

# THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

No. 86

May, June 2007

upcoming retreats  
with  
chögyal namkhai norbu

## 2007

### Romania

Merigar East

July 14 – 22

Shine and Lhagtong according to

Dzogchen Atiyoga

Restricted Webcast

### Italy

Merigar West

September 7–13

Paltrul Rinpoche's Dzogchen Man ngag

'Odsal Nangcha (The Upadesha on the

Vision of Clear Light)

Restricted Webcast

September 15–17

Santi Maha Sangha Second Level Exam

September 18 – 24

Santi Maha Sangha Third Level Training

October 5–11

Teachings and practice of Buddha

Shakyamuni's Praises to the 21 Taras

Open Webcast

November 1–4

Collective practice dedicated to the dead

### Spain

Barcelona

November 25–29

Longchenpa's Nyingtam Sumchu (Thirty

Pieces of Advice from the Heart)

### Brazil

Sao Paulo

December 7–12

Paltrul Rinpoche's Shri Gyalpo'i Khya-

dchos (The Three Lines Which Strike the

Essence, The Three Statements of Garab

Dorje)

### Argentina

Buenos Aires

December 15–17

Weekend of Dzogchen Teaching

Cordoba, Tashigar Sur

December 27–January 3

Longchenpa's Choszhi Rinchen Phrengwa

(The Necklace of the Four Precious

Dharmas)

Open Webcast

## 2008

January 7–10

Santi Maha Sangha First Level Exam

January 11–17

Santi Maha Sangha Second Level Training

February 18–24

Shine and Lhagthong according to

Dzogchen Atiyoga

Restricted Webcast

March 21–25

Zhitro Khordas Rangdrol, a Terma of

Rigdzin Jangchub Dorje

### Peru

April 4–8

Zer-nga (The Five Crucial Points)



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the Tashigar Norte Gonpa.

Photo: Fabio Andrico.

## the jñana dhakkini drubchen retreat with chögyal namkhai norbu

tashigar norte  
margarita island, venezuela

may 31,- june 15, 2007

christopher dye

At the end of the long, dry season on Margarita Island in Venezuela, the moment had finally arrived. The Dzogchen Community's first drubchen was beginning. This Jñana Dhakkini Drubchen Retreat was something that the 500 plus Community members from all over the world had been excitedly looking forward to. And our precious teacher said, on the first day of the retreat, that he had been looking forward to it as well.

A drubchen is a traditional form of meditation retreat in Tibetan Buddhism that lasts for about ten days. It involves a large number of lay and monastic practitioners and is led by at least one High Lama. It is regarded as a very powerful practice, and is said to act as a remedy to the negative forces at work in the world, and to

Rinpoche looked strong and healthy throughout the rigorous drubchen schedule. The retreat itself consisted of double practice sessions, morning and afternoon. Prior to each practice, Rinpoche gave instructions and the practice and teachings on many topics related to transmission. He related some of his dreams of clarity, which all his students love to hear about. One of these dreams took place when Rinpoche and his father had gone to receive teachings from

promote inner personal peace, peace within the community and world peace.

Tibetan Buddhists traditionally regard attendance at a drubchen as producing the same benefit as practicing alone for seven years. The practice requires prayers and the drubchen mantra to be recited by practitioners for

twenty-four hours a day throughout the period of the retreat.

In addition, the lamas present sometimes also prepare large quantities of a herbal medicine known as dutsi, which is said to promote physical and spiritual wellbeing.

From Wikipedia

the son of Changchub Dorje. Rinpoche dreamed that a nun had come up to him and given him a special stone with sacred letters on it. The next morning, after Rinpoche had told his father about the dream, the very nun from the dream came to him and gave him the stone! Rinpoche said his father was very surprised. One topic Rinpoche returned to during the drubchen was samaya. He twice mentioned the famous statement of the great Vajrayana Buddhist teacher

Atisha, who said that the essence of samaya is to keep pure vision. Rinpoche taught tirelessly and everyone responded with gratitude and collaborated together. The Tashigar Norte Gakyil did a great job. They worked very hard to manage all the myriad things that needed to get done. Many times they had to make 500+ copies of a necessary paper or practice on short notice. Several Community members kindly donated the use of their computers

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### Teaching



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Norbu  
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A School for  
Girls

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### Tashigar Norte



Jñana Dhakkini  
Drubchen

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The Three Sacred Principles are three fundamental aspects of the teaching that are always explained right from the beginning. This is true not only in the Dzogchen teachings, but also at the level of Sutra and Tantra. The first of these Three Sacred Principles is Refuge and Bodhichitta; the second is Contemplation; and the third is Dedication of Merit.

At a practical level, what the first and the third of these three principles mean is that when we start a practice, we begin it with an idea or thought; and similarly, when we finish a practice and return to our normal activities again, we begin those activities guiding ourselves with an idea or thought. The fact is that we are not always in the state of contemplation. Even if we have some experience or knowledge of this state, most of the time we are distracted from it. In order to find ourselves in the state of contemplation, we start by guiding ourselves towards it with a particular thought.

Let's assume, for example, that we have at least intellectually understood that our real nature is like that of a mirror that has the capacity to reflect everything without judging it to be good or bad, without accepting or rejecting anything. How can we, on the basis of our intellectual understanding, actually discover this real nature in ourselves? How can we enter into the true state of knowledge and thus come to a real experience of how our thoughts and emotions are actually like reflections in a mirror? We begin by guiding ourselves with the thought of wishing to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings. We do this with the Refuge and Bodhichitta.

#### Refuge and Bodhichitta

It is important, particularly in Dzogchen, to understand what Refuge and Bodhichitta really mean, how to apply them practically, and not just remain at the level of words and external forms.

The origins of the practices of Refuge and Bodhichitta are to be found in the Sutra system. In both the Hinayana and Mahayana systems of Sutra, the way in which one takes refuge determines whether an individual is considered to be Buddhist or not. In Sutra, if a person takes refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, such a person is considered to be a Buddhist. I have personally been criticized by some people who claim that I am not a Buddhist because I use another form of Refuge – taking refuge in the Guru, Deva, and Dakini instead of taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Such criticism is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the principle involved, because “Guru, Deva, and Dakini” do not mean something different from “Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.” The principle of the teachings does not depend on the superficial level of the names by which things are called, but on the real sense and meaning behind those names. We must understand what “Guru, Deva, and Dakini” mean. These are terms used in the Tantric system.

Generally speaking, when we use the word “Buddhist,” what we are referring to is someone who follows the teaching of the Buddha himself, or something related to the teaching of the Buddha himself. At least this is what is meant by the term Buddhist in the Hinayana view. The official Buddhist teaching is considered in that tradition to be only that knowledge and understanding that the physical Buddha himself actually transmitted. There are, however, many other teachings the Buddha transmitted in manifestations other than his physical body. This is the origin of Tantric transmission. How did the Buddha manifest to transmit the tantras? To transmit these teachings he did not manifest in the form of Buddha Shakyamuni – the physical, historical Buddha – but rather in different ways according to circumstances, and not just according to someone's rule. For a Buddha, there is no rule that his form must be a figure like that of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. The form he manifests depends upon circumstances, and a Buddha will work with the situation in which he finds himself.

A Buddha will sometimes manifest in a form similar to those beings to whom he is trying to communicate knowledge and understanding. When a Buddha communicates to an elephant or a monkey, for example, he may manifest as that kind of being. He can do this because he is free. He is able to work with any circumstances; he never remains limited by rules. People who are limited do not understand this and they believe a Buddha can only manifest on the physical level. They believe that if the physical form of the Buddha is not the one with which they are familiar, then this form is not a Buddha at all. The manifestations of Deva and Dakini are none other than the Buddha, who can manifest in many different



## chapter 13

# the three sacred principles

excerpt from  
chögyal namkhai norbu, dzogchen teachings  
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ways, not only in the form of a human being. There is a saying in the sutras that the Buddha sometimes manifests as a bridge or as a boat in order to save people; it is not necessary that he should always manifest as a human being. There are many possibilities of manifestation. This is the principle of Deva and Dakini.

Similarly, Refuge is not limited to the taking of a vow as it is in the Hinayana view. Many people like to say that they have taken Refuge with this or that Lama. There are teachers who travel widely and give Refuge vows everywhere, claiming that they have converted enormous numbers of people to Buddhism. They seem to think of Refuge as if it were a matter of conquering people.

This is not how the teachings should be spread. Spreading the teachings really means helping people to wake up and understand something; it should not become another means of conditioning people. That is not to say, of course, that it is not useful for people to take a vow of Refuge if they understand its real sense and meaning. When they do not, however, understand its meaning, they can deceive themselves into believing that something has changed in them when it has not. If they really honestly observe themselves, they will see that their conditioning, attachments, and problems are all still there and are just the same as before they took the vow. Nothing has changed. What then is the benefit of taking refuge? The real point is to know and understand what Refuge means.

#### Vows

Refuge can be taken with a vow. If we don't have the capacity to control ourselves, we need to take a vow. The Hinayana specifically aims to help individuals whose capacity to integrate emotions is less developed. Taking a vow, such people are able to control their emotions and problems and avoid creating negative karma.

We should not think that since we are Dzogchen practitioners, we are particularly highly developed and do not need vows. Many people have this idea, but it is not true. We must observe ourselves well. We have many weak points. When people want to stop smoking or drinking, for example, they may not succeed for a long time because it is their weak point. Sometimes it is necessary to take a vow to deal with a situation like this. There are people who are not in the Dzogchen Community who have told me that my students are very arrogant, that they feel themselves to be at a very high level and do not feel the need to do the ngöndro, or preliminary practices, that are commonly done.

To think that just because we are Dzogchen practitioners we do not need a vow is completely wrong. When we discover we have a weak point, we may need a vow to help us overcome it. This is why it is said in Dzogchen that we

should work with our circumstances. What do we mean by this? Even if we understand that, at the absolute level, spontaneous self-perfection is our inherent condition, and that rules and vows are not necessary at that level, if in our own particular circumstances we find that there are problems we cannot overcome without such methods, then we apply a rule or a vow. The difference between Dzogchen and other levels of teaching is that these relative methods of rules and vows are not considered to be the main point. They are not the fundamental method of Dzogchen practice as they are in Sutra.

In the Hinayana, for example, receiving a vow is considered to be the single most important aspect of the training. In Dzogchen we proceed differently, and although a vow might be used if necessary, it is not the principal method. Of course, if it's the case that someone has received the Refuge vow from a teacher other than myself, then they need to understand its meaning and function. It is ridiculous to think that just because we have taken a Refuge vow we have become Buddhist. It does not mean anything to say we are Buddhist on that basis. The Buddha never asked anyone to become a Buddhist, nor did the Buddha ever propose these limitations. These are our own limitations projected onto the teachings.

