yantra Yoga Demonstration in Arcidosso.

garded us with a certain distance. They would never go up to Merigar to see what "those Tibetans" were doing!

A party in the three villages closest to Merigar was the request.

But while this seemed feasible for the shows, the "friendship meetings" and exhibitions, we were really puzzled - if not skeptical - about the idea of even making a "presentation of the Community" in the main squares. Spreading the Mandala out on the street? Doing the Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga while people passed by chatting, having an ice cream, a cigarette or a glass of beer? Wouldn't it be better to arrange a demonstration in the Gonpa, where just the environment itself would create an atmosphere that would be more intimate and conducive to conveying something? No, the specific request was to "go down there". And the result was amazing. For three days in a row we spread out three Mandalas in the village squares - first in Arcidosso, then in Castel Del Piano, and finally in Santa Fiora - and each time hundreds of people were caught up by the energy and joy of the thirty-six dancers who practiced the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra, by the yogis who afterwards, in a short sesPeace" by Rinpoche in the presence of the public authorities, many practitioners and many curious people, with the closing drink to toast the occasion offered to all.

And then, in the evening, a fantastic performance of folk dances. In fact, in the village, they had never seen anything like it. The colorful costumes and folk dances of different countries, exhibited by eighty professional and amateur dancers, really showed the international character of our Community. The "Gourmet meeting point" at the Photo: L. Carniel

end of the square, where every night one could taste "flavors of the world" was also a "tasty" treat. In Arcidosso they had never seen anything like the amazing Garuda Circus of Prague. And, of course, never before in the square had so many people gathered – thousands of them – like that first evening that ended with fireworks from the Tower of the Castle.

But it did not finish there: the exhibition "Tibet. Art. Now." by ASIA and the "Primo Centro ". rate. And the presentations by the thirty-six speakers/moderators of the "Friendship Meetings" and the concerts given by one hundred and forty musicians of the Community on the second and third nights confirmed the cultural richness and variety of talent in the Dzogchen Community.

Yes, it really was a big surprise! Surprise at what we are capable of doing and joyful surprise at the collaboration of everyone: those who had been planning, organizing and communicating everything for months, those who attended the celebrations as players, musicians, dancers, and those who collaborated in the preparations, welcoming people, in transport, in the kitchens, audio/video, and those who offered money and materials, time and skills, and all those who came from near and far – some from very far away – just to be there, to be part of this great dance in honor of our Master!

And finally surprise, about the effect that "The joy of being here" has had on the local people. Never have so many people been seen visiting Merigar as in those three days and in subsequent periods. "Thank you for organizing this wonderful celebration! Without you this summer would have been empty!" wrote a local boy on the MerigarW30 Facebook page. And then when we've been shopping in Arcidosso, Castel Del Piano and Santa Fiora we have had so many compliments. It seems that now they look at us with different eyes.

Yes, it was really a surprise for everyone – and a grand opening. Let us not waste it! ©



with works by forty-six artists from the Community, were first



St Russia.

Photo: P. Fassoli



Argentina.

Photo: P. Fassoli

Adriano Clemente, Italy.

Photo: P. Fassoli

Harvey Kaiser, USA

Photo: P. Fassol

## Primo Centro

#### **Gabriella Dalesio**

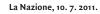
• he doves that spread out in flight at the time of the unveiling of the Monument to Peace, inaugurated in Arcidosso on July 15 in the presence of our precious Teacher, united us all in the vision that a better world is possible. While the violins played the hymn to joy and life, a feeling swept through those gathered that this was a special event - special for the local communities that in recent decades have welcomed but also been wary of the young 'Tibetans' of the Merigar Dzogchen community - although there is only one Tibetan, as Rinpoche pointed out - and for the international Community come from all over the world to offer their collaboration.

And it is precisely because of the presence, patience and compassion of our Master, who started from the Amiata moun-



Corriere Della Sera, 22. 5. 2011.

precious mandala and the demonstrations and explanations of Yantra Yoga in the squares of the three villages involved – Arcidosso, Castel del Piano and Santa Fiora. How can there be a world of peace if we do not open our hearts to the harmony of the elements represented symbolically in the monument to peace. The sculp-



il **Tibet** italiano

la «Grande Perfezione» buddista

from all over the world, contributed to the success of the festivities. The high level of professionalism of the participants offered Rinpoche and the public a music



Monument to Peace by Piero Bonacino.

tain thirty years ago to give us students the opportunity to know and follow the Dzogchen teachings, that a new stimulus has been created for others centers arise, other Merigars that will develop in the world for the benefit of sentient beings.

The Community's integration with and openness towards the local communities, in an area where spirituality permeates the landscape and the people in the ancient culture of the place, as pointed out by the authorities who attended the inauguration, were the recurring themes that characterized the three days of celebrations: from concerts in the main square of Arcidosso to the Dance of the Six Spaces on the





Visitors to the exhibit at the Castle in Arcidosso.

ture is a hollow metal sphere on which the continents rest like clouds, placed over the water of the fountain, which gushes out beside the symbols of the infinite knot placed in the four directions of space. The work is the result of a close-knit collaboration with Piero Bonacina, an artist who has lived for more than twenty years on Amiata.

The 'Joy of Being Here' with its celebrations that involved the entire Amiata area and the three centers closest to Merigar, marked a turning point or perhaps simply revealed this opening of the heart of the 'local' community to the 'abstract' Merigar Community and the 'Merigaresi' whose presence is integrated into a social fabric that has brought Amiata to the world and the world to Amiata. It was also an opportunity to show a Community working in harmony and this was felt in the way in which everything, despite the efforts and the huge amount of work that had gone on throughout the entire year, was done with the' joy' of being here. And the results were there to be seen!

festival of the highest level. Art was one of the other ways in which the Community showed

# *Books by* Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

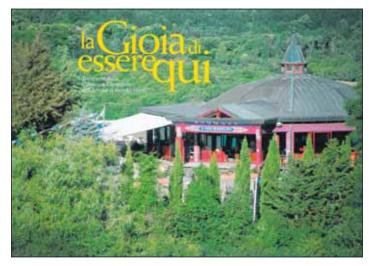
15 its gratitude and devotion to the Master by offering their work for the Primo Centro exhibition held at the Aldobrandescan Castle in Arcidosso. From the fluttering "Tibetan' flags to the medieval and mountain characteristics of the area of the host villages, the sense of the elements – wind, water, earth and space – was the recurring theme of the works being shown.

Starting with the first two emblematic works of Prima Mai, where the deep sense of the teaching is revealed in the poetry and in the simplicity shown. A small shrine contains a stone held in place by nets at the bottom (of the sea or river) represented by the blue background and small stones that surround it. Next to the shrine, there is a work on canvas in which, at the center, the same shape of the stone, free from its bonds, seems to have lost weightlessness as a form appearing as space with a pale blue color. Just like light the color moves out and around becoming stronger showing the indistinct circular passage from the sky to the water. Birds hover at the top, at the bottom stylized fish swim, going in a circle to mark the cycles of life.

Next to Prima's work a giant wooden xylophone invites us to play our own music with different types of drumsticks that are on the wall. This is a piece by Annie Ratti, who has also presented a video in a secluded room of the castle. It is the story of a red balloon, which is abandoned by the hand that holds it and flies free over the roofs of a city driven by the wind and air. Its journey reveals the hiding places of a silent city and a landscape seen from above which continually and slowly changes to the rhythm of >> continued on the following page

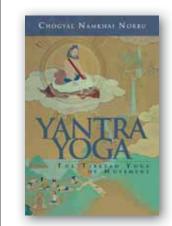


The President of the Italian Republic sent this medal to the Dzogchen Community in lieu of his presence on the occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of Merigar celebrations with his best wishes for a successful outcome to the event, 'The Joy of Being Here. Thirty years of the Dzogchen Community: from Amiata to the whole world'.



One of the three postcards (see also the following page).

It also showed a Community in which the presence of countless artists, from musicians to painters, together with the voluntary work of practitioners who came



- Yantra Yoga
- Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light
- Dzogchen Teachings
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>> continued from previous page its silent flight. But what changes is also the point of view of things because the journey of the Red Balloon now reveals its inner self, hidden by its color as if its eye is also ours.

Then in a secluded area of the castle, a former prison cell, there is the photographic work of Robert Zamparo. A series of photos entitled 'The Path' go by one after the other on a screen. They are images of roads made in different places and at different times. Very small landscapes appear in which the abstractedness of the road, that becomes lines, disappears and meets again at the infinite. But in the sequence of photos the road is a symbol of communication that washes away time and joins places, appears to divide rather than unite the landscape.

Several of the works in the hall of the castle are photos, from those reworked on the comput-



The Relay [La Staffetta] As seen by the local people of the Amiata area where Merigar is based.

On the left the 18th century Christian visionary Davide Lazzaretti who founded his Giurisdavidica community on the peak of Monte Labbro - in the background and facing Merigar - passes the spiritual-religious baton to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to carry Credit: by Jacopo Ginanneschi, reprinted from Il Corriere Dell'Amiata, anno XI 7 Luglio 2011 ed. Effigi forward.

ic form. The works of Drimey Lodo, his pupil, are closer to the traditional Tibetan style. There are also quotations from sacred rituals and objects in the works of Leon Galichian and the silk screen prints of abstractly stylized stupas by Tristan de Robilant.

Reminiscent of ancient times are the chandeliers and lamps with human and animal figures, adorned with colored stones and sparkling lights by Riccardo Polveroni and the lamps in alabaster by Piercarlo Manfredi. All the works on display, many more than those that have been mentioned, and the thoughtful way in which they were selected by Alessandra Bonomo and set up by Massimo Pelliccioni in collaboration with Giovanna Natalini, represente along with other initiatives that were part of the 'Joy of Being Here' the deep devotion and the endless gratitude that we have for our precious teacher.



Painting by Angela Signorini.

er by Daniela Monaci showing images of pine trees seen from below in which the branches become roots sinking into the sky, to those of Mandarava Bricaire where the clouds become landscapes of sky and light. There are photographic images of flowers by Gianni Baggi, that multiply like a display of mirrors in a kaleidoscope that doubles or triples them in the joy of their colors. The pictorial works of Sofia Cacciapaglia are always giant flowers, stylized flowers that become abstract spirals. In one of the rooms of the castle there are a great number of photos ranging from mountain landscapes by AlPhoto: Gloria Pera

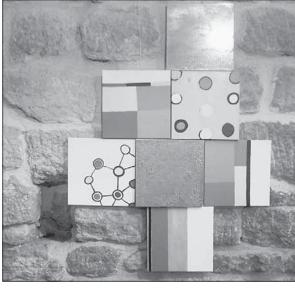
exander Egorov to photos of fleeting presences by Marius Noreger, to those retouched pictorially by Michele Salvatore where places of worship, monasteries and the human presence emerge from the color. At the center of the room there are three monolithic sculptures of wood and graphite by Max Roth, boat-shaped, as the archaic symbol of passage from life to death.

Among the photographic works there are those of Romain Piro with votive candles and Tibetan places of worship, and of Ornella Trentin depicting light filtering through the woods. The works of Patrizia Moscatelli, who



Painting by Rita Hector.

in 2008 exhibited her enigmatic faces, are now presented in a series of stupas with writing in the Tibetan language. In the hall at the top of the castle is the magnificent portrait of Barrie Simmons made of fabric, which seems to come alive. Another living presence is the image of a monk with a child sitting on his shoulders.



Painting by Luca Tirello.

Photo: Gloria Pera

In a room facing the courtyard on the ground floor there is 'A Mandala on Amiata', photos from the Shang Shung archive portraying the history of Merigar and different moments in Rinpoche's life. We see him in Sikkhim with Jampel Senge, in Kalimpong in 1960 and with his younger sister Yangdzom when he attended the Italian language courses in Perugia. In others, his meeting with Pope Paul VI, along with photos by Felice Boffa depicting some aspects of Tibetan life such as the sacred dances in Cham and at Puntsogling Monastery, or murals, all in 1939. There is the inauguration of the Merigar Gonpa in 1990 depicting Chogyal Namkhai Norbu with the Dalai Lama. There is a superb shot portraying the face of Rinpoche in a halo of light. The 'Joy of Being Here' also involved the children. A booklet was prepared for them with images of the Dance mandala and figures of different positions of Yantra Yoga to color. The celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of Merigar was therefore a discovery of the potential of the whole Community and its ability to collaborate in the knowledge and joy of being fortunate students of our precious Teacher.  $\bigcirc$ 

THE MIRROR · No. 111 · July, August 2011

These are the works of Rita Hector. In a small window there is

with Western styles with mantras written in the delicate strength of color and energy of the graph-

the playful work of young Nam-

sel Siedlecki and his two friends.

of the castle are the works on pa-

per of Dugu Chogyal Rinpoche,

author of the paintings of the

Primordial Masters in the Meri-

gar Gonpa. In those exhibited

here sacred iconology mixes

In one of the rooms at the top



On the occasion of the Merigar 30 celebrations, a special postmark and three postcards of different scenes at Merigar were created. The Italian Post Office makes special postmarks for particular events that are of notable interest and which reproduce the theme of that event. The postmarks are only used for the day of the event and are then conserved for posterity in the Italian Post archive in Rome.



On July 15, the Post Office set up a table in the centre of Arcidosso where people could get free postcards, prepared by Merigar, and have the dated postmark stamped on them. The dated postmark is not only a reminder of the event but also a collectors' item. Photo: L. Carniel







## The Flight of the Blue Bird

The Garuda Retreat from Rigdzin Changchub Dorje's Terma at Merigar West, August 5-12, 2011

#### Griselda Gálmez

Translated by Martín Fernández Cufré

arrived in Merigar for the Trentennale but did not intend to remain for so long in Italy. I had a commitment to come to participate in the friendship meetings that were part of the Thirty-Year Celebration, collaborate in the well-deserved festivities and enjoy with my Vajra brothers and sisters, all very close to our beloved Master.

Of course I knew about the Garuda and Yanti retreats, but one must learn to be content. I thought that Italy was an expensive country for someone from Latin America.

Let's say that the bird had opened its wings, but flying seemed like too much. In the end, I stayed for the retreat of the Dark Garuda, or actually the Blue Garuda.

A Nicaraguan writer, Ruben Dario, wrote a beautiful and wellknown story called The Blue Bird. It is the bird that symbolizes the ability to dream, to imagine destinations that don't seem possible, to defy the laws that seem immutable and to rise, to take off, to give in to the marvel of distances beheld from high above, from the air, soaring, free, over the unmistakable beauty of the earth, of the trees, of the flowers.

This view is just like the view of Merigar as seen from the outer mandala, in a turn of the dance, or in the mudra of the Dance of the Three Vajras; like the landscape of Merigar as enjoyed from the shadow of a tree, on the extremely green grass; like the hills and open space, smooth slopes, gentle wild flowers, and the soft smoke of Sang spreading to the Gonpa. The Gonpa of Merigar is a pure luxury of shapes, colors and wisdom.

On the pathways, people walk by, over 1000 practitioners! Some

is on his throne - everybody waiting for him, going towards him, listening to his words with a silence that seems hard to believe considering that we are a lot of people in a country as expressive as Italy.

The Master looks healthy and happy. No problem resists his presence. One approaches Him with one of these doubts that haunt and disturb, and his precise answer dispels it in an instant. One approaches him with a conflict deserving a Greek tragedy or at least a Shakespearean play and, when He extends his hand and takes yours, one must make an effort to remember the problem. Everything he touches is transmuted into the gold of the true nature.

Merigar is a perfect place, not just because of the beauty of the landscape at the foot of Mount Amiata but because everything a practitioner needs is already there, available to all: the famous yellow house (Serkhang) with the office, the dining room, the shop filled with Teaching books, the Mandala House and the outer Mandala for the dancers, the Stupa, the information center, the parking, the house for personal retreats, the dormitories of Merigar Due for hosting practitioners, and the Gonpa, where just by staring at the ceiling, a cause of liberation is created for any person.

But all of this is the result of the magic of the Master, who works tirelessly, exerting his creative influence also through his students. So many have collaborated through the work of their bodies, voices and minds so that Merigar [West] can become what it is now. So many continue to work seriously, sometimes to the limit of their strength so that everything develops positively as the Master desires: the instructors, the Gakyil, the retreat's project manager, the Gekös, the people from the office and from the Shang Shung Institute, the practitioners working at the

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Black Garuda Thangka painted by Migmar Tsering.

shop, the huge amount of collaborators for each activity... How is it possible for Rinpoche to mobilize the energy of so many people in such a way?

Also there are so many Vajra sisters and brothers caring for the needs of each practitioner. If things were different, I wouldn't have even dreamed of participating in the Garuda Retreat or writing these words in Rome waiting for the Yanti retreat.

The Teaching we received in this retreat was an eight day retreat that started with the instructions for the Dark Garuda Practice from the Lama Zabdon series, the base for the possibility of using the action mantras successfully that are so necessary to counteract various negativities and sickness from this relative condition. It was broadcasted via closed webcast, so it is not easy to speak about this Priceless Teaching. As a simple practitioner I made a samaya with myself that when I return to Tashigar Sur and circumstances are appropriate, I will do a personal retreat of the essential mantra.

Because differently from Ruben Dario, a poet who I admire and who left a permanent mark on my approach to the great themes of the human nature during my adolescence, now I have the rare fortune of being a student following Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The main character in the story The Blue Bird of which I spoke at the beginning, this man-poet who chases the impossible, finally fails in his quest. And the story has a devastating ending. Instead of that, following our Master gives us the certainty of the only true success. Whoever has seen the powerful and loving effect that the festivities of Merigar's Thirty Years has had on the local community, whoever has heard the tribute presented by

the local people and authorities to the work of the Master, whoever knows the living and brilliant miracle of each retreat in Merigar, cannot doubt this even for an instant.

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I consider myself a serious practitioner, but I have never shined in devotion as an a priori belief. This is the first praise I write in my life and it is a praise to Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and to his tireless liberating activity.

After the Trentennale, at one moment I approached Rinpoche. I had seen him so ill in February of this year and so I asked him how his health was. Satisfied by his answer, I then said to him:

"What an amazing work, Master, you have done and keep doing! I admire so you much..."

He replied to me: "I am a practitioner, what else can I do?"

Yes, of course, I thought, and I am a tiny coleopterous with the potentiality to fly and your eyes hopefully can see that.

At the end of the Garuda Retreat, of course, I had to have one preoccupation. And so after a Ganapuja I approached Him:

"Master, recently I cannot remember my dreams ... "

"You must do Guruyoga correctly before sleeping. In this way, if there is a truly interesting dream, you will remember it."

His reply was everything I needed to take up again my night practice. Again the magic of the Master instantaneously dissolves everything useless, the difference between the blue bird from my adolescence that lives in the ordinary mind and the Teaching of the Blue Garuda who flies in the space of our true nature and that He has given us as a present in this Retreat.  $\odot$ 

walking alone, some accompanied, others calling the children, caring for them, some avoiding cars, meeting with acquaintances. People coming and going when the Master is at home, but only people going when He

Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga By Sarasvati Giacalone

his summer from July 27 to 31 l did a course of Kumar Kumari, which is yoga for children at Merigar. During the course we did loads of things like the stories of the Yoga positions and each person was a different character.

There were also all the Yantra breathings!