#### The Real Meaning of Refuge

Therefore, we must try to understand the real sense of the teaching. The real meaning of Refuge is to know that we are on the path. We take refuge in the path. How do we find that path? We find it from a teacher. If there is no teacher, there is no path. Whether we speak of Sutra, Tantra, or Dzogchen, the root of the path is always the teacher.

When we take refuge in the Sutra system, with the first words we recite, “Namo Buddhaya,” we take refuge in the Buddha; then we take refuge in the Dharma, and in the Sangha. In Tantra, the way of seeing Buddha and the way of seeing the teacher, or Guru, is a little different. In Sutra, the Buddha is understood to be the origin of the teaching, the source of the path. The final goal is seen as the state of the Buddha, or the Dharmakaya. For this reason we take refuge in the Buddha at this level of the teaching.

In Tantra and Dzogchen, we take refuge principally in the Guru. This is because, even though it is the teachings of the Buddha that we are following, we have received them from our own teacher. We can never receive teachings directly from the Buddha. Although we do not even have direct contact with the Buddha's direct students, his students taught other disciples and so on, and in this way the teachings have continued until the present day, when our teacher taught them to us.





Tantra is also particularly related to special transmissions such as empowerments. In Dzogchen the principle is to give direct introduction to the state of knowledge and understanding. The students receive this transmission of the introduction from their teacher. Although we may receive explanations or methods that have originated from the Buddha, we can only receive direct transmissions from our own teacher. We can never receive such transmissions from the Buddha. As our teacher is extremely important for us, and because the teacher is the source from which something originated, he or she is referred to as the “root Guru.” Our root Guru is the source of all transmissions, knowledge, and understanding, and therefore, when we take refuge in the context of Tantra or Dzogchen, we first take refuge in the Guru. In Dzogchen particularly, when we take refuge, we do so in the Guru. This means that the teacher is considered more important than other persons. If there is a Guru, there is a teaching. This is the principle of transmission.

### Sangha

When we speak of the Sangha, we are referring to people with whom we collaborate on the path. In Dzogchen, Sangha can also refer to the Dharmapalas, or “Guardians,” beings who help us on our path to realization. In the Sutra system, when we speak in terms of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, the teacher is considered to be part of the Sangha. What does Sangha mean? In Sutra, Sangha refers to a group of at least four monks. For example, if an individual wants to receive the full vow of a monk or nun, he or she receives it from a Sangha of at least four monks. Three monks is not enough. One cannot receive the full vow just from the teacher. A Refuge vow can be taken from the teacher, but the complete vows of monk or nun can only be received from the Sangha. Similarly, in the Sutra system, if we make a mistake, we confess it to the Sangha. We cannot confess to the teacher. It is characteristic of the Sutra level that in order to make a confession we always need a Sangha. For this reason, the teacher is part of the Sangha, and the Sangha is considered to be the group of people that helps us. In Dzogchen, on the other hand, the teacher is indispensable. In the Sutra system, if there is no teacher, we nevertheless still have the teachings of the Buddha. As long as we have the possibility of learning words, reading books, or studying with a group of people, we can still go ahead. That is not possible in Tantra and in Dzogchen. If we want to follow the Dzogchen teachings, we must receive an introduction from a teacher, otherwise our knowledge is not connected with the transmission, and there can be no enlightenment. Similarly, in Tantra, it is necessary to receive an empowerment from a teacher. Otherwise, even if we know many Tantric methods, our situation remains like a plowed field in which no seeds have ever been sown; even if we work it for years and years, nothing will grow in such a field. Whether or not we take a vow of Refuge does not matter, but we must understand the meaning of Refuge, because Refuge and Bodhichitta together are the first of the Three Sacred Principles.

### Bodhichitta

Bodhichitta is a term found principally in the Mahayana, which speaks a great deal about the two truths, absolute and relative. By “absolute truth” we mean our real condition, the condition of things as they truly are. When we do not have knowledge of this real condition, we remain conditioned by the relative dimension, and that is what is called the “relative truth.” In the Sutra teaching, relative truth is considered to be like samsara, the state of confused, deluded mind; and absolute truth is considered to be like knowledge, or understanding, or the state of nirvana. The terms nirvana and samsara correspond respectively to absolute truth and relative truth. Bodhichitta is also explained in that way, in terms of absolute and relative. Absolute bodhichitta means having real experiential knowledge of emptiness, which arises through practice. It is not just having an intellectual idea of emptiness. In the Sutra teaching, one of the principal practices is Shine, developing a calm state through which we discover emptiness. When we have experience of emptiness and our knowledge has become more concrete, then finally we can consider that we have at least a little experience of absolute bodhichitta. Absolute bodhichitta is the experience of emptiness from which its compassionate energy or function manifests.

### Compassion

When we speak of bodhichitta in general, what we are speaking of is compassion. What is compassion? Compassion arises through our feeling as an experience we have in relation to others. Where does it arise? Compassion arises from emptiness, which is its source and its basis. In an empty sky, for example, you can’t find anything; however, sometimes clouds appear in an empty sky. They arise, they develop, and they disappear again into an empty sky. The same is also true of bodhichitta, or compassion. Compassion also manifests from emptiness. That is the reason why, when we are speaking of Tantra, we always speak of emptiness and clarity. Emptiness and clarity are functions of the same principle. All manifestation comes from emptiness, which is represented as the sky. When we speak of the Dharmadhatu, *dharma* means “all phenomena,” and *dhatu* means “the real condition of emptiness.” Although there is total emptiness, from that emptiness everything manifests. When we speak of the manifestation of the five elements, the first of these is the element of space from which everything manifests. The element of space is emptiness. If there were no element of space, there would be no possibility of manifestation. In the same way, compassion manifests from emptiness, the real knowledge of which is called absolute bodhichitta. Relative bodhichitta, which is compassion, is related to our thoughts, our sensations, our feelings, and to everything that develops in the dimension of samsara. Sometimes, even when we do have compassion, it is still something limited. For that reason, in our training we practice cultivating compassion beyond our limitations. Otherwise, our compassion and love might always remain limited. For example, a mother has compassion and love for her children; but she never loves anyone else the way she loves her children. In the same way, when people fall in love they are at that moment conditioned by their emotions, and never love anyone else in the same way. That is what we mean when we speak of our compassion being limited.

When we cultivate bodhichitta, it means going beyond limitations characteristic of our dualistic vision. From the beginning we have our narrow ego, our sense of “I,” and even if we expand our thinking a little and speak of “ourselves” – where at first we said “I,” and now we are saying “we,” and developing things along those lines – we nevertheless always remain within defined limits. Through the teaching and developing real knowledge we can go beyond that. Working with our intention and thinking, we cultivate bodhichitta. Diminishing our attachment to ego, we place others before ourselves in order to benefit them. The bodhichitta principle is a fundamental teaching of the Mahayana. If we ask, “Why do we follow Mahayana teachings? What do we practice in the Mahayana?” the answer is very simple: we observe our intention and try to cultivate a good intention in everything we do. That is the total practice of Mahayana.

### Transmission

Following the teachings of Tantra or Dzogchen always involves the principle of transmission, which is not something we can receive through reading books, or only through the words of an oral explanation. That kind of approach is more characteristic of how we might follow the Sutra teachings. In Dzogchen, transmission is the life of the teaching; we cannot attain realization without it. There are three kinds of transmission; direct, oral, and symbolic. Garab Dorje was the first human teacher of Dzogchen on this planet in this time cycle. Before he concluded his life with the realization of the Rainbow Body, he summarized his teaching in what became known as the Three Statements of Garab Dorje. The first of these statements is “Direct Introduction.” In this direct introduction, the teacher introduces the student to the state of contemplation through experiences of body, voice, and mind. The second statement is “Not Remaining in Doubt.” The student experiences the state of contemplation through the transmission he or she has received in the direct introduction, and no longer has any doubt as to what contemplation is. The third statement is “Continuing in the State.” This means that the student seeks to remain in the state of contemplation all the time, remaining in the natural condition of instant presence without correcting it, and applying practices as necessary according to circumstances to reenter the state when she or he has become distracted from it. Thus, when we practice Guruyoga, what we are trying to do is to discover the state in which the teacher continu-

ally abides and has transmitted to us. When we are in the state of contemplation, there is no separation between the teacher and ourselves. Through Guruyoga we can enter the state of contemplation. In Dzogchen the teacher is indispensable, because without receiving direct transmission from the teacher, there can be no realization.

Along with this method of direct introduction I have just explained, there are in fact two other kinds of transmission mentioned in the Dzogchen teachings. “Oral Transmission” refers to general explanations of the teachings, or to particular instructions relating to various methods, such as instructions for visualizations.

“Symbolic Transmission” refers to the use by the master of objects such as a crystal, a mirror, or a peacock feather as symbols to help the student discover the nature of the inherent potentiality of their own state, and how that potentiality manifests as energy in various ways. Practice enables us to discover within ourselves the state of contemplation through which we find the presence of the master, together with the experience of the knowledge that he or she is transmitting.

In contemplation we find ourselves beyond the distracted state of our habitually confused minds, completely relaxed in the naked awareness that is our natural condition. In this natural condition, thoughts or emotions can arise, but they do not disturb us; we remain in the nondual state, integrated with whatever arises, without accepting or rejecting anything. Practicing in this way, we are able to remain in contemplation, working with whatever situation or circumstance we find ourselves in. In the state of nondual contemplation there is really nothing to do or apply. There is no need to struggle with anything; everything can be left just as it is, with nothing to purify or transform. Then we discover for ourselves what is meant by The Great Perfection, or Total Perfection, which are both ways that the Tibetan word *dzogchen* can be translated. When we discover the self-perfected nature of our own state, we understand that Dzogchen is a word that, rather than referring to a tradition or school, really refers to our own inherent condition, the self-perfected state that is always there in each of us, but which is only experienced in contemplation. So contemplation is the most important of the Three Sacred Principles.

### Dedication of Merit

The third Sacred Principle is the Dedication of Merit, which is a practice inseparably linked to our intention. When, for example, we do long-life practice, we do it because we want to have a long and prosperous life with as many positive factors influencing it as possible; but if that were to be our only intention, it would not be enough. We need to ask ourselves why we want a long life. We should not want to prolong our lives just in order to have more time for our business or for our political interests. We should do long-life practices because we wish to live for a long time in order to attain realization. If we live longer, we will have more time to practice, and if we are prosperous, we will have fewer obstacles to interfere with our realization. The purpose of realization is to benefit all sentient beings. This is why we are on the path. We must be aware that the infinite sentient beings to whom we dedicate any merits arising from our good actions and practice have no knowledge of the teachings or of the path. This means that they experience infinite suffering. We are seeking realization not just for our own benefit, but with the awareness of the infinite suffering of the infinite beings in samsara. If we really develop this awareness, there arises a real, rather than an artificial, compassion.

The Buddha taught that we should observe ourselves, and that through observing our own condition there would arise the wish to benefit others. If, for example, we imagine ourselves in the place of those who are not on the path, we can understand how infinite their suffering is. Such beings have no guarantee of liberation, and that is very heavy.

Those of us who are on the path have made a connection through which we are not only able to receive and practice the teachings, but also, through the power of this connection, have a real guarantee that we will one day attain realization. We have the good fortune to have learned many methods, some of which, if we use them correctly, can even bring us to realization in this very lifetime. We must think not only of ourselves, but also remember the suffering of all sentient beings, and thus cultivate bodhichitta, the aspiration to arrive at realization for the benefit of all other beings. Applying bodhichitta in a way that is alive and concrete, we develop a real compassion that is not just a matter of words. >> continued on next page

activities of the international shang shung institute

oliver leick, luigi ottaviani, paola zamperini

Dear members, friends and supporters of the Shang Shung Institute and the Dzogchen Community,

As you probably have noticed there have been many changes in the organization and structure of the international Shang Shung Institute in the last period. We have started with a new worldwide membership system and we have created our first common website of all the sites of the Shang Shung Institute. We want to thank everybody who has become a member of the international Shang Shung Institute, who has sent us feedback and who has supported all activities and projects.

The aim of the Shang-Shung Institute is to deepen the knowledge and the understanding of the Tibetan cultural traditions in its religious, historical, philosophical, artistic, medical, and social aspects in order to con-

tribute to the survival and preservation of this culture. Its purpose is to encourage cooperation among interested groups and individuals, thus keeping alive the essential values of these traditions. The Shang Shung institute is a global organization that has three main seats: Italy, the USA and Austria. All seats follow the same principles and guidelines; some of our initiatives are more linked to one seat.

We are pleased to present some of our main activities to you:

1. The Outsourcing for the Dzogchen Community

- a) The Shang Shung Institute coordinates and plans all Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance courses.
- b) The Shang Shung Institute coordinates and plans all courses on Santi Maha Sangha; furthermore all SMS data are kept and updated by the SSI.

- c) The Shang Shung Institute manages all data of the members of the Dzogchen Community.
- d) The Shang Shung Institute manages and produces all the web casts of retreats of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for the benefit of all people interested in the Dzogchen Teachings.

2. The Copyright Management

In order to preserve the original form of the Teachings to benefit all practitioners and also future generations, and to protect Rinpoche's image, voice and writings together with all his Teachings from unchecked diffusion and circulation, the Shang Shung Institute has taken over the copyright management.

3. The Archive Project - Making our Heritage a top priority

The Digital Archives of the Shang Shung Institute are dedicated to ensuring that all information related to the life and teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, as well as all manuscripts, books and documents on Tibetan culture present in our Library, are digitally preserved so as to remain available and accessible for generations to come. Thanks to the support received from the Dzogchen Community (Merigar in particular) and to the many people who donated to the Archives Project, we have been able to enter a new phase, which constitutes a quantum leap in quality and efficiency. The SSI office premises located in Merigar (Arcidosso, Italy) have been

restructured to host this technically advanced installation. A climate-controlled room has been designed and built specifically for the new data storage system. The Digital Archives are now linked to research workstations and a presentation classroom via a secure network infrastructure, capable to provide straightforward access – in the future also via web – to the wealth of information they contain.

4. Production of products for sale related to the Teachings

The improvement of the quality and the reduction of the prices of sale products have been a big challenge and success of the Shang Shung Institute. Every year many new products are produced for members of the Dzogchen Community as well for the general public. These goods are offered during retreats or seminars, in our on-line shops any by external companies like Snow Lion Publications.

- a) **On-line shops:** in our shops one can purchase not only all products produced by the SSI, but also products of the Tibetan Institute for Astrology and Medicine, Men-Tsee Khang, Buddhists statues and other practice materials from Nepal.
- b) **Shang Shung Editions:** Since November 2006, Shang Shung Editions has become part of the Shang Shung Institute. Through that fusion the resources and organizational methods are shared and books and audio video products are produced in a cooperative.

5. Tibetan Medicine

- a) **4-year traditional Training in Traditional Tibetan Medicine** The “4-year traditional Tibetan Medicine program” is the only one of its kind in the Western world providing instruction in English. Its purpose is to offer the possibility to, and actually educate, doctors in the ancient tradition of Tibetan medicine according to Tibetan standards. The work towards such an objective is largely due to the dedication and expertise of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo who has worked

>> the three sacred principles continued from page 3

False Bodhichitta

Sometimes people speak a great deal about bodhichitta and love for others, but they never actually observe their own thoughts or intentions at all. Then everything they do can become a little like the games politicians play. Politicians promise all sorts of things, but often don't keep their promises once elected. For example, a certain party might continually make promises that if they are elected, they will provide everything the people need free of charge. But once they win the election they conveniently forget whatever they promised in order to get people to vote for them. Unfortunately, we sometimes do just the same, and claim to be practicing compassion for the benefit of all beings; but if we were to really observe ourselves and the way we actually behave in our lives, we would notice that in fact we never even relax our tensions enough to even get along with our own friends or with our Vajra sisters and brothers. We don't even have compassion for those close to us, let alone all sentient beings. This kind of falsehood clearly does not correspond to

real bodhichitta, to the real expression of a pure intention to benefit others. We accumulate merits through practice, particularly through the practice of contemplation. In fact, when we practice and find ourselves in the state of contemplation, we can accumulate infinite merits; and then again, when the teacher gives an explanation of the teachings and you try to understand this knowledge through your intention and collaboration with him or her in the field of transmission, you can accumulate infinite merits. We should then dedicate these merits to all sentient beings. Once the merits have been dedicated, they always develop; they can never be destroyed. If you do not dedicate your merits and become distracted while losing your awareness, perhaps in the experience of a strong emotion such as anger, you can destroy in that one moment of anger the accumulation of thousands of kalpas of merits. That is what has been said by the great Master Shantideva in the Bodhisattvacaryavatara. ❀

>> the jñāna dhakini drubchen retreat continued from page 1

when audio CD's needed to be made for drubchen participants. Tsegylgar East members took this opportunity to offer a lively and informative multimedia presentation about the sacred land Khandroling that has an important connection to Goma Devi and the Vajra Dance, as well as about Shang Shung Institute's excellent Tibetan medical program taught and coordinated by Rinpoche's niece, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, in Conway, Massachusetts. There was an overall open and generous spirit among those who shared the intense experience of the practices. This spirit was typified by Community members who organized and donated money to purchase new water tanks for ten local families. These families were in desperate need. The generosity wasn't ig-

nored; as we walked to the Gar from town one morning, members of the town baseball team shared the road. “Tashigar?” one asked us. When we said yes, he smiled and said “Tashigar good!” Another place where the spirit of the drubchen really showed was during the auction that took place near the end of the retreat. A Community member had already donated for the completion of the Gonpa floor and the Gakyil hoped to raise enough to bring in an artist to finish painting the Gonpa in a beautiful Tibetan style. Many fine thankas, statues and other precious items were offered. Thanks to the openhearted participation of many Community members, the auction not only brought in enough for painting the Gonpa, but also for buying a much need-

ed vehicle for the Gar! During the auction, several people also offered their musical talents to the Master, singing or playing beautiful music during breaks in the bidding. The drubchen was, above all, a time for intense practice. Near the end of the retreat, a thigle manifested around the sun. Rinpoche said this was an excellent sign of our practice together. On the last day, Rinpoche seemed pleased by what we had accomplished. He said that this drubchen was something we would remember being a part of in years to come. He also said that now that we had had this first drubchen, there would be more to follow – and that is great news for us all! ❀



Photo: Fabio Andrico



tirelessly to create the rigorous curriculum taught in English, based on the same course of study she herself followed at Lhasa University’s Traditional Tibetan Medicine program. The curriculum has also been further complemented with additions originating from her personal specialization studies with the most prominent Tibetan doctors, and resulting in a state-of-the-art learning opportunity. The importance and the potential of the 4-year program is also reflected in another endeavor undertaken by the Institute: the application steps that will make the “4-year traditional Tibetan Medicine program” compliant to official licensing regulations by the board of education in the state of Massachusetts. In other words, the completion of the application process will allow us to operate as a “post secondary proprietary school”. Once such license is obtained, the appeal of the 4-year course will radically change, for it will not only respond to a personal interest of a student, but also actually bring him/her much closer to an actual and legitimate professional career.

b) The Healing Center

As a complementary effort to increment the Institute’s visibility, in 2006 our “Healing Center” was opened in Northampton, Massachusetts under the direc-

tion of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo. The center has been very successful in attracting visitors and patients, in promoting general knowledge about Tibetan Medicine and giving visibility to the Institute. The center has offered Tibetan medicine consultations and Kunye massage sessions and has hosted the monthly series “Tibetan Medicine for Everyone” that covers the main topics and ideas in Tibetan medicine. The center will happily enter into its second year of activity in 2007.

c) Ku Nye courses

The Italian branch of the Institute offers complete trainings in the traditional Tibetan massage, Ku Nye. Courses are scheduled wherever there is a request. Currently there are courses in Italy, France and Russia.

6. The Ka-ter Translation Project

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said: “The Shang-Shung Institute exists for the preservation of Tibetan culture and to translate Tibetan books into Western languages. Through the Shang-Shung Institute we are trying to do something to maintain the survival of Tibetan culture and understanding.” The work on translation of unique and sacred Tibetan texts has always been an important task of the Shang Shung Institute. The crucial point of this work is to guarantee qualified translations of the ancient wis-

dom, knowledge and experience of Tibetan culture into western languages. But good and experienced translators are very rare, because it is really extremely difficult to become a qualified translator, as one has to put so much diligence, devotion and dedication into his studies and work for many years.

a) The Dzogchen Tantra Translation Project

In summer 2004 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu suggested that a small team of three qualified translators – Adriano Clemente, Elio Guarisco and Jim Valby – should take over the responsibility for the translation of the Dzogchen Tantras.