I really had a lot of fun. The positions were really easy but some of the breathings were a bit difficult because we had

## New Gakyil

Blue: Giovanni Boni, Giovanna Natalini, Rahul Ballarin Yellow: Claudio Maritano, Giovanni Totino, Lorenza Citton Red: Ignazio Bernadoni, Salvatore Zivillica Geko: Roberto Porcedda Assistant geko: Pablo Pilotti

to breathe with our stomachs as well and I had never done it.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

My favourite position of all was "The Mountain" and you do it sitting in the lotus position with your arms up. I get tummy ache quite often but it went away with these exercises.

Then in the afternoon we did workshops on the five elements: water, air, earth, fire, space. It was great to spend time together making sculptures and at the end each person took their work home with them.





Yoga Holiday for adults and children held at Merigar July 27-31. The adult course was led by Laura Evangelisti while the children did Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga with Tiziana Gottardi in the mornings and artistic activities with Alba Papini in the afternoons. Photos: G. Giromella

## International Community News **Merigar**<sup>West</sup>



Yantra Yoga Advanced and 2nd Level Teacher Training with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico at Merigar West August 2011.

## Germany

## Yantra Yoga Beginners course Part I 9 Breathings and 8 Lungsang

with Elke Glander Oct. 7-9 in Munich registration Viktoria Gershevskaya viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

## Vajra Dance Practice Days

with Karin Heinemann Oct. 14–16 in Höfen Registration: Viktoria Gershevskaya viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

## SMS Course: Base and 2nd Level

with Igor Berkhin in Dargyäling, Cologne **Base Level Study & Practice Day:** Oct. 21 2nd Level Study & Practice Days: Oct. 22-23 SMS Practice Day, all levels welcome: Oct. 24 registration Viktoria Gershevskaya viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

## Garab Dorje, Guru Yoga with White A with Alexander Sasha Pubants

Nov. 4–6 in Höfen **Registration Viktoria Gershevskaya** viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

## Yantra Yoga Beginners course Part II Tsadul w/Pranayama,5 Yantras, Vajra

Wave with Elke Glander Nov. 11-13 in Munich registration Viktoria Gershevskaya viktoria.gershevskaya@dzogchen.de

'Dzogchen Without Buddhism' with Jim Valby Nov. 23–24 in Dargyäling, Cologne **SMS Base Level Study & Practice** with Jim Valby Nov. 25–29 in Dargyäling, Cologne **Registration Jil Self** jil.self@dzogchen.de



## France



## Passages

## Died: Zeljka Jovanovic

Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters, The 13th August, full moon day, around 10am, our Vajra Sister and mother died. Her name was Zeljka Jovanovic also known as Yeshe Paldron. Her last 24h hours were very difficult, but she died with eyes, mouth and arms wide open. After that the blessing of the moment of death of a good practitioner was very strong.

Please remember her in your practice. Cvetko, Ana and Marija Jovanovic

The Dzogchen Community in France has great honour to welcome CHÖGYAL **NAMKHAI NORBU** September **PARIS & SOUTH OF FRANCE** 2011 16-17-18 **IN LERAB LING (near Montpellier) SEPTEMBER** Contact: info@rigpa.org 23-24-25 **IN PARIS SEPTEMBER** Organized by the Dzogchen Community Contact: chnn.paris2011@hotmail.fr

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## Zeljka's Songs

Looking for a Home (Songs of a lonely Refugee) HOMELESS, SWEET HOMELESS He\* said "Leaving home beginning of practice" \*\*\* Since I've left what used to be home I've never stopped looking for it: in wide plains by wild ocean in turbulent mountains of Karmaling Ceaselessly running mad w. desire for a roof a quiet corner a hearth of fire Home nowhere to be found For a while I dreamt of heaps of gold coins with which to buy a home I dreamt of the man with whom to build Of plane tickets and a backpack Of Home

Running toward it I've run away The only road I never remembered is to relax in the Nature of Mind forget about Home and find it again Just let me run a bit longer Let me exhaust all desires the backpack of karma on my own doorstep in the dream: A house near the forest a cool spring breathe in and sleep or die

\*Dudjom Rinpoche The Alchemy of Realization



Before I drop down





New Gakyil Cologne Red: Birgit van Leuven, Blue: Saadet Arslan, Yellow: Anita Elis; saadet.a@gmx.de

## Ireland

There is a small Dzogchen Community in Ireland. If anyone would like to contact them you can do so here: Jan Golden, 00353-879795042 taichidublin@gmail.com www.dzogchen.ie Thank you. The Mirror Staff

nowhere to be found

## **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.







## Merigar East

Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen

23 August 907005 Constanta Romania phone: 0040 746 26 08 61 office@dzogchen.ro www.dzogchen.ro

## Merigar East is looking for new administrator

he ideal candidate should be a member of the community for at least three years, should be able to communicate in English and Romanian (or is willing to learn Romanian). He /she should have some experience with the tasks of the admin position which are mentioned below.

It would be a great help if he/she has already participated at some of the retreats in Merigar East and is familiar with the conditions at the Gar and the surrounding area.

Essential is possession of a valid driving license.

The post is open as of now.

Merigar East is in a secluded, but beautiful spot, therefore the admin needs to be able to live in semi retreat Admin's responsibilities include: • Liaison between public and local community;

• Ensure that the administrative part is done (this includes task such as: payment of the bills, reviewing the contracts, etc.);

• Together with Geko purchase supplies for the buildings and for any scheduled activities, retreats, practices, etc., held there;

• Collaborate and communicate with the Gakyil of Merigar East, participate in Gakyil meetings.

#### **Benefits**:

• Free participation in all retreats in the Gar;

 Monthly salary which is enough to live comfortably in Romania (300 Euro);
Free accommodation.

This is a perfect opportunity for you to help the Gar grow and develop and to deepen your own practice. We are looking forward to receiving your application!

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate in contacting us.

If you would like to hear firsthand from our current admin and Geko about their experience, please get in touch with Adrian office@dzogchen.ro or Anatol geko@dzogchen.ro

We're looking forward to hearing from you. Lots of love, The Gakyil of Merigar East office@dzogchen.ro ©

## Czech Republic

SMS First Level Course October 1–7 in Phendeling and Shine Course October 8–9 in Phendeling with Igor Berkhin

Requirements: Participation in the SMS 1st level retreat is possible only for people who already passed SMS Base level exam.

The retreat will take place in Phendeling (southern part of Czech Rep.) For detailed information about registration, accommodation and directions for the travel please contact **blue@dzogchen.cz** ©



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## Passages

**Born**: On Tuesday August 2nd, at 1:25 am near Prague, Czech Republic, a daughter, Barbora, was born to Tereza Starkova and Vitek Pulda. Much love from the whole family Terka, Vitek, Anicka, Barborka



Beginners Vajra Dance retreat with Rita Renzi from July 2 to 6 at Phendeling, Czech Republic.



Kunye part two with Aldo Oneto from August 26 to September 1 at Phendeling





as though we were on holiday, to relax, to do pleasant things, to be healthy and satisfied. For this we can say that we had the most incredible opportunity to both follow a twelve day retreat on Longde and to experience the



## Japan

Munselling, New Ling in Japan

n June 15, 2011 Rinpoche founded a new ling in Japan called Munselling. Munsel (Tib. mun sel) means to remove darkness, or light (or lamp) in Tibetan. So Munselling may mean the "island or a religious place (ling) that removes darkness" or "island of light". There is a very important commentary of Longchenpa on the Guhyagarbatantra is titled "Chogchu Munsel" (Tib. Phyogs bcu mun sel), which means a commentary that removes all obstacles or darkness, which is ignorance.

A Marvelous Holiday with the Master

Dzogchen Longde Retreat

with Khyentse Yeshe

## Andrea Bucaioni and Gabriele Marazzi

hyentse Yeshe started his explanation of the Longde retreat by introducing the importance of being healthy, comfortable and satisfied with one's own condition, touching on these topics several times during his explanations. Our Master had thought up a programme for the retreat in a way that was different from usual with sessions of explanation and practice (around two each day in addition to in-depth sessions and practice given by the instructors) but also with excursions with him so that we could learn to relax and be together with awareness. Khyentse advised us to behave

pleasure of being on holiday with the Master.

The programme for the Longde retreat had rich explanations from the "Vajra Bridge" text and, fortunately for us, numerous practice sessions with Khyentse Yeshe, seeing that the retreat was long and gave that possibility. On some mornings there were Yantra Yoga classes that concentrated on pranayama while in the evening those who wished did practice or danced.

The recreational activities gave us a way to really appreciate the wonderful place in which the retreat was held in its most pleasurable aspects. Khyentse kindly introduced us to some of the more historical aspects of the area with his clarity, direct humorous style

Ancient theatre in Chersonesus Taurica, a historical site near Kunsangar South. Photo: Y. S. Namkhai

and the precision of a university lecture and so we visited Khersones, an ancient Greek colony and bathed in the sea (with Khyentse Yeshe!) while just a few steps behind us we enjoyed the sights of the ancient ruins. We went on two pleasant Sunday walks along the seafront of Yalta, we had a swim at a little beach not far from Balaklava and were on the peak (reached by cablecar) of one of the highest mountains in Crimea. As always the Master was unfailingly generous and dedicated time to us not only for teaching (twice a day) but also his free time during the group outings. It was a wonderful experience to stay with our Master and to be able to share his teaching with the lively growing Community of Kunsangar South.

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Thank you Master!

## New Japanese Gakyil

Yoko Morita (Yellow) Takatomo Sasaki (Red) Keigo Yoneda (Blue) International Community News

20 Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim

Namgyalgar North Gakyil

jamesbailey36@yahoo.com.au

nnth\_geko@dzogchen.org.au

Blue: James Bailey

Yellow: Maree Ploetz

Red: Rick Albert

maree4nn@gmail.com

ralbert@acenet.net.au

Geko: Naomi Tsubaki



Namgyalgar South Gakyil

lydialimesoda@grapevine.com.au

Blue:

Yellow:

Ben Pearsall,

Lydia Nelson,

Alathea Vavasour,

Catherine Horner,

Julian King-Salter,

Barbara Robertson,

Gekö: Thubten Rabgyi,

commence late 2011)

julian.kingsalter@gmail.com

barbara.robertson3@gmail.com

nsth\_geko@dzogchen.org.au (new Geko, Jakub Augustinsky, to

bengakyil@gmail.com

vavasour@bigpond.com

Namgyalgar

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

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

> The retreat will include the webcast Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Webcast "Lama Zabdon Nyinthig, a Terma of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje".

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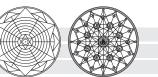
## Chöd Retreat

Led by Angie Gilbert, authorized SMS Base Level teacher 27 December-3 January

Teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from Tashigar North will be available via webcast during the retreat. Enquiries and Registrations: Viki Forscutt, secretary@dzogchen.org.au Tel/Fax: 02 4473 7668

A Course in the Vajra Dance of the Song of Vajra Parts 1 & 2 with authorised instructor, Cosimo Di Maggio at Buchan in Victoria, Australia 11-23 September 2011 Enquiries and Bookings: Tenzin Namtrul, tnamtrul@yahoo.com





## DCA Tsegyalgar East

Further Information at:

www.dzogchen.org.au

2011-12

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



Photo: John La France

Kyu calculating the number of earth mandala to fit onto the Vajra Hall mandala base surrounding the universal mandala.

Vajra Hall **Construction Update** by John LaFrance

the building, it appears enormous and seems to occupy the entire top of the hill. Walking inside the structure I had the strange sensation of both vastness

tiers of the roof. This will be followed by the installation of the synthetic slate roofing materials and pouring the concrete base for the Universal Mandala. The Construction Team spent many hours discussing materials for the roof before making the material and color selection and many more hours discussing the concrete floor and completing additional engineering studies. One of the most exciting decisions coming out of those discussions is to include piping in the mandala concrete to allow for future radiant heating. Imagine how wonderful it will be to dance or do yantra yoga on a warm floor. Marvelous! All of these steps will be completed before the end of the building season near the end of October. What's especially amazing is that all of this work has been accomplished with a very small crew of between 2-6 workers. Simultaneous with the construction process, Tsegyalgar East's Gakyil has initiated a Land Clearing Project in conjunction with State Forestry officials to clear large areas of overgrown pine trees and shrubs. The result will be

that upper Khandroling in general will be more open and specifically the area around the Vajra Hall will be more open to the sky and views across the valleys



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Australian Tour March-April 2011

Namgyalgar North Inaugural Retreat 16–22 March Queensland – Glasshouse Mountains 206 Glasshouse-Woodford Road, Glasshouse Mtns, Qld, Australia

Namgyalgar South Retreat 6–12 April New South Wales - South Coast 9000 Princes Highway, Tilba Tilba, NSW, Australia

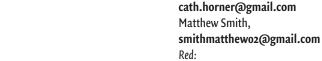
Information at: www.dzogchen.org.au

**Retreats at Namgyalgar South** 

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#### Practicing the Essence of Ati Yoga

Khorde Rushen, The Separation of Samsara and Nirvana Led by Elise Stutchbury, authorized SMS Base Level teacher 28th September-7th October



ust about one year ago during Yeshi Namkhai's retreat at Khandroling I visited the Vajra Hall construction site. At the time only the infrastructure work had been completed including the concrete piers for the columns, the perimeter retaining wall and the leveling of the interior dimension. The massive steel beams and other construction materials were stacked around the site awaiting erection.

Now, one year later, as I climbed up the last stretch of hill leading to the construction site I was surprised at how dense the trees and shrubs had become since my last visit. I'd seen construction photos on the website (http://tsegyalgar.org/localcenters/tsegyalgareast/ vajrahall/) and expected the building to be very prominent from lower down the hill. Instead it wasn't until getting very close to the site that the building came into view. Then, being very near

and intimacy in the space. It's hard to describe the feeling of spaciousness and warmth at the same time. The 35 foot high ceiling and 116 foot diameter of the floor certainly create the spaciousness and the wooden beams create the warmth. Add to that the unique power of the place and it's a very strong experience.

So much has been accomplished during this exceptionally hot summer building season. The 24 piers and supports for the promenade roof were completed. Then the steel frame for the promenade was erected and the very labor-intensive job of framing and sheeting the entire promenade was completed. Before seeing the structure I hadn't realized that the promenade actually contains more space than the interior space for the Universal Mandala. It's huge! Next comes the very difficult and precise job of building and installing 36 skylights in the top two

and hills.

As I finished my visit to the Vajra Hall some friends sat and sang Song of Vajra on the mandala space. Afterwards I felt a strong urge to stay longer and a member of the group who practices there regularly said "it's difficult to leave isn't it". He is so right! Difficult to leave indeed.



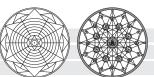
## Passages

Born: September 10, 2011 This day will be remembered for a long time. At 2:32 PM our lovely daughter came to the world bringing us a lot of joy and happiness. Maya Aleksandra Borkiewicz and Mom are feeling fine. Best regards, **Borkiewicz Family** 

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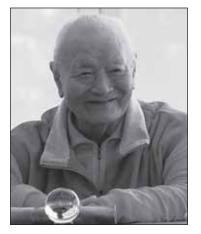






Khyentse Yeshe Teachings

2012 USA Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



June 13th–17th: Hawaii Retreat June 22nd-24th: Los Angeles Retreat June 29th–July 1st: **New York City Retreat** July 6th-10th: **Tsegyalgar East Retreat** July 11th-12th: Santi Maha Sangha **Base Exam** at Tsegyalgar East July 13thth-17th: Santi Maha Sangha **First Level Training** at Tsegyalgar East





his fall, Khyentse Yeshe will be coming to North America for several wonderful opportunities! My Reincarnation, the epic father-son drama about Khyentse and his father Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, is showing in Amherst and premiering in NYC and LA theaters. Khyentse will be attending the NYC screenings to offer question and answer sessions for viewers. In conjunction with these screenings Khyentse will

Tsegyalgar West

and My Reincarnation Theatrical Tour Fall 2011 be offering two formal teachings. The

**DCA Tsegyalgar East** 

Conway, MA 01341 USA

PO Box 479

first will be a course at Amherst College on the Hevajra Tantra and the second will be a Dzogchen Teaching Retreat held at Tibet House in NYC.

## **My Reincarnation at Hamptons** Film Festival

The US Theatrical tour of My Reincarnation will kick off October 13th-17th at the Hamptons International Film Festival

The Samadhi of Completion A Course with Khyentse Yeshe

Join Khyentse Yeshe for a four day course at Amherst College this October 19th-23rd, 2011. Course free by donation.

Phone: 413 369 4153 Fax & Bookstore: 413 369 4473

secretary@tsegyalgar.org www.www.tsegyalgareast.org

## My Reincarnation at Amherst Cinema

On October 22nd and 23rd the film My Reincarnation will show at Amherst Cinema followed by question and answer sessions.

## **My Reincarnation Premieres** in NYC and LA

October 28th through November 2nd My Reincarnation premieres at Cinema Village in New York City with Q and A Sessions.

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat with Khyentse Yeshe

Khyentse Yeshe will offer a three-day retreat on Dzogchen Teachings at Tibet House in NYC from November 4th–6th, 2011.

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

## **Upcoming Events:**

Primordial Dzogchen Knowledge Theory and Practice with Jim Valby September 17th-18th Florence, MA

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Dance of Song of Vajra with Nelida Saporiti September 22nd–October 2nd Tsegyalgar East in Conway, MA

SMS Base: Parlung with Jim Valby December 3rd-4th Tsegyalgar East in Conway, MA

For more info visit www.Tsegyalgar.org, call (413) 369- 4153 or email secretary@tsegyalgar.org

DCA and SSI Locations: Tsegyalgar East at 18 Schoolhouse Rd. Conway, MA Khandroling at 160 East Buckland Rd. Buckland, MA Florence, MA Space at 140 Pine St. Rm 10

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

## Tsegyalgar West

Ranchos Los Naranjos – Baja California Sur – Mexico

The "Winter Gar" of North America. Recommended from October to May.

- ....."how is Temple in Baja? Temple are the elements".....
- ....."at direct contact with nature and very strong elements"......
- ..... "so vast that helps to develop your understanding of the nature of the mind"....
- ....."in a place like this you feel that everything is normal".....
- ....."Ideal to experience intensive practice as Rushen and for those interested in doing personal retreats, short and long terms".....

Direction: San Jose los Cabos, BCS, Mexico.

If you arrive with your own transportation: At the km 53 of the "Transpeninsular road" from San Jose de Cabo direction toward La Paz, take the dirt road at the sign "RASTRO TIF" on left for 15 km.

By plane: The gar is 45 minute from the International Airport "San Jose Cabo (SJD)". The gar offers airport pickup service. Write to: twestoffice@ gmail.com or to the secretary at : tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com

Recommended: We invite people to enjoy the beauty of the surroundings before or after retreat.

Nearby are some beautiful beaches. The Sea of Cotez side has Cabo Pulmo a protected reef area. People enjoy windsurfing, diving, swimming with sea lions near La Paz, whales watching, etc.

On the west side of BCS is the Pacific Ocean. Todos Santos, a natural oasis in the desert and is ideal for surfers, art lovers and food lovers. The Gar itself borders the "Reserva de la Biosfera" one of the main ecological protected areas in Mexico, a pristine environment with a great variety of flora and fauna some of which endemic of the area.