The purpose of the project is to translate the Dzogchen Tantras so that their meaning will be also accessible for future generations. Currently the three translators work on several texts that will be published as soon as they are ready:

- ★ The Marvelous Primordial State (byang chub sems rmad du byung ba)
- ★ Sky-like Vast Space Tantra of the Great Perfection (of) the Primordial State (byang chub kyi sems rdzogs pa chen po mkha’ mnyam klong gi rgyal po zhes bya ba)
- ★ A Concise Practice of Moxibustion. The Clear Crystal Mirror. (me gtsa’i lag len nyung bsdus dwangs shel me long)
- ★ The Secret Description of the Vajra Body (rdo rje lus kyi sbas bshad)
- ★ Easing the Beginner’s Way: The Essential Points of Creation and Completion That Helps the Beginner on the Path (lam zhugs kyi gang zag las dang po pa la phan pa’i bskyed rdzogs kyi gnad bsdus)

b) The Training for Translators from Tibetan

In summer 2003 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu decided that Elio Guarisco should be responsible for the Training for Translators. From 2003–2006 the first

4-years training for translators were held in Italy and in Margarita. More than 15 translators from all over the world participated in the series of trainings and could benefit very much. In summer 2007 the next series of trainings will start. In summer 2006 the first translation of the Ka-ter Translation Project was published. It is the latest book of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on Tibetan Medicine called “On Birth, Life and Death”.

c) Financial security of the translators

Since 2006 the Shang Shung Institute has not only established a system of regular payment of the three translators, but also set up a system for guaranteeing their retirement fund.

All the projects and activities of the international Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies follow the aim and the purpose to preserve the unique treasure of Tibetan culture. All collaborators and people who work for the Institute are really very much dedicated to the principles of the Institute and do their very best to improve and to fulfill Rinpoche’s vision about the Institute. We offer various possibilities to study and to apply the transmitted

knowledge of Tibetan culture, and in that way preserve that universal understanding so that it will be accessible also for future generations.

Every single initiative of the Shang Shung Institute is financed by donations. Thank to generosity of many people over the last years we could not only initiate but also carry on our undertakings in order to fulfill our mission. Only due to a global collaboration of all interested people dedicated to Tibetan culture and teachings we can continue with our work for the benefit of everybody.

So, become part of our responsibility, take part and support all our actions. Become a member of the Institute; get one of the donors’ packages, or one of our beautiful Buddhist statues in exchange for your donation. You can donate with your credit card on our web safe site and you also can donate using PayPal. Please visit our web site and check the possibilities to donate.

Thank you very much for all your financial assistance, very best wishes, Oliver Leick, Luigi Ottaviani and Paola Zamperini [www.shangshunginstitute.org](http://www.shangshunginstitute.org)



Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo teaches Ku Nye. Photo: M. Schmookler

shang shung institute USA summer 2007

Shang Shung Institute of America is very happy to announce the Traditional Tibetan Medicine Program “Licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Education”, upcoming courses in Tibetan Astrology and a Tibetan Herbal Medicine course held primarily ‘outdoors’, the availability of Tibetan Literary Arts Catalogs for purchase, the next enrolling class in February 2008, and additional happenings.

Licensed by the Massachusetts’ Department of Education

We are delighted to share with you the wonderful news that the Shang Shung Institute of America has officially received its License from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Education. This is the result of much hard work on the part of many individuals – Dr. Phuntsog

Wangmo, past and present SSI’s Board members, the pioneering students of the Traditional Tibetan Medical program, among others – to whom we convey our most heart felt thanks. As many of you already know, this was a long process, and it is just one of the steps towards getting accreditation in the United States for the Tibetan Medicine Program. It is also a fundamental cornerstone for the Shang Shung Institute, and its future goals of expansion and growth as a cultural and educational institution with the mission to preserve and promote Tibetan Culture, Arts, Language, History, Medicine and Philosophy.

Details of the license:

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education License to Operate a Private Occupational School in accor-

dance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws. License No. 061201B

Upcoming Courses

Tibetan Astrology with Dr. Chimed Rabtan

August 24 – 29th, 2007

Taught by Dr. Chimed Rabtan, professor of Tibetan Medicine & Astrology at the Eastern Tibet University. Tibetan Astrology & Medicine are intrinsically connected. To be a Tibetan doctor you must have knowledge of astrology. Tibetan Astrology is a traditional practice used by Tibetan doctors & lamas. The study of the five elements, combined with trigrams, numbers, and animal signs form the basis for astrological calculations.

Course Details:

Time: Friday, August 24th Evening only. Saturday, Aug 25th–Wed., Aug 29th: Class meets all day Fee: \$340 regular registration early registration before August 9th: \$300

Tibetan Medicine Herbal Course with Dr. Kalzang

September 7–9th, 2007

Herbal Medicine is one of the four lines of treatment in Tibetan medicine; diet, behavior, external therapies, and medicines. This course will present an overview of the theory and practice of Tibetan herbal medicine including plant identification. 30% of the course will be spent in lecture and 70% of the course will be spent in the field, outdoors. Please make sure to bring and wear appropriate clothing for the weather and time that will be spent in nature.

Course Details:

Time: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday: All Day – regardless of weather. Come prepared with raingear and dressed appropriately for the weather. Fee: \$300 regular registration early registration before August 20th: \$275

Shang Shung Course Registration Forms

For a course registration form please email or phone By email: [greta@shangshung.org](mailto:greta@shangshung.org) or Phone: # 413.369.4928

Newly Available:

Tibetan Literary Arts Catalogs

Marit Cranmer, a long time student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, curated the current Tibetan Literary Arts Exhibition in Northampton, Massachusetts. She also edited its beautiful catalog, which contains scholarly essays and the poetry included in the show. The catalog was prepared for the recent Tibetan Literary Arts Exhibition held at Smith College to mark the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the area. The Tibetan Literary Arts is an exhibition on the history of the Tibetan written language from Ancient times to the 19th century. The exhibit highlights selected poems from all of the five schools with the primary emphasis on experiential poems



and advice from many historic masters. Poetry, along with logic, medicine, astrology, art and architecture belongs to the five secular sciences in the Tibetan literary tradition. The exhibition continues to be on display at the Neilson and Hillyer Art Libraries at Smith College. Catalogs are available to purchase for \$20 through Shang Shung Institute. To purchase please contact SSI at 413.369.4928 or [greta@shangshung.org](mailto:greta@shangshung.org). Alternatively, a small quantity of catalogs is available through the bookstore.

**Other News**  
There have been a number of activities happening at SSI including the successful completion of another year of the **Traditional Tibetan Medicine Program** this past May. With over 15 students enrolled in two separate classes, the program continues to progress. Students will resume classes again this September. **Any interested people in the program are encouraged to apply soon for the February 2008 Semester.**

**Tibetan Kunye Massage Level 1** was offered in Conway with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo early this June. There was very positive feedback from students in the course evaluations. Some re-

marks include: “Extremely beneficial and exceeded all expectations.” “Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo is wonderful, compassionate, very knowledgeable teacher. The whole course was excellent.” Plans are underway to offer Kunye Level 2 at a location to be announced in the winter.

**Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo** was invited back as an honored guest and lecturer at International Herbal Symposium held this past June. Dr. Wangmo presented at the conference held at Wheaton College. Lectures included: Visions of Healing, Properly Harvesting & Processing Herbs in Tibetan Medicine, Treating Mental Illness in Tibetan Medicine,

and Understanding & Treating Menopause.

**Membership**  
You can become a member of Shang Shung Institute and share with us the honor of working for the preservation of Tibetan Culture, Language, Medicine, Arts, and Philosophy. By doing so you play an active role in supporting all of our activities and initiatives, and proving your interest and commitment in preserving Tibetan culture for future generations. For information on the various levels of membership please visit <http://www.shangshunginstitute.org/pages/mission/membership.php>

**Shang Shung Healing Center** located in Northampton; Massachusetts continues to offer Tibetan Medicine consultations and Tibetan Kunye massage. For information contact them at 413.585.1081.

**May All Beings Be Healthy!**

first international shang shung institute lottery

oliver leick, luigi ottaviani, paola zamperini

Dear friends, members and supporters of the Shang Shung Initiative, Dear Dzogchen Community,

The Shang Shung Institute is a multi-tasked organization for the preservation of Tibetan culture and works on many important projects like preserving the unique and precious Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in a huge archive, making available the authentic teachings of Tibetan Medicine to Western students, offering the possibility to study how to translate Dzogchen texts in Tibetan, or translating ancient Dzogchen Tantras into English. The Institute also takes care of the retirement funds of the main translators of the Dzogchen Community and guarantees them a regular income for their translation work. A detailed description of our entire project was listed a few weeks ago, for more information please visit our website <[www.shangshunginstitute.org](http://www.shangshunginstitute.org)>. Besides of all these responsibilities, the Shang Shung Institute collaborates very closely with the Dzogchen Community: Every web cast of Rinpoche’s Teachings is managed by the Institute, it publishes Rinpoche’s Teachings in form of books, DVDs and CDs, and all seminars of Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Santi Maha Sangha are coordinated by the Institute as well. All these projects and initiatives not only need very dedicated and devoted people who collaborate, they also need a good financial base. In order to guarantee that we can continue with our fruitful work in the future, we definitely need more financial resources. Many of our projects are long-term activities and in order to keep up with the high quality material for the benefit of all interested people, we need funds. In order to receive funds we began the **first lottery for the inter-**

**national Shang Shung Institute.** The total income of this lottery is a donation for all our undertakings and every donor can win really wonderful and fantastic prizes. Rinpoche has already agreed on our initiative and is happy that we all are collaborating in that way. There are only 600 tickets available and you can win 30 prizes – so the chance to win is 1:20. In this lottery you have a much higher change to win than in any other lottery. Furthermore, it is insured that everybody who gets a ticket of this lottery is a winner, as you gain a lot of merit by supporting the mission of the Shang Shung Institute that works for the preservation of Tibetan culture.

In this lottery there are three levels – high level, medium level and low level. Only 100 tickets are available in the high level for 108 Euro each, only 200 tickets in the medium level for 50 Euro each, and only 300 tickets in the

low level for 25 Euro each. You can win ten prizes in each level, and the first three prizes in each level will be amazingly beautiful, gold plated statues. The main prizes are:

high level:

1st prize:  
**Semantabhadra Yab Yum statue.** Seated, excellently formed, fully gold plated. 16 inches or 40,5 cm high.  
2nd prize: **Guru Dragpur statue.** Standing in a circle of flames, gold plated. Height: 12 inches or 30 cm, Width: 8,7 inches or 22 cm. Weight: about 3,4 kg.  
3rd prize: **Garab Dorje statue (small size).** Seated, fully gold plated. Height: 8,5 inches or 21 cm, Width: 6,6 inches or 17 cm.

medium level:

1st prize: **Garab Dorje statue (big size).** Seated, fully gold plated. Height: 13 inches or 33 cm, Width: 9 inches or 23,5 cm. Weight: 3,3 kg.  
2nd prize: **Statue of the Medicine Buddha.** Totally gold plated, extraordinary quality. Height: 22 cm or 8,8 inches. Width: 15 cm or 6 inches. Weight: 1,63 kilo.  
3rd prize: **Green Tara statue.** Fully gold plated and sitting on a lotus. Height: 8,5 inch or 21 cm, Width: 6,5 inch or 16 cm. Weight: 1,5 kg.

low level:

1st prize: **Vajrasattva statue.** Seated, gold plated. 14 inches or 33 cm high.  
2nd prize: **Dorje Legpa statue.** It is excellently carved and has a gold plated face. Height: 14,5 inch or 35,5 cm. Width: 11 inch or 27 cm.  
3rd prize: **Simhamukha statue.** Standing, excellently carved and fully gold plated. Height: 7,4 inch or 18,5 cm. Width: 4 inch or 10 cm. Weight: about 900 gr. You can see all these statues on our website “Buddhist Statues as a gift for your donation”.

The other prizes are crystals with a lazed A inside, different kinds of jewelry and some surprises. Rinpoche will bless all of these fantastic prizes.

The drawing of this lottery will be during the retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in October 2007 in Merigar.

If you want to win and simultaneously support all activities of the international Shang Shung Institute, don’t hesitate, but get your tickets now as we do not have more than these tickets. Please send an email with your precise name and address to Oliver Leick and indicate how many tickets you want in which category.

You can send us your donation by using our web-safe credit card payment site, or by sending the money to our bank account: Name of the bank: Raiffeisenbank Ilz, Address: Hauptstr. 39, 8262 Ilz, Austria. Bank Code: 38151. Account number: 30387 in the name of Shang-Shung Institute Austria. BIC (= SWIFT): RZSTAT2G151, IBAN: AT19 3815 1000 0003 0387

In the name of the Shang Shung Institute we want to thank you for your support and wish you that you may win one of these extraordinary prizes.

Many Tashi Delegs and very best wishes,  
Oliver Leick, Luigi Ottaviani and Paola Zamperini  
[www.shangshunginstitute.org](http://www.shangshunginstitute.org)



Guru Dragpur.



Garab Dorje.



Vajrasattva.



# his holiness the dalai lama gives public talk in northampton, ma

ed hayes

New England winters can be a bit long and miserable. Especially toward the end – April is usually wet, muddy, cold, and barren. In most years, there is a final terrible snow and ice storm. Just when it feels impossible to bear it any longer, all at once everything changes. This year in Northampton, Massachusetts (nearby Tsegyalgar East), that day was Wednesday, May 9th. It was suddenly so warm, a cloudless sunny day. Trees were suddenly green with leaves and blooming in all other colors. Anyone could see how everyone's spirits lifted magically. I think it was no coincidence that on this day, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama gave a public talk in town at Smith College. The event, sponsored by Smith College, Hampshire College, and the Tibetan Association of Western Massachusetts, drew a crowd of nearly 5000 students, faculty, Tibetans, and friends of the Tibetan community. Many more listened to the live broadcast over radio, television, and internet. His Holiness, who received an honorary degree from Smith College, offered a talk entitled, 'Education for Transformation.' H.H. emphasized the importance of values beyond education:

"It seems quite clear that education and other facilities support having a happy and successful life, but then obviously people who have these two things – good education and wealth – are not necessarily happy persons. So that means there must be another element in order to be a happy person: a compassionate heart. With a good education, facilities and warm-heartedness, a person becomes fuller and, I think, better equipped to face problems. Education gives us guidance, and warm-heartedness gives us the proper use of all our knowledge. So I think personally also warm-heartedness is the key to sustain peace of mind. That way, the person is much happier [and that leads to] physical wellbeing since your body's elements go more naturally. The physical health is also a very important factor for peace of mind. Anger, hatred, jealousy are actually destroyers of peace of mind. And the opposite force – emotions such as love, kindness, altruistic attitudes, openness – are factors that create more peace of mind." The audience was charmed by H.H.'s natural charisma – he seemed like a young boy fidgeting in his chair, giggling, and playing with his academic mortar-




Photo: David Hayes

board. In all directions, people (including myself) were brought to tears by H.H.'s enormous capacity to open our closed hearts with compassion and love. In one powerful moment, Thondup Tsering, President of the Tibetan Association of Western Massachusetts and owner of a local Tibetan restaurant, took the opportunity to thank H.H. personally for offering him an education. As a child, Thondup attended a school for refugee children in India founded by H.H. The members of the Tibetan Association performed several traditional Tibetan dances for H.H., including one dance that originated from a dream of the Fifth Dalai Lama. During one segment of the event, members of the audience had the chance to ask H.H. questions. One person asked, "What is the most important thing to keep in mind in living one's life?" H.H. replied: "That is difficult, I don't know. There are different importances. So what's the most important? I don't know. I think it's a typical Western way of thinking. [the audience laughs]

What is the most important, what is the best, what is the quickest... Then also those people who are really counting the economy, what is the cheapest! [everyone laughs]. So often you see people, they will ask me, what is the best way to have a happier life? And what is the quickest, what is the fastest way? Usually I answer 'that is a typical Western way of questioning' so the answer is very difficult. So now, what is the most important thing? I think for those business people, the most important thing is about their company, their money, like that. Then to the serious practitioner, the most important thing is how to challenge my negative emotions. Then those students, I think most important is how to get a high exam grade – and without much effort. [audience laughs] So there are a variety of most important things. Then of course those young people, I think the most important thing is to get the best partner. Then

once you've materialized that, then how to remain together for a longer period. Then those people may want children. If too many children, then again you worry. So there is a Tibetan saying, 'you worry when you have them, and you worry when you don't have them.' So the importance is difficult to say. You cannot generalize. It's all according to circumstances – according to our personal situations. So there are a variety of 'most important's.' The two-hour event ended around noon. After an enormous applause of thanks from the audience, the crowd left rather quietly. Everyone seemed lighter and more joyful – there was a general feeling of bliss after encountering this living emanation of Avalokiteshvara. Outside of the auditorium, it was very warm, green, full of life, and with clear blue skies. Spring had finally arrived and everyone knew it was the most beautiful day of the year.


Merigar West  
30 July - 6 August

  
Shang Shung Institute  
International Institute for Tibetan Studies  
ORGANIZES A COURSE ON


# KU NYE

## TIBETAN MASSAGE

(PART I)



TEACHER: ALDO ONETO,  
born in Livorno in 1954,  
Aldo has been interested in  
Oriental studies and natural medicine  
since an early age. He graduated in phytomedicine  
from the I.U.R.T. in Milan and has practiced in since 1980.



Following which he followed the Ku Nye (Tibetan massage) courses organized by the Shang Shung Institute in Milan graduating after a three-year course. He then attended a two-year course of specialization and in-depth study for instructors in this discipline and successfully passed the final exam held at Merigar (Arcidosso, GR), main center of the Daoqiche Community and the Shang Shung Institute founded and inspired by Chigyal Namkhai Norbu, of whom Aldo has been a student for about 30 years.

\*For this course only, there is a special participation fee of 350 euro.  
Participants must register before July 1. The course is planned for a  
minimum of 8 and a maximum of 20 participants and will be held only  
if the minimum number is reached.

The second part of the in-depth training for the final exam and diploma is planned for January 2008, date to  
be decided. The date has been put forward in time in order to give students time to practice and deepen what  
they have already learned. The second part and the exam are not included in the participation fee.


Students should wear comfortable clothes and bring a large, a medium and a  
small towel.

Registration: Shang Shung Institute  
Tel. 0039 0564 966940 (Monday to Friday 8.30-12.00 & 15.00-18.30)  
Localita Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso (GR), Italy  
e-mail: courses@institutoshangshung.org

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antiquities of upper tibet : an inventory of pre-buddhist archaeological sites on the high plateau

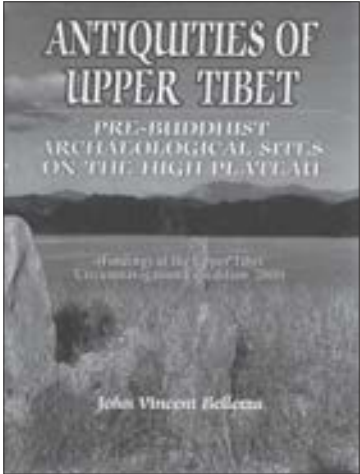
john vincent bellezza

(findings of the upper tibet circumnavigation expedition, 2000) delhi, adroit, 2002, xviii, 304 p., maps, \$77. isbn 81-87392-25-8.

michael white

There was a time in the ancient history of our globe when people believed the earth was a living being ruled over by all the forces of the sun, moon and stars and all the particulars of nature were living elementals. These supernatural forces were in a hierarchy and the tallest mountains and largest lakes were the divine monarchs of the pantheon of local deities. John Vincent Bellezza's work documenting the pre Buddhist history of Tibet has opened a window into this ancient history that incredibly still survives of the high reaches of the Trans Himalayan Mountains of Tibet. He has published four major studies with another forthcoming. These include *Antiquities of Northern Tibet* (2001) and its companion *Antiquities of Upper Tibet* (2002) that survey a great variety of archaeological sites on the high plateaus of Tibet. These books are richly illustrated with photographs of different types of ruins including megalithic remains and prehistoric rock art on the high plateaus between 14,000 and 18,000 feet. These two books provide detailed archaeological surveys of a large number of ruins of pre-Buddhist sites without going into detail regarding the anthropological or ethnographic information associated with the sites. His other two books, *Divine Dyads: Ancient Civilizations in Tibet* (1997) and *Spirit Mediums, Sacred Mountains and Related Bon Textual Traditions in Upper Tibet: Calling Down the Gods* (2005) provide more detailed anthropological and ethnographic information along with textual and linguistic research that casts a light on the pre historical remains that he documents. Another title, *Antiquities of High Tibet: A Comprehensive Enthnoarchaeology and Textual Analysis of Pre-Buddhist Archaeological Monuments and Rock Art in the Tibetan Upland* is forth coming. His books mark a huge advance in the study of the ancient civilizations of Tibet. He carries on in the tradition of Giuseppe Tucci, George Roerich, Aurel Stein, Sven Hedin and others who have explored inside Tibet seeking out archaeological sites. He uses a combination of history, archaeology, ethnology, anthropology and linguistics. To many students of Tibetan Buddhism the history of Tibet begins in the sixth and seventh centuries C.E. In his books Bellezza explores the pre Buddhist history of Tibet that he divides into two great periods. First is the history of the country known as Zhang-Zhung,