# **TSEGYALGAR WEST**

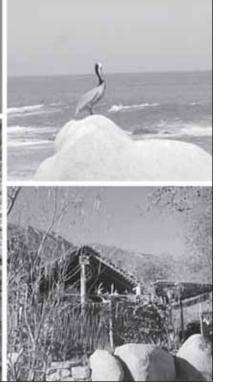
www.tsegyalgarwest.org

We are not buying land to grow potatoes, we are buying land to make rainbow bodies possible.

San José los Cabos, BCS, México

Baja California Sur, Mexico





If you plan to come from Mexico City: We recommend you spend few days in this interesting city. The local Dzogchen Community can send a car for you to go the International Airport (Juarez International MEX) and help you to organize your visit in Mexico city. For information: pelzomling@ gmail.com

Facilities: The Gar offer economical spaces and services, for personal and group retreats: • Open Gonpa for Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance.  $\cdot$  20 casitas (cabins) for 1 to 4 people. · Ecological: communal kitchen, camping area, compost toilets, showers.

• Spaces ideal to practice with the 5 elements in the pristine nature of Baja California Sur, Mexico.

Services and program: The Gar can assist in shopping for the people in retreat. Internet is available in the office of the gar. For the program of the Gar visit: www.tsegyalgarwest.org and http://bajagar.blogspot.com/

Inquiries and information: tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com www.tsegyalgarwest.org http://bajagar.blogspot.com/  $\odot$ 



## Passages

Married: Carolina Mingolla and Thomas Marconi were married on August 21, 2011 in Berkeley California.

International Community News



Message From Tashigar North

he security situation on Isla

Margarita is more or less how it

has always been. Recently some

rumors circulated about the situation

in Margarita but the Gakyil wants to

inform everyone that these rumors are

the Gakyil to build a dormitory to ac-

commodate practitioners who wish

to come to the teaching retreats at

Tashigar Norte and thereby improve

safety conditions for them. They will be

During his last visit, Rinpoche asked

Gakyil

completely false.

operational for the month of November

as we begin our program of courses

and retreats. In addition, the Gakyil has

been working on strengthening internal

security in the Gar. We have invested

in the latest of security technology.

We are also trying to coordinate with

local authorities to arrange for police

protection in the area of Pedro Gonzalez

and the Gar but we still have no confir-

wish to visit is to follow guidelines be-

low to make sure your stay in Margarita

Our recommendation for those who

mation about it.

is safe and pleasant.

Tashigar North /Finca Tashigar

**General Recommendations** 

1. Book accommodation preferably at

the Gar, sleeping in the camping, the

dormitory, or the posada. You can also

choose a hotel such as Dunes or Hes-

peria. If you decide to stay in a private

home or inn in Pedro Gonzalez, do so

in groups and follow the additional

2. Do not bring your luxury items like

jewelry or sophisticated electronics. If

you bring your camera and laptop, do

3. Whenever you move through the

streets, do so in groups and try to ar-

range a reliable taxi contact. Ask the

wire transfer (only available way to

not show them on the streets.

recommendations.

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

taxi contacts.

resident.

Margarita

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

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

THE MIRROR · No.111 · July, August 2011

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, November 9, 2010.  $\bigcirc$ 

## **Reservation System** Camping & Dormitories Autumn Spring Season 2011–2012

he Gakyil of Tashigar Norte wishes to inform all those interested in accommodation at the Gar during the scheduled activities between November 2011 and January 2012 that it will be necessary to reserve your space in advance. We have decided to implement a reservation system in order to offer users more comfortable spaces. There will be available our new dormitories in adittion to our Camping area.

In order to reserve a space practitioners have to pay in advance for their accommodation. This is the only way to guarantee a space. Also all incomes related to this issue will support our ongoing works to make the space comfortable with all the related services.

Camping: Available 40 lots for a tent daily cost of US\$ 4.00 (cost by lot, max. 2 people). Includes Access to common

kitchen, drinking water and toilets.

Dormitory: Available 16 bunks divided into two rooms with access to toilets and located 50 meters from Tashigar Norte dining room. Daily Cost US\$ 8.00.

tortugadorada/posadatortugadorada

1) Write to tashigarnortesecretary@

2) You will receive a pre-reservation confirmation and you will have 5 days to send the money by the international

Guest house: Visit www.wix.com/posada

gmail.com asking for a space pre-reservation indicating if you wish a space in camping or dormitory and the precise period that you want to book.

transfer money from foreign countries, detailed account information at the bottom of the message) or to proceed with a transfer in to our account in Banco Mercantil for residents in Venezuela. (Detailed account information at the bottom of the message.) To calculate the import you have to multiply the number of days that you want to book by the cost of each day according to the chosen space. For example if you want 30 days in camping 30 x 4= 120 US dollars. Plus you have to add US\$ 10 (charged by the receiving bank) and the amount that your own bank charges for the international transfer. Due to exchange regulations in Venezuela Pay Pal system is not available. Do not insist.

3) Once you have made the transfer, send a letter to the following email addresses (tashigarnortesecretary@ gmail.com and tatiana\_fedorchenko@ yahoo.com), informing the Gar of your transfer. You must notify both addresses with the subject: Reservation for Accommodation.

Who can attend? Open to all people who have knowledge of the First Level of Yantra Yoga and would like to become instructors or deepen their knowledge and experience

Course Content: Preliminary loosening exercises, 9 purification breathings, Tsigjong, Eight movements, Tsadul, Pranayama of The Four Characteristic Conditions, Five basic yantras of the First, Second and Third Series Pranayama of The Four Profound Applications, Vajra Wave

4) When we confirm the transfer, we will send you the definitive reservation. Print it and bring it with you when you come to the Gar. This definitive reservation it is extendable only if there is available space.

Gakyil or reliable local resident about

4. Bring the money you will need while

you are here. When you change money,

do so with a secure and trustworthy

person. Ask the Gakyil or reliable local

5. When you go to the beach, go in

groups and do not stay beyond 6 pm.

6. Never buy drugs from anyone in

7. Always maintain your presence.

5) If you don't notify us regarding the transfer within the 5 days, you will lose your pre reservation and you will have to transmit again.

## **General Advice**

1) Margarita Island has a Tropical climate so we advise you to bring water proof tent, insect repellant and an umbrella.

2) Some lockers are available. You should bring your own lock. 3) Bring a big plastic sheet to use as a base for the tents and to protect from insects.

Tashi Deleks, The Gakyil of Tashigar North

#### International Wire Transfer Account Information (US\$)

Beneficiary: Margarita Promotions C.A. Calle Bolivar, finca Tashigar, casa numero 1, Pedro Gonzalez, Nueva Esparta, Venezuela Bank: Mercantil Commercebank N.A. 220 Alhambra Circle, Coral Gables, Florida 33134, USA. Account Number: 8303628606 ABA: 067010509 SWIFT: MNBMUS33

#### National Transfers

Beneficiary: Asociación Civil Nuevo Tashigar Del Norte Calle Bolivar, s/n Finca Tashigar Norte Pedro González Nueva Esparta, Venezuela Cta. Cte. Banco Mercantil  $\bigcirc$ 01050124501124018905

The Gakyil of Tashigar North is pleased to announce:

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Dzogchen Teachings Retreat

December 27th of 2011 to January 2nd, 2012

Who can attend? Open to all those who are interested in the transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Cost: Full Price US\$ 300 Meritorius US\$ o Sustaining US\$ 120 Ordinary US\$ 240 Reduced US\$ 150

#### ORIENTE

November 18-20, 2011 La Asunción, Margarita Island, Venezuela Organized by Tashigar North

#### Dear Community,

We would like to tell you about an event that we are organizing in Margarita from November 18-20, 2011 in La Asunción. This is another activity that we expect will contribute to diffuse Rinpoche's efforts in relation with the Teachings. It is also an opportunity to let the local people know that we are here and everyone is always welcome. This will coincide with the celebrations of the Tashigar North's 10th Anniversary that is going to be scheduled for January 6–7, 2012. We invite you to come and participate of this program that includes some aspects of the Indian Culture as well Tibetan and of course an introduction to the Dzogchen Teachings. Please visit the site: www.festivaloriente.com

For information contact: tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com

## **Course for Deepening the Practice of The Dance of the** Song of Vajra with Bodhi Krause November 11th-16th

Cost: US\$ 120 (with membership discounts)

Who can attend? Open to all people who have knowledge of Dance of the Song of Vajra and would like to deepen their knowledge and experience. Includes the latest updates given at Merigar West last summer.

For this course will be available our new dormitories inside the gar!!!! US\$ 10 a day. Registration at:

tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com

## Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners

with Marisa Alonso November 28th–December 2nd

#### Cost: US\$ 20

Who can attend? Open to all those who are interested in practicing Yantra Yoga. For this course will be available our new dormitories inside the gar!!!! US\$ 10 a day. **Registration at:** 

tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com

## **Teacher's Training on the First** Level of Yantra Yoga with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti December 17th–December 23rd in Cordoba, Argentina

Cost: US\$ 270 without discounts

#### Reaistration

You can proceed with the registration through a international bank transfer in the account detailed at the bottom of the mes-

## sage.

No discounts can be applied. No work exchange programs either.

For this course will be available our new dormitories inside the gar!!!! US\$ 10 a day. **Registration at:** tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com

## Teacher's Training on The Second Level of The Vajra Dance

with Prima Mai & Adriana Dal'Borgo January 9-16, 2012

Cost: US\$ 400 without discounts Who can attend? This course if for those who have good knowledge of the female advance (if the course is cancelled well give the money back) See the bank account information at the bottom of the message.