which included most of modern Tibet in its territories. Zhang-Zhung held sway over this territory until the seventh to eighth centuries when the kingdom of the Yarlung Valley in central Tibet rose to power and, in an act of political sabotage, assassinated the last King of Zhang-Zhung. After this the Yarlung dynasty slowly came to dominate the region including the ancient capital of Zhang-Zhung in western Tibet. The religion of Zhang-Zhung, called Bon, continued to hold sway in remote parts of Tibet up until about 1250 C.E. and even now ten percent of the populations is Bon. But, secondly, he reaches back before Zhang-Zhung and the Bon to the Neolithic and Bronze Age. He begins delineating the time spans for these periods and puts the Neolithic from 3,000 BC to 1,500 BC, and the Iron or Metal Age from 1,500 BC up to 700 C.E. In these ancient traditions the people believed that the great mountain peaks, the lakes and all the forces of nature were supernatural beings. The divine dyads of the title of his first book are the places where there is a mountain peak associated with a certain lake. The divine beings that are personified in the mountain and the lake are consorts who are responsible for the well being of the entire area. He studies two particular dyads that are found in the region of central and western Tibet. He shows how these deities are personified in the liturgical texts that are used in their worship. He also gives a review of the literature showing how these elemental local deities are depicted, first in the Bon tradition and later in the Buddhist tradition. Finally he provides a detailed archaeological survey of the areas around the lakes. Each of the two lakes is surrounded by caves and ruins and in some cases the walls of the caves were covered with petroglyphs and pictographs. He provides an in depth analysis of these cave paintings with cross-cultural information to begin the process of dating them, some of which are of great antiquity. In the foreword to *Divine Dyads*, written by Namkhai Norbu, he says, "Zhang- zhung is the source of Tibetan culture and history", he also says the population of Zhang- zhung were largely nomadic living primarily in tents. They were a confederation of tribes but had a capital city, a king and a national religion. They built castles and fortresses to govern and guard their country. He does a very detailed sur-



vey of the ruins of some of these and explores the local legends that still cling to these spots. There were also religious institutions and they were especially centered around the sacred lakes and utilized the caves in the mountains around the shores of the lake. Zhang-Zhung was defined geographically by three great dyads that mark the western area, the center and the eastern region of the great plateau and lake region known as Bhang thang. The first of these in the west is Mt. Kailish, which he refers to by its Tibetan name, Gangs ti se, along with lake Manosovar. In *Divine Dyads* he says that because so much has been written about Mt. Kailish he is going to concentrate on the other two dyads. Yet these are not the only such pairs of local deities and he reports that there are hundreds of them to be found in the great expanses of Tibet. He visits the remote areas where these indigenous traditions continue to survive in the high mountains of contemporary Tibet. It is remarkable that the world can sustain these remote areas where ancient indigenous traditions can survive. The intense climate of Byang thang that has many areas between 14,000 to 18,000 feet in altitude helps to preserve these traditions that include the deification of meteorological, celestial and topographical features along with animal and plant life. The Bhang thang is roughly eight thousand square miles in what has come to be called the Trans Himalaya region. In this context the great mountain peaks and the huge lakes that form on their slopes are the most dominate of all these features and stand out as the rulers in a pantheon of supernatural forces. He explores the literature of the Bon tradition and the later onset of Tibetan Buddhism and demonstrates how the same strategy was used in relation to these indigenous deities in both traditions. That is, the indigenous tradition of the mountain deities ruling over their kingdom was already in place when the ancient Bon tradition was established. There are hagiographic stories in the Bon scriptures telling how the great founder of Bon subjugated the mountain deities and made them protectors of the Bon religion. They claim these ancient deities were blood thirsty wrathful beings that were tamed by the Bon. The Buddhist make

very much the same case in reference to Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, and there are stories of Padmasambhava entering into spiritual combat to subjugate the mountain deities and make them protectors of the dharma. These deities, known as yul lha, protect the vitality and sanctity of their kingdoms and as long as the people under their domain subscribe to their religious and environmental obligations all will be well in the kingdom, but should they violate any of these protocols they will feel the wrath of the deities which can manifest as severe hail or other crop destroying weather, disease for flocks or even personal health problems. In order to maintain proper relations with the mountain deities the Bon, and later the Buddhist, carry out elaborate rituals and ceremonies to honor and supplicate them. Activities such as fire pujas, building cairns on the mountain passes, circumambulating the mountains and the lakes and flying pray flags are ways of supplicating the mountain spirits. There is even a genre of Tibetan literature known as Gsol kha that deals with ceremonial texts written in praise of the indigenous deities. Even now in some villages they are still appeased with animal sacrifices and with offerings of meat or horns from slain animals. The deities are feed with incense and, as the newer religions dictated that blood sacrifices were no longer allowed, torma, images formed of dough, were substituted for the animal sacrifices. He even finds a scriptural text with detailed instructions describing a series of offerings that include, "offering of a beautiful young woman". His research includes archaeological finds from ancient tombs that indicate ransom sacrifices in which, upon the interment of a high status person, other people were sacrificed to accompany them in death. The life force of the mountain is personified in local iconology where the deity is pictured as a robust man riding a white horse carrying a crystal mala in one hand and a bow and arrow in the other. However, the life force of the deity can also manifest in other forms such as a gigantic snake, a bear or a wolf or even a dragon. These animal forms reflect back to totemic beliefs from ancient shamanic traditions. The research for these books took him on many treks across parts of Tibet that are over 12,000 and 14,000 feet in altitude. For many years he spent half the year in Tibet exploring archaeological remains and the other half in Dharmasala where he studied at the Tibetan Archives to sharpen his language skills so he could conduct interviews and read the texts associated with the various deities he was studying. On some of the trips he made pilgrimages circumambulating the sacred lakes and mountains on foot. He would survey ancient

ruins, taking photographs and interviewing local nomads and villagers along with any Bon or Buddhist lamas who resided in the area. He has documented three main types of ancient sites: first, caves, many with paintings on the walls, second, megalithic remains including standing stones, stone circles and unusual rectangular arrays of standing stones, and third, ancient buildings made of stone that were in some cases hilltop castles and fortresses and in others the ruins of ancient Bon religious institutions. He carefully catalogs these sites, surveys their dimensions, photographs the remains, interviews the local people to find out if any memory survives about the sites and finally studies the historical, hagiographic and religious literature associated with the sites. The oldest of the rock art sites show vibrant portraits of animals, men on horseback armed with bows and arrows and people in combat with shields and swords. He has inventoried many different kinds of megalithic sites including single standing stones, circles of stones and rectangular arrays that can have up to 1,000 standing stones. These large arrays are typically accompanied by adjoining structures. His research indicates these standing stones had some funerary purpose. In *Calling Down the Gods* he goes into great details about how these indigenous gods are able to speak through spirit mediums. These spirit mediums are possessed by the local indigenous deities and speak for them. However, the deities of the dyad, the deity of the mountain and the lake, are too powerful to enter into any human receptacle and only lesser members of their retinue are suitable for accommodating the consciousness of a human. In contemporary Tibetan society, under Chinese rule, these mediums risk imprisonment if they allow themselves to be possessed openly. The bronze mirrors that were part of their costume has now been outlawed. This mirror was referred to as "the entire world" and was the place where the deity resided until called forth in the ritual. Then during the possession of the spirit the personality of the medium was kept in the mirror. During the trance the medium is able to predict the future and to heal using a katag that he or she holds to the body of the person who is ill and sucks and tugs on the other end of the scarf to extract the cause of the illness. He found thirteen lineages of mediums including some that were possessed by zoomorphic deities such as Red Copper Wolf, Black Bear with the White Shoulders and Owl with the Long Beak. Before his work little was know about Zhang-Zhung. As a result of his many field trips to document Pre Buddhist sites associated with Zhang-Zhung he has begun the process of establish-



ing the extend of its boundaries, its chronology and its religious traditions. While Zhang-Zhung was largely nomadic he has found agricultural areas with ruins of houses that served as fixed settlements at least during the growing season. He found evidence that the priests were also warriors and carried weapons and led troops into battle. The priests had costumes that included horned helmets. The Bon tradition had both ceremonial magic, ritual sacrifice and also a Dzogchen tradition of meditation. Zhang-Zhung came to its end not so much due to conquest but more so due to climatic decline. The climate became dryer and dryer and many of the lakes that were settlement areas and agricultural centers became salinized. When the Yarlung Dynasty finally took over it was after several hundred years of climatic pressures. He has inventoried over 500 Zhang-Zhung sites and over 100 rock art sites between 14,000 and 18,000 feet. This extreme altitude has acted to preserve both the ruins of the ancient pre Buddhist societies but also the tradition of the indigenous deities that still survives within both the Bon and Buddhist communities in these high mountain areas.

# uncompromising truth for a compromised world: tibetan buddhism and today's world samdhong rinpoche with donovan roebert

foreword by hh the dalai lama  
2006, world wisdom publications

gerald reilly

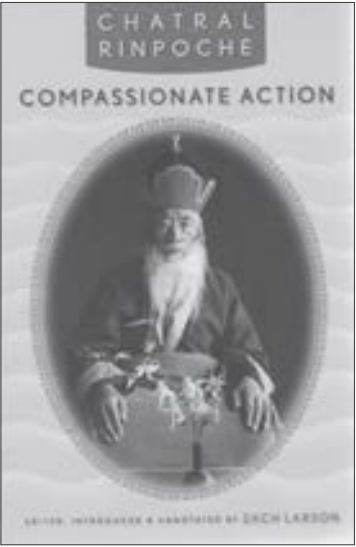
It is surely a truism that political realities in the Twentieth Century have turned the attention of Tibetan Buddhism far beyond the shadow of the Himalayas. In Tibet before 1959, the weight of monastic institutions was often decisively influential in shaping public policy in Tibet even as Tibetan dharma remained invisible to the rest of the world. Nearly fifty years later, the Dalai Lama has taken on an ever-growing role as a commentator and spokesperson a global Buddhist audience even as he remains policymaker and political leader of a population-in-exile. In recent years, the Dalai Lama has addressed a vast array of topics beyond standard dharma fare, including global politics and history, western religions, psychology and mind science, even physics and technology.