(Pamo) and male (Pawo) parts of the

Dance of the Song of Vajra and would

like to deeepen the practice or aspire to

become 2nd level Vajra Dance Instruc-

Important: This course requires a

minimum of 20 people. The deadline

is October 30th to enroll. If there are

not enough people, the course will be

cancelled. We ask to pay the 30% in

tor

Registration

Please confirm your participation to: tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com

> Tashi deleks, Gakyil de Tashigar Norte Prolog. Calle Bolívar s/n Finca Tashigar Norte Pedro Gozzalez – Isla Margarita (T) 58-2952580332 www.tashigarnorte.org







**Tashigar South** Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar Calle pública S/N

Tanti 5155 Pcia. de Córdoba Argentina

Tashigar South is pleased to announce Retreats with

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



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Passages

Died: Diana Montenegro died on 21 of August in Cordoba, Argentina.



## Passages

Died: Our Vajra Brother Adolfo Fredrico died the morning of August 19 at 8:30 am. Adolfo was cremated in Quilmes and his ashes will be brought to Cordoba, as he expressly asked before he died. He was accompanied by his daughter, friends and brothers of the Sangha, until the last moment. 🔘

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other activities January/February 2012 January 12th Arrival to Tashigar South January 20th to 24th: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu First Retreat

February 3rd to 7th: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Second Retreat

February 15th to 20th: **Teacher's Training Dance of Vajra First Level** with Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo

February 22nd: Losar, Tibetan New Year

February 24th to 28th: Advanced course of Song of Vajra Dance with Prima Mai

March 2nd: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu leaves to Brisbane

Contact: secretaria@tashigarsur.com

## Poem

The Day of the Children

them a movie.

- In praise of the Terma I am humbled in its presence
- In this place, on this mountain this sacred Khandroling
- A ray of compassion and love flowed from the Dakinis heart To the mind of the Master
- May its luminous brilliance shine into this realm
- Like the rays of the rising sun on a clear summer morning

I give praise to the Terma

Joe Zurylo Conway, MA







n August 19, 2011, Tashigar South invited the children from the local school that is next door to the Gar to celebrate the Day of the Children. Thirteen

children came with their teacher and we gave them breakfast and showed

After that, we gave each child a bag with presents (pencils, colors, and different

useful things for school) and also some gifts for the school, like soccer balls, etc. O



ennifer Fox, Director, in front of the theatre for the screening of My Reincarnation in Sar Rafael, California on July 17 2011. Photo: R. Welsh

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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## "To Be And Not To Be, That Is the Answer" (Claudio Naranjo)

## Buddhism and Psychotherapy edited by Mark Unno (Wisdom Books, 2006)

#### Andy Lukianowicz

his book, a collection of papers given at a conference in 2004, is essential reading for all those involved or interested in the evolving interaction of Buddhist practice and psychotherapy at both the practical and theoretical levels. Editor Mark Unno's detailed introduction gives a broad overview of the contents with synopses of the individual contributions, useful for selecting a reading order. Although only two authors treat specifically Tibetan Buddhism (one of whom, Anne Klein, also treats Dzogchen) all are well worth reading.

The two countries with the strongest psychological culture are USA and Japan, and the Japanese contributors offer valuable glimpses into how a Buddhist country (as opposed to the Christian West) has moulded, adapted and innovated psychotherapeutic theory and practice in alignment with Buddhist views of the most widespread forms of Buddhism in Japan: Zen, Vajrayana Shingon, and Pure Land Shin. Especially illuminating and touching is Yasunobo's discussion of sand – in the aspect of sandplay, one the fastest growing forms of psychotherapy in the world, and the sacred aspect of sand as carrier of the blessings of the mantra of light in Shingon. Incidentally, editor Mark Unno treats this subject in detail in his book Shingon Refractions, recounting the work of Buddhist teacher Myoe. He was a contemporary of the important Zen master Dogen and the Shin masters Shinran and Honen - the latter he bitterly opposed over the diffusion of his form of Pure Land practice in Japan, Myoe (who kept a diary record of his dreams for 40 years) made the sand practice a central feature of the Shingon Dharma he transmitted.

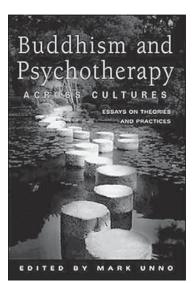
Taking on board John Reyn-

additional ngondro, 100 hours of psychotherapy?

Anne Klein is the only contributing author who treats Dzogchen directly. Elucidating the energy of the sacred, she brings the Dzogchen themes of non-duality of opposites, the womb as primitive and transcendent reality, self-knowing and open awareness, primordial purity and effortlessness, spontaneity and unbounded wholeness, into her discussion of a psychology of the sacred. A bonus: written at the time she was co-authoring the book on the Dzogchen teachings of the Bonpo master Lishu Daring (as essential, if not more so, that Pettit's book on Mipham's Buddhist Dzogchen teachings, as a study of Dzogchen logic and philosophy), she peppers her essay with translations from Lopon Tenzin Namdak's commentary on the Magyud tantric cycle of teachings, otherwise very hard to find.

Also worthy of attention is the article by Waldron, which contrasts the personal and individualistic concepts of depth psychology with the process-oriented Buddhist psychological theories of the alaya-vijnana and interdependent origination, elaborated most strongly in the Abhidharma and Mahayana Yogacara; rather than being mechanistic this model is dynamic (an insight dear to H.V. Guenther) and decisively refutes the creation of a pleonastic 'self' (also in cosmological terms) as agent ('soul'). In fact the self/no-self Western psychology /Buddhist 'dilemma' (explicated at length and in detail by Engler and Safran) is the leitmotif of the general discourse of these essays.

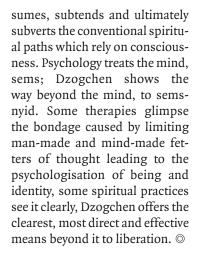
Also worthy of note is Payne's observations on the danger of Westerner practitioners transforming Buddhist Dharma into a humanistic (and exotic?) version of Christianity as a Buddhism based on self, proposing original sin as self-alienation, repentance as atonement and divine redemption as self-redemption. The alternative he presents is the dynamic vector of the Bodhisattva ideal and path of unselfish motivation leading to realisation of self-less bodhicitta. Albeit commenting favourably on Jung's contribution to the study of the psychology of Buddhism (largely based on the pioneering work of D.T. Suzuki) he does criticize Jung's attempt to psychologise a metalanguage of religious practice (as aspiration for individuation) and corroborates Reynolds' (and others') distinction between the Buddhist goal of enlightenment for all and the Jungian goal of individuation. Aronson too contrasts the no-self theory of

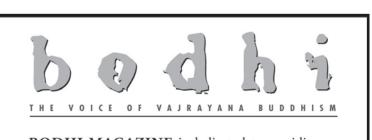


karmic action with the self-driven theory in Western psychology, also finding space to make his own comments on Almaas' observation on the tendency of meditation practice in some to bring forward emotional issues, that not all meditation practitioners and teachers know how to manage and direct constructively. His scrutiny on identification and disidentification as opposed to dissociation, self-realisation and dissolution of self-representation, deserve attention. Engler in his essay usefully lists 10 unhealthy motivations in meditation practice: seeking perfection and invulnerability; fear of individuation; avoidance of responsibility and accountability; fear of intimacy and closeness; substitute for grief and mourning; avoidance of feelings; passivity and dependence; self-punitive guilt (e.g., 'I'm not enlightened because I don't practise enough'); devaluing of reason and intellect; escape from intrapsychic experience. In a word, maybe the greatest pitfall in spiritual practice and endeavour he discerns is narcissism. Interestingly, he recounts a Theravada retreat he attended, where after 3 days' practice he was asked whether he had 'seen the light yet?' His comment is that apparently the retreat leader, the renowned Mahasi Sayadaw, thought 3 days were sufficient 'to get there' (which says something about the additional obstacles and hindrances we Westerners labour under; Sayadaw pointed out that talking to Westerners had enabled him to discover a

tia of man's fear of death makes the condition in which one finds oneself of fundamental importance in all schools of Buddhism (as of every religion), and in particular Shin Buddhism with the predominance it attributes to entrance into the Pure Land. Honen and Shinran taught that Buddha Amida's compassion was directed particularly to the poor, the uneducated and the wicked, usually ignored (except as a source of revenue) by the Buddhist clergy elite; in fact many Buddhist institutions made a nice living terrorising simple people with the threat of Buddhist hells looming at the time of death. Honen and Shinran, both of whom felt comfortable with the underclass who were the privileged recipients by Buddha Amida's compassion, taught the reassuring lesson that at death it is much better to eagerly expect and rely on Buddha Amida's welcoming warm compassionate embrace. The modern Shin approach is outlined in these essays.

In conclusion, it would be interesting to hear psychologists involved in Tibetan Buddhist-related therapies: Trungpa's Maitri programme, Akong's Tara Rokpa therapy, parts of the Karuna therapy offered in the UK, and aspects of Sogyal Rinpoche's hospice movement (and also therapies not close to Tibetan Buddhism, such as Caroline and David Brazier's Rogersian other-person therapy, appropriately grounded in Pure Land Amida Buddhism) immediately spring to mind. Also certainly therapists in our own Dzogchen Community, many of whom trained under the late Gestalt luminary Barry Simmons, must have many precious insights to share on aspects of any common ground there might be between Dzogchen and psychotherapy. Dzogchen sub-





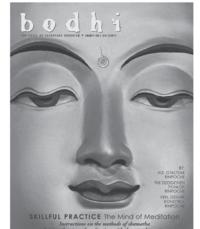
olds' cited warning (expressed in his Self-liberation through seeing with Naked Awareness) not to distort reductively Dharma to fit psychological discourse, ideology and language (in relation to basic concepts, praxis and outcome) yet seeking what is (mutually) valuable, constructive and complementary in this interface, each contributor offers subtle (and generally hard-won) insights - gleaned in many cases through clinical practice – as well as methodologies, and also advice, especially useful to Dharma practitioners who might never undertake or even consider psychotherapy. Who doesn't remember Trungpa's (probably apocryphal and possibly alcoholically challenged?) quip, that Western Tantric Buddhists should do an

new dukha: psychic suffering); one might also ask whether this indicates that there may be a form of osal or lhundrup accompanying tongpa or kadag in Hinayana after all?

Also fascinating is Metcalf's intricate (and at times hard to follow) comparison of certain aspects of Zen with Winnicott's object relations theory (especially in young children).

The last section, comprising three essays, deals with Shin Buddhism in relation to dying and death, and is equally compelling. Although Honen and Shinran both taught that one did not have to wait for death and that in fact a practitioner with true devotion and entrustment (shinjin) could enter Buddha Amida's Pure Land now, in this very life (due to Buddha Amida's fundamental 18th Vow) the iner-





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The Early Days of Merigar

#### John Shane

Reprinted with kind permission from Merigar Letter no. 12, Year 4, July 2011

n 1981, perhaps the least likely thing that the inhabitants of the town of Arcidosso imagined would happen is that Tibet would arrive on their doorstep.

And yet that was precisely what was about to happen.

In those days hardly anyone in rural Tuscany gave a thought to the far off and almost mythical 'Land Of The Snows', that had remained closed off behind the high Himalayas for so many centuries.

The people of Italy were, in any case, at the time, preoccupied with problems much closer to home.

The day I set out to fly from London to Pisa to look at the land that would become Merigar, a few weeks after the contract had been signed for its purchase, I bought 'Time' and 'Newsweek' in a kiosk on the way to the check-in desk at the airport, and saw that the cover articles of both magazines were about the latest activities of the Red Brigades who were terrorizing the country, with lurid photos of bombed-out buildings and bullet-ridden bodies in various Italian cities. Together with the ongoing problems caused by organized crime and Italy's recurring economic troubles, the prevailing political turmoil convulsing Italian society was the main topic in the headlines.

In the midst of the continuing national crises of the day, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who was at the time the Professor of Tibetan and Mongolian language and culture at the Oriental Institute of the University of Naples, had been searching for a place to serve as a base for the growing community of individuals from all the world who had sought him out, hoping to receive spiritual teachings from him.

If Norbu – as he then permitted us to call him, using his first name - had been reluctant to assume the role a spiritual teacher in the first place, preferring to remain a private person practising the Dzogchen teachings he had learned from his own teachers in Tibet whilst working in Naples in a normal job to maintain his family, he was even more reluctant to found the kind of centre that he saw springing up around other Tibetan Lamas in the West.

Aware as he was of the tendency for formal religious institutions to develop in ways that can come to obscure and contradict their essential message, he was instinctively wary of forming any kind of organization.

So for the first few years all the retreats at which he taught were held in a variety of improvised locations, such as out of season hotels, resorts that were taken over for a few weeks, and - on one occasion – in an enormous ruined farmhouse in the mountains of northern Italy that had no glass in its windows and no doors in its entrances, around which we slept in tents after receiving teachings each day, appropriately enough, on death and dying, while thunder storms raged all around, often accompanied by dramatic displays of eerie lightning that lit up the blackness of the night.

In this way, Rinpoche's students became used to following

Merigar, the Yellow House in 1982. teaching - he called it a 'Gar', which in Tibetan means a nomad's encampment, in this case 'Merigar', the encampment of the fire mountain, Monte Amiata being an extinct volcano.

Rinpoche has said recently, 'I never had a plan as to how I would go ahead... I have always worked with circumstances as they arose'. When we speak about the

been involved in the purchase of the property for the Community to drive up the mountain with me to show me the house and land that we had just bought.

It was an overcast day, and low cloud hung over Monte Amiata. When we arrived at the end of a long dirt road, we came to a locked gate, and parked our cars. I climbed over the gate, and

the product of the play of impermanent causes and conditions, with no inherent self-nature.

And in the dream of our lives we act to accomplish our aims, even as we are aware that their nature is, from the absolute point of view, illusory.

I am always amazed at Rinpoche's courage: with very little in the way of financial resources – much of which he provided himself from his own savings and with only a group of young people who were more blessed with enthusiasm than with experience, he bought a tumble-down farmhouse on a remote mountainside in Toscana and proceeded to turn it into a major centre for the preservation of the essence of the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan culture.

Together with a small number of others from various countries around the world, I moved to Toscana in 1981 to help with the founding of Merigar. If I ask myself now what on Earth the inhabitants of the local towns must thought of us at the time, I know that it was confusing for them.

We were young, we had long hair, we wore strange clothes, a high proportion of us were foreigners who spoke very little or very bad Italian, and we had no visible means of support.

Yet the local people welcomed

An early retreat at Merigar in the open air.

nomads, setting everything up ter all, talking about a teaching looked like a ruined farm in the for the duration of the retreat, and then dismantling it all, before moving on to the next place, and we learned the principle of 'nonattachment', even with regard to the Teachings themselves. Perhaps it was only when he felt he that a few of his students understood that the essence of the spiritual teachings he was conveying should not be mistaken for the trappings of culture or for the structure of an organization that he felt he could take on the challenge of the purchase of a place of our own as a base for the Teachings, but whether that is true or not, when, after much searching, a suitable place was finally found on Monte Amiata – just to remind his students not to forget why he had previously been reluctant to allow any centres to be created around his

him from place to place like the Dzogchen teachings, we are, af- turning a corner, could see what that insists that one lives in the present moment, which is all we can ever know. The past is, of course, over and done, and will never return, and the future does not yet exist. A Master, such as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, always remains present in awareness without distraction, and this has enabled Rinpoche to respond with extraordinary precision to the challenges of developing his Community around the world, overcoming great difficulties with remarkable clarity, patience, and perseverance. When I arrived at Pisa airport that day in 1981, I hired a car and drove up to Arcidosso for the first time. After looking around the town, I found a room at the Hotel Giardino, and persuaded the local real-estate agent who had



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'The real principle of the Teachings is to be found in the individual,' he would say, 'the individual is the true centre'.

And yet, when he did begin to teach a few students, such was the quality of his teaching that his reputation quickly spread far and wide, and after a few years he found that the pressure on him and his family, as well as the needs of the increasing numbers of his students, left him no choice but to act.

## distance.

At that moment, the sun came out, and a huge rainbow arose that went from one horizon to the next, and at the same time, a herd of small goats came running out of the building down the track towards me.

I took out my camera to capture an image of the moment, and I still have the photo.

But, of course, as well as being a symbol of auspicious circumstances, a rainbow is also a symbol of the illusory nature of all that manifests, and I have never forgotten that when I am at Merigar.

No matter how solid it appears, even Monte Amiata, even Merigar, are, from the ultimate point of view, only as real as an appearance in a dream.

Yet the dream arises, like a rainbow, illusory but apparent,

us into their homes, their restaurants, their shops and their offices with an open-heartedness that does credit to the great traditions of hospitality of the region, and I will always be deeply grateful to them for that.

Somehow or other, in the midst of the political confusions in Italy at the time, when the hard-working people of the Amiata region saw on the TV news every day reports of young people who were losing their heads in ideological dogma that led them to commit acts of violence against the state, there was still enough trust in the hearts of the local people to welcome us, no matter how strange we – and what we were doing up on Monte Amiata – must have seemed to them.

>> continued on the following page

>> continued from previous page

At first we all lived in the same one house together with Rinpoche. There was no other place to sleep. In the main rooms of the first floor of what is now the Serkhang, or Golden House, Rinpoche had the only bed, and the rest of us slept on the floor, like caterpillars, in our sleeping bags. There was no electricity, no telephone, and no running water. We had no indoor toilets.

We had very little capital, so we had to try to do everything ourselves, rather than hiring professional builders. Everyone - no matter what their background, education, or occupation worked together, and Rinpoche himself led from the front as always, working harder than everyone else.

I stood shoulder to shoulder with Rinpoche digging out the cowsheds that are now Merigar's shop and kitchen. I wheeled barrows of cement to him as he built the retaining wall behind the house that keeps the hillside from sliding down.

>> Yangti continued from page 1 as the lines of people swell seeking to speak with him.

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

This accessibility was indicated recently in the method devised for us to seek permission to attend these special teachings. In order to receive these teachings, each individual had to communicate directly with Rinpoche individually by email – or to use his exact word for those who had the "courage" to ask his permission, permission was automatically granted. So from all over the world hundreds - over a thousand practitioners hovered in hope and fear before receiving that wellquoted response from Rinpoche granting us permission and the joyful and somewhat charming indication that we were accepted. "OK. I put your name in the lists of Yangti. Ciao ciao!!!!!! NN."

In the early days, when we were getting the house in order, everyone worked and ate and slept in the same large openplan upstairs room together, and everyone played together, too. There was endless laughter.

Rinpoche taught us many things in the formal sessions at the retreats that took place at intervals, but we learned so much from just living with him, from just being with him. We did a lot of practice, we worked hard, and we had so much fun.

Of course, there were many difficulties, but Rinpoche never seemed to get discouraged.

I have the abiding image of him sitting with a group of students surrounding him in the garden playing a board game with one student at a time. The game was quite simple, really, and did not involve any complicated rules: one player had white counters, and the other black counters, and each student in turn would try to beat Rinpoche by taking his counters off the board.

If others are like me, you probably gave a shorter or longer version of where you were at in your practice babbling on needlessly. During the retreat Rinpoche mentioned for those who had the excruciating experience of NOT receiving a reply to their request to him, he was "innocent" as there were some computer failures not his fault!

In the midst of these marvelous teachings which occurred twice daily, to behold the vast diversity of our Community was uplifting - old and young, well disposed householders, vagabonds, poets, artists, musicians, many monastics in robes of different denominations, youthful parents and families with lots of kids (including a certain young Namkhai I overheard announcing himself as the "captain of Merigar West" to

But Rinpoche would always win. No matter how much we tried, none of us could beat him.