## compassionate action chatral rinpoche

a small review of a short book published by snow lion publications

jonathan schaeffer

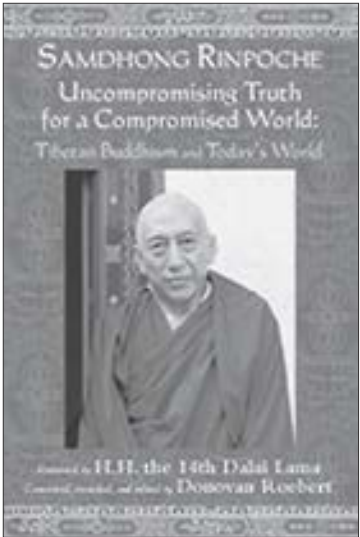
Compassionate Action is a biography of the life of Chatral Sangye Dorje Rinpoche, a consummate Yogi well into his 90's at the time of this writing. This includes a short poetic autobiography, a number of his essays (Dharma teachings) and prayers, and advice for (Nyingma) practitioners. Chatral Rinpoche's life is itself a teaching. The qualities of humility and simplicity, perseverance and discipline do seem to have been embodied to the fullest extent, as suggested by the author in chapter 1, apparently adopted from the yogin code of ethics from *The Practice of the Mountain Retreat Expounded Simply and Directly in Its Essential Nakedness*, a text by Dudjom Rinpoche. He has meditated in retreats for over 30 years, all over the Himalayan region, founding and restoring various meditation centers and



stupas, most noticeably residing at Yangleshod, Nepal, on the outer rim of the Kathmandu Valley, and in Darjeeling. There are many anecdotes of incidences in his life, for example, a famous meeting with Thomas Merton, and his first meeting with Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche in Lhasa in the late 1950's. Several chapters focus on Chatral Rinpoche's nonviolent ethics and proactive vegetarianism, citing various sutras, and the famous Paltrul Rinpoche. As the story is told, Chatral Rinpoche's deep commitment took place in the 1960's, at Bodhgaya, India. His commitment includes an annual blessing ritual, releasing of 1000's of fish in Calcutta every year, praying for higher rebirth

and connection to the Buddha-dharma. The book focuses on aspects of this theme, and while the traditional diet in Tibet was meat oriented, the plentiful availability of fruits and vegetables in India and elsewhere make vegetarianism easier, as Rinpoche himself states. Chatral Rinpoche's teachers and Dharma Lineages are described in some detail, the most recognizable by many students being the Longchen Nyintig and the Dudjom Tersar Lineage. A few tales of Rinpoche and his Gurus are described, as to the level of his realization, and his "traditional style" of humility and refusal of fame. Also the unique relationship he and Dudjom Rinpoche share as student/teacher is described briefly which is quite interesting. Though the culmination of those Nyingma Lineage Teachings is Dzogchen, the book stresses the importance of a firm foundation, a seriousness and dedication towards the Dharma, and the way of accumulating the proper instruction through traditional retreats and practice. Also described, the current situation of it being much more difficult for Westerners to meet or receive Dharma teachings from Rinpoche, as a strange and unfortunate incident occurred in 1997, where a Western student tried to strangle him. So it is

possible now for serious students to receive higher teachings only after 6 years; 3 years of ngöndro and the traditional 3 year retreat. As a senior Nyingma Lama, and Vajra Regent of Dudjom Rinpoche's Lineage, his presence and teachings are no doubt in high demand. It is quite apparent that Rinpoche is quite selective in his teaching to students, and focuses himself on practice in the traditional style (retreat), whilst maintaining training for thousands of students in monasteries and centers across the Nepal/India/Bhutan region, and worldwide. This little book is an inspiration of immense value to all serious practitioners of the Buddhadharma. There are some surprises here, as with the chapter regarding "...Making Aspirations at a Stupa", and over 15 pages of photos of Chatral Rinpoche and some of his teachers including Kalu Rinpoche, Khenpo Ngawang Palzang, Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro, and others. The few details of the life and activity of Chatral Rinpoche have not been formerly (or widely) known, though Chatral Rinpoche's presence and continuation of the Nyingma Lineages are of tremendous importance. May we keep the advice of the Lama in our minds.



Last year, Samdhong Rinpoche, the first elected prime minister of the Tibetan government in exile, published a book entitled UNCOMPROMISING TRUTH FOR A COMPROMISED WORLD: *Tibetan Buddhism and Today's World* that has begun to make him better known to the global Buddhist Sangha. With a special focus on politics, the book considers how a variety of the deepest ideals of Tibetan Buddhism can be realized in that violent and oppressive world we all know as samsara. As the book jacket suggests, the book was conceived and edited by a South-African Buddhist, Donovan Roebert, who has been actively supporting the Tibetan cause in his own homeland. The book's format includes both question and answer dialogue between Mr. Roebert and Rinpoche as well as summaries written by the editor presenting Rinpoche's views. The book begins with an overview, compel-

lingly entitled "The Long Road to Now" that discusses a range of more than fifteen contextual topics relating the philosophy of Buddhism with the realities of modern society and individual life. These are followed by chapters on the nature of the modern individual, a consideration of humankind in samsara, lengthy recounting and analysis of the tragic modern history of Tibet, and a chapter on non-violence and Satyagraha. The book concludes with a summary presentation of relevant aspects of the Buddhadharma as background for the previous discussions. Samdhong Rinpoche doesn't stray far from the traditional Buddhist perspectives even as he generously engages an enormous overview of worldly issues. As the leader of the Tibetan exile community, elected consecutively by landslide, and as an educator and philosopher who has lived much of his adult life in India, he brings similar intellectual breadth to his writing as his obvious model, the Dalai Lama, even as he perhaps lacks the polished editorial support that characterizes those many other publications. The discussions of personal liberty are characteristic. Rinpoche posits a tension between the individual's responsibility and the individual's right. He notes, "Buddhism...will emphasize personal responsibility as the key element in establishing a cohesive and peaceful society. If each individual fulfilled their responsibility correctly, there would be no cause for social conflict or social

injustice." The modern western reader might hear echoes of the conservative-liberal debate with conservatives' reliance on the individual versus a liberal/socialist emphasis on government action. Yet Samdhong Rinpoche also admits the insufficiency of answering enormously complex social issues with a stock, all-but-simplistic reliance on personal virtues and ideals. The book is quite open in its intentions to offer introductory, generalized, even provisional discussion and analysis. In one of his brief discussions of global economics and commerce, Rinpoche insists that there is not nearly enough time or space in this book to even begin a proper examination. He correctly observes, "Cultures are being destroyed by the process of globalization," even as he notes that unchecked "economic imperialism" is harming the entire planet, not just regions. In fact, the book outlines the problems without pretending to have nearly sufficient answers. The book's most powerful solutions are based to a great extent on Gandhian ideas of Non-Violence, Satyagraha (truthfulness), and Ahimsa (non-violence). Rinpoche's affinity with the great spiritual, social philosopher clearly goes beyond his noticeable connections to Indian culture including a long residency in Benaras (as principal of the then Tibetan Institute) and fluency in Hindi and Sanskrit. Excerpts from previous speeches and articles point to Rinpoche's ongoing efforts to articulate tactics that can combine idealism

and pragmatism. He interprets HH the Dalai Lama's ideas on Tibetan self-rule within the Chinese constitutional structure as essentially Gandhian in nature. The text is unfortunately brief here, at what is the heart of the book, relying on extracts from speeches and articles that Rinpoche has produced as prime minister. What Rinpoche recognizes very clearly from Gandhi's own experience is how much diligence, wisdom, and even luck such tactics require. At the end of the section, he invokes the Buddha's own battles with the hosts of demonic forces as a kind of ultimate archetype how Satyagraha and Ahimsa can be achieved. Undoubtedly, Samdhong Rinpoche's political career will include further evolution and refinement of the practice of non-violence. Throughout the pages of this collection, he has attempted to bring compassion and wisdom into an arena where many modern people resignedly believe they can no longer stand. No doubt, this engagement is a potential model for some of our own, often stumbling attempts at integration. Beyond its technical meditative and teaching context, that essential word is suggestive of the ongoing challenge of recognizing our true nature amidst the distractions of everyday living. In that context, Samdhong Rinpoche's efforts are exemplary and inspirational.



# golok traditional tibetan school

“a school for girls”

**linda fidanzia**

This year ASIA achieved a significant goal in the field of education in the Amdo Tibetan Region. On June 4th, 2007 the Golok Traditional Tibetan School for “school-age females” was opened in the presence of the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands to Beijing, the representatives of the Trace Foundation and the local authorities. This school is the result of a project, which began in 2004 in the remote area of Golok, a prefecture that lies in the upland plains in the south-east of Qinghai province, at an average altitude of 4.200 meters. The climate here is very cold and the living conditions very harsh. Communication is limited and most of the roads are dirt roads, making the economic development of the region very difficult. The level of education is very

from the others, since it was the only one in Qinghai province to apply the “teaching and debate” methods formerly used in monasteries, together with the learning of modern sciences. The curriculum of the school included the study of traditional culture – logic, grammar, rhetoric, Tibetan, astronomy and astrology, Sanskrit and medicine; languages – Chinese, Tibetan and English; politics – including current political affairs, basic jurisprudence and the politics of nationality; history – including Chinese and world history; and sciences – geometry, algebra, physics, chemistry and information technology. ASIA’s staff that has been working in the Prefecture since 1993, paid several visits to this school in order to assess the results of the educational policy that was



During inauguration.

Therefore, as the school structures were no longer adequate to satisfy the continuous applications for enrollment and were unable to accept female pupils

ings with Jigmed Gyaltzen and the local authorities of Golok prefectures and Maqen County, in 2004 a project proposal was prepared by ASIA and submitted

Yuan, which corresponds to nearly 314.000 Euro. Furthermore, in 2006, the Golok government decided to open a new road that has greatly im-



The Dutch Ambassador during the opening ceremony of the school.