After a while, this was not much fun for Rinpoche. So he began playing continuously with just one person, and as usual he proceeded to remove all the other player's counters. But this time, when he had almost won, he turned the game board around, and, taking the hopeless losing position of his opponent with only one or two counters left, he began to fight back until he had once again cleared the board of almost all his opponent's counters and had almost won again. Then, with a smile, he would turn the board around, take the losing position with only a few counters remaining, and proceed once more to transform that seemingly hopeless situation into a winning position, repeating this over and over again, much to everyone's astonishment and amusement.

When we later encountered difficulties with planning applications, bank loans, or people who let us down in one way or

a pack of little boys), teenagers, professors, laborers, lawyers, doctors, nurses; I imagine almost every kind of profession in a multifest of cultural differences joined together by that one common syllable we invoke. In the end, when we are together as so many different people practicing in a unified way, we experience guruyoga deeply in this fragile world of suffering and confusion. The knowledge that we have all been together before and in the future softens the heart.

Surrounding the perimeter of the Merigar West Gonpa were sections set aside for numerous nationalities with placards like the UN announcing the language group where participants could hear simultaneous translations, Among the many groups there were several hundred Russians

another, Rinpoche displayed the same indomitable attitude and capacity for action without hesitation in response to circumstances that he had demonstrated in playing that game: once he had set out to do something, Rinpoche never gave up.

'Being able to stay present in awareness does have its advantages', as Rinpoche remarked to me when we finally put the board game away.

Some of that must have rubbed off on us. We, his students, learned from his example, and became stronger ourselves in our own lives. The Dzogchen Community developed, and, in time, more centres were founded all around the world. But Rinpoche has always referred to Merigar as 'the navel', in the sense, that it is from the navel, where the umbilical cord connects, that a baby develops in its mother's womb, and Merigar has always served as an example to all the other centres.

Just as my experience of Merigar began with a rainbow appearing out of nowhere, so thoughts of

utilizing at least four translators, about 70 Asians traveling from afar including mainland China, Eastern Europeans, and countries with practitioners from such places as Central Europe, South America, Mexico and the English speaking UK, US and the Australian continent, including New Zealand. Did I miss some place, probably as every corner of the world seemed to there.

I don't know about others, but usually when I receive very important teachings, I often experience a kind of heightened irritation. We become more sensitive. The "special" Merigar West white dust, the heat, and large crowds were minor glitches in which to "integrate" one's experience, along with the increasing jocking over available chairs and seating and finding a comfortable spot

that rainbow, passing through my mind, have, through the action of my fingers on the keyboard of my computer, left traces on the screen of bits and bytes of digital information that will now travel via wifi and down cables from country to country to another computer from where they will be printed out and reassembled as words on paper for you to read that will enable you to see images in your mind of the early days of Merigar.

It is my hope that reading these words will help those visiting Merigar for the first time to understand the conditions in which it came into being, as well as helping those of us who are responsible for Merigar to remember to continue to maintain it in the spirit which, all those years ago, its founder intended.  $\bigcirc$ 

### John Shane ©2011

John Shane is the Editor of 'The Crystal And The Way Of Light: Sutra, Tantra, And Dzogchen', a book of the Dzogchen Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, published by Snowlion Publications.

between inside the Gonpa or outdoors as the days progressed. Nonetheless, one can only commend the exceptional organization of the Merigar West staff for their proficient, kind and smooth running of the retreat as well as feeding so many people through out the days of the retreat. Their organization acumen is inspiring. They have learned through experience how to provide the best hospitality from the moment of check-in at the beginning to the final ganapuja. Many thanks to all the hundreds of individuals who made this retreat possible, including our great Master.

Tsegyalgar East September 7, 2011 Guru Rinpoche Day

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Schedule 2012

>> continued from page 1

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Taiwan May 24–28 Taipei Retreat

#### Japan

June 1–5 Tokyo Retreat

## Hawaii June 13–17

Hawaii Retreat

## USA

June 22-24 Los Angeles Retreat

June 29–July 1 New York City Retreat

July 6-10Tsegyalgar East Retreat

July 11–12 Santi Maha Sangha Base Exam July 13–17 Santi Maha Sangha First Level Training

Russia  $|u|y|_{22}$ Public Teaching in Moscow

July 25-29 Kunsangar North Retreat

Ukraine August 3–9 Kunsangar South Retreat

## Romania August 17–23 Merigar East Retreat

### Italy August 31–Sept. 6 Merigar West Retreat

Sept. 7–9 Santi Maha Sangha Level I Examinations Sept. 10–16 Santi Maha Sangha Level II Training

Sept. 21–27 Second Retreat of Merigar West

## Greece

October 3–7 Greece Retreat

Spain October 12–16 Barcelona Retreat

Canary Islands October 26–30 First Tenerife Retreat

November 9–13 Second Tenerife Retreat

November 23–27 Third Tenerife Retreat

December 7–18 Fourth Tenerife Retreat

Dec. 26–January 1 Christmas and New Year: Fifth Tenerife Retreat



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# How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

#### Kate McDonald

## An Interview with Kate McDonald from New Zealand August 2011, Merigar West

#### The Mirror: Hello Kate. Can you tell us how you met ChNN?

Kate: I met someone on the Norbunet who knew about Dzogchen and then I looked on the Internet and found out about Rinpoche and went to Auckland to meet the people there. They told me I needed to participate in the worldwide transmission on such and such a day and I read the booklet and then I did and life has changed considerably since then! I have been following the web casts for the last two years, but now is the first time I have met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

M: Why were you looking on the Internet? KM: I was looking for a date. I was looking for a man. I was really looking for love, but I found a different sort of love, I found the right kind of love, the deep one.

M: So you ended up chatting with someone who knew about the teachings?

KM: He is an old practitioner and ended up to be my mentor. I have never met him in person. He lives in another country. He told me if I wanted to meet a Dzogchen Teacher that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was one of the greatest Dzogchen masters left, he was his teacher and I should meet him.

M: Had you had contact with Dzogchen or Buddhism before?

KM: I didn't know anything about Dzogchen or Rinpoche. I had gone to the Buddhist Monastery of Karma Choling in New Zealand on the day of the Buddha's birthday and said some prayers in front of the big golden Buddha. I also met the Karmapa there, but I did not know who he was and I still don't really, but he gave me some kind of blessing. Then years past and I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

M: So after you took the transmission you

by email, which I did every day for three months. Then I had to let that go and looked into Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and found it was a whole other level, a whole different thing.

After the transmission via web cast, I burst into tears, I was very upset, and I thought, "Oh no, nothing happened!" But actually the next day one of the biggest things that could have happened, happened when I was able to give up medication I had been on for seven years. I was on a kind of morphine for seven years for pain because I had a very bad pain problem and the next morning after the web cast, I decided that this was the day I can give up, I can give up today. I have never gone back. I went through horrible withdrawal, so much pain, I had to have three or four showers every day just to deal with it, and I wanted to take something to help but I didn't; I got through it and now I am medication free and my mind is clear.

I was taking the morphine because I had a car accident in 2000 and I had ten years where I could barely walk and I couldn't use my arm at all when I met Rinpoche. I couldn't put my heel down and I walked with a limp and was hunched over. I couldn't sit up for more than two or three minutes and I had to lay down most of the day. I had shooting pains down my arm that came out my eyes. I could not make phone calls. I had no friends. For the last ten years I lived in this little town in New Zealand totally alone and I could do nothing.

All of that has changed in the last two and half years. Meeting people here and having conversations is all new to me and I am relearning to be a social person. It is like a miracle.

The process of healing was gradual, but I can say that once my mind became calmer, and I was able to notice what was there, and I shined the light of the noticing on it, and things begin to change. So that is what has been happening and I have had to do it hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times.

I also have had physical therapy and started practicing with the group in Auckland? other modalities and my doctor said that I KM: Well after I met my friend on the Inshould not have gone off the medicine cold ternet I started to want to learn to mediturkey and should have had some supervitate. So I took an online meditation course sion and other medication to help, but



Photo: N. Zeitz

there was no way I was going to mix the medicines, so I just decided that morning to go off.

#### M: Your doctors must be amazed. KM: Yes they are.

I have not started to work again yet. I have been having treatments from a specialist as well as doing practice. That I felt well enough to travel to come here was an amazing thing. When I return home I will start to do some kind of work.

M: So this is the first time you have met **Rinpoche?** 

**KM**: Maybe this sounds funny but it does not feel so different from the web casts, it's the same, and if I am right, my mind may be tricking me and I am totally open to the fact that I may not know anything at all, but I have had some experiences during the web casts particularly, and I had the same experiences in front of Rinpoche as on the web casts. So he is obviously reaching all the way to New Zealand and everywhere else.

One thing I would like to say is that during all of this, there has always been a sense of not knowing, where I am going, what I am doing, and having to be ok with that. Being in that lost emptiness and say-

ing ok and trusting. If I had not been willing to do that it would not have worked.

As soon as I arrived here and stepped out of the vehicle on to the land of Merigar, I just wanted to cry. I was so upset, my chest and my throat were bursting and I did not know what was going on; I couldn't speak and people were talking to me and I didn't know what to do. Then the next day all that went away and I met a lot of lovely people and it was a lot of fun. Meeting people there is some kind of sense that I have met them before; there is clarity and a sense that this is a good person.

When I go back to New Zealand, a friend of mine has some land and has offered that we can build retreat cabins on it and Jerri Bassi has offered to bring the dance mandala up. I think I am strong enough to learn the dance. I used to be a dancer before the accident, so that will be wonderful for me.

M: Is there anything else you would like to sav?

KM: I would like to say a huge thank you to Namkhai Norbu for all he does and all the time he spends in the background looking after us all. I can feel that, I know that is there, whether I am seeing him in person or not. I really appreciate it.

M: Thank you Kate for your moving story.







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