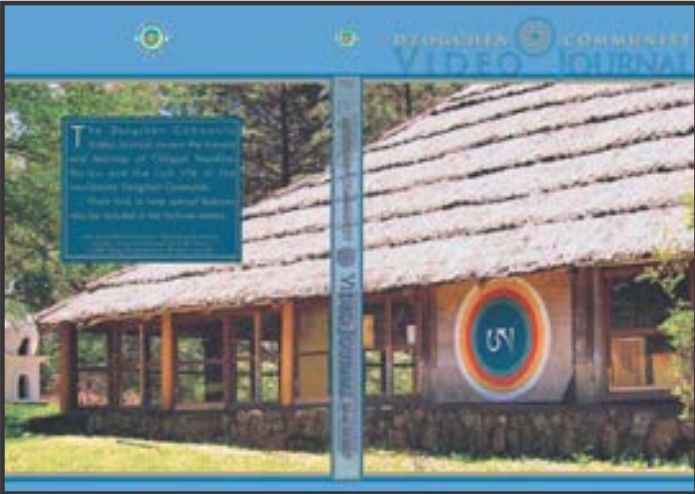
low and up to 75% of the local women are illiterate. The project arose from the experience of a monk named Jigmed Gyaltzen. In 1994, wanting to give the new generation of youngsters the chance to receive traditional Tibetan knowledge combined with a modern education, he founded a private school near the famous Ragya Monastery in Golok Prefecture. This school immediately distinguished itself

being applied. They found that the educational system was very well structured but were disappointed by one aspect: the total lack of female students at the school. In fact, the school is located within the Ragya monastery area, and due to the rules that forbid women to enter the monastery, the school cannot accept local girls.

thus penalizing local girls, it was decided to prepare a new project for the construction of a co-educational school which would make the monastic teaching method, based on memorization and debate and on the experiences gained at Jigme Gyaltzen’s school, available to girls. After several missions carried out by ASIA experts and meet-

to the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Beijing and to the Trace Foundation. Both donors decided to give grants to the proposal: in 2004 the works began and were finally concluded during the winter of 2006. The total investment done for this project amounted to 3.142.000

proved link from the main road to the school. Today more than 200 girls are attending classes and through the long distance sponsorship project ASIA will provide them with the support needed to live at the school.



## New Video Journal #13

The issue #13 of the Video Journal is ready. This is the first issue of the 2007 subscription. For information on how to subscribe please write to [orders@istitutoshangshung.org](mailto:orders@istitutoshangshung.org) or to the SSI secretary, Luisa Velasco at [l.velasco@istitutoshangshung.org](mailto:l.velasco@istitutoshangshung.org)

Thank you,  
The Video Journal Staff



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adriana battisti designer





During Jnanadhakini Drubchen.

Photo: Fabio Andrico



Photo: Fabio Andrico

# a tribute to the gakyils, vajra dance teachers and places of the vajra dance mandala in the world

## chögyal namkhai norbu

june 13, 2007  
tashigar norte, margarita island, venezuela

“I would like to give some small gifts for all the Gakyils of the Dzogchen Community. You know that we have many different kinds of Gakyils; we have the Gakyil of a Gar, a Ling and also small Gakyils of different places. I consider the Gakyils important for maintaining the Dzogchen Teachings. My idea is that when Namkhai Norbu disappears, the teaching of Namkhai Norbu must not disappear. My hope is that there will be a continuation of the teaching I have taught for more than thirty years. I believe what I have taught is really very important Dzogchen teaching, not only the title Dzogchen, but touching some real sense of the teachings. We need to continue that for future generations, so therefore all practitioners, all people who follow the teachings, have that same responsibility. Some people say, “Oh yes, I like Dzogchen Teachings, but I don’t like the organization and I don’t like the Gakyil, etc.”. We are living in society. Society is organized, so

we cannot live without some kind of organization. We are trying to organize the Community in a way that corresponds to the teachings. This is then more or less the principle of the Gakyil, so in that way we must work for the future. For that reason, I consider that the Gakyils are important, and even though I have not great things to give, I would like to give something for remembering. Now, please, just one representative of each Gakyil should come up to receive the gift. I am giving some copies of a Guru Dragphur thanka. This thanka of Guru Dragphur is related to the terma teaching of my uncle, so Guru Dragphur is particularly important for me and for that reason I want to give a copy to the Gakyils. It is not only a copy, but it is empowered. So first the representatives of the Gars can come, because in a Gar there are more people and there are also some copies that you can give to people who are more active in the Gakyil. Now for the



Gakyils of the Lings. (People came from Brazil, Argentina, Russia, Ukraine, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Holland, Costa Rica etc., etc.) So this is the end of our Jnanadhakini retreat and we have the Vajra Dance. The Vajra Dance is very special and, in particular, this teaching came from Goma Devi. For that reason I would like to give a kind of homage to all the Vajra Dance teachers. Please come, all Vajra Dance teachers. There are some extra copies so you can give to the best students as well. Now where there is a Vajra Mandala, even if it is private or of a Gar or Ling, please each representative of a mandala can come. [This gift was an empowered representation of a thanka of Gomadevi.] That is all. Thank you.”



Photo: Fabio Andrico



Photo: Fabio Andrico



# calendar of events 2007

**General Program**  
In case of any changes to the current calendar, we suggest you check our website – [www.dzogchen.it](http://www.dzogchen.it) – from time to time for confirmation of the courses.  
The Tibetan letter **A** in this program indicates events that are particularly suited to those who are approaching the Dzogchen Teaching for the first time.  
We would like to remind those who are genuinely interested that it is indispensable to meet the Master. This can take place by following one of his Teaching Retreats or by participating in one of the Worldwide Direct Transmission days.  
Please note that two courses previously announced with Elio Guarisco have been cancelled and that two of the SMS courses have switched teachers. The changes have been indicated in the program.

**July**  
**July 28–29, 2007**  
(please note change of teacher)  
*Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS*  
with Costantino Albini  
Topic: *the Precious Vase*, Chapter IV

(from 6. to the end)  
Start: Saturday July 28 at 10.00  
Cost: 60 €  
(with discounts for members)

**August**  
**August 7–12, 2007**  
*Dance of the Song of the Vajra*  
course for beginners (Part 1)  
with Rita Renzi  
Start: Tuesday August 7 at 10.00  
Cost: 180 €  
(with discounts for members)

**August 13–19, 2007**  
*Meditation practice retreat*  
*with explanations*  
Combined with Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance  
with Costantino Albini, Fabio Risolo and Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance teachers  
Start: Monday August 13 at 10.00  
Cost: 250 €  
(with discounts for members)

**August 20–23, 2007**  
*Teachers' Training for the Breathing Course*  
with Fabio Andrico  
The course is limited to a maximum of 9 participants  
Cost: 160 € (no discounts)

**August 24–31, 2007**  
*Yantra Yoga Teachers' Training (1st level)*  
with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico  
Start: Friday August 24 at 16.00  
Cost: 320 € (no discounts)

**September**  
**September 1–3, 2007**  
*Course on breathing and Kumbhaka*  
with Fabio Andrico  
Start: Saturday September 1 at 17.00  
Cost: 100 €  
(with discounts for members)

**September 7–13, 2007** **A**  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
Teaching retreat  
Paltrul Rinpoche's Dzogchen Man ngag 'Odsal Nangcha (*The Upadesha on the Vision of the Clear Light*)  
(Paltrul Kabum, vol IV, p. 687)  
The retreat is open to all and starts on Friday Sept. 7 in the afternoon  
Cost: 350 €  
(with discounts for members)  
Closed webcast

**September 15–16, 2007**  
*Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS*  
with Fabio Risolo  
Topic: *The Precious Vase*, Chapter VII  
Start: Saturday September 15 at 10.00  
Cost: 60 €  
(with discounts for members)

**September 15–17, 2007**  
SMS Second Level Exams

**September 18–24, 2007**  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
SMS Third Level Training

**October**  
**October 5–11, 2007** **A**  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
*Teachings and practice of Buddha Shakyamuni's Praises to the 21 Taras*  
The retreat starts on October 5 at 16.00  
Cost: 350 €  
(with discounts for members)  
Open webcast

**October 11–14, 2007** **A**  
*Yantra Yoga course for beginners*  
with Tiziana Gottardi  
Open to everyone  
Start: Thursday October 11 at 10.00  
Cost: 60 €  
(with discounts for members)

**October 20–21, 2007**  
*Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS*  
with Costantino Albini  
Topic: *The Precious Vase*, Chapters VIII and IX  
Start: Saturday October 20 at 10.00  
Cost: 60 €  
(with discounts for members)

**November**  
**November 1–4, 2007** **A**  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
*Teachings and collective practice dedicated to the dead*  
Cost: 200 €  
(with discounts for members)

**November 25–29, 2007** **A**  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
Open webcast from Barcelona, Spain  
Teaching retreat  
Longchenpa's Nyingtam Sumchu (*Thirty Pieces of Advice from the Heart*)  
(Sung Thorbu, vol. I, p. 354)

**December**  
**December 8, 2007**  
Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Birthday

**December 8–9, 2007**  
*Green Tara practice retreat*

**Dec. 27–Jan. 3, 2008** **A**  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
Open Webcast from Tashigar South, Argentina  
Teaching Retreat  
Longchenpa's Choszhi Rinchen Phrengwa (*The Necklace of the Four Precious Dharmas*)  
(Sung Thorbu, vol. I, p. 247)

**December 27–January 3, 2008**  
*Dance of the Song of the Vajra*  
course for beginners (Part 2)  
with Rita Renzi  
Start: Thursday December 27 at 10.00  
Cost: 200 €  
(with discounts for members)

## training on the third level of the santi maha sangha

**September 18th to 24th, 2007**  
Practitioners who have already attended a *Third Level Training* and would like to do so again, should enroll before

the training starts, by email or phone, to the secretary of Merigar who will check in advance to see if they fulfill the requirements  
The requirements for attending a Santi Maha Sangha Training Level 3 are the following:  
• To have passed the examinations of the Base, First Level and Second Level of the Santi Maha Sangha.

• To be a member of the Dzogchen Community and up to date with the membership payment which should have been paid without interruption for all the years between the Base Exam and this 3 Level Training.

The cost is € 350, and for those who have already done the Training, the cost is half price, or € 175.

Best wishes  
Shang Shung Institute and Merigar West office  
[courses@istitutoshangshung.org](mailto:courses@istitutoshangshung.org)  
[merigaroffice@tiscali.it](mailto:merigaroffice@tiscali.it)  
phone: +39 05 64 96 68 37

## passages

**Died:** On Thursday June 28 our Vajra sister Terry Di Pompeo passed away at 8.40 in the morning in Rome, Italy. Several years ago Terry came to live at Merigar West in order to be close to the Dzogchen Community, to participate in activities at the Gar and to be able to put into practice the Teachings of our precious Master. Terry was well known to everyone at Merigar West and there are so many things that could be said of her: she was a very strong and courageous woman, she had a way of standing by people that was both blunt yet, at the same time gentle, and always solicitous. I think that many of us had spent time in her kitchen telling her about our problems over a cup of tea or a plate of pasta.  
But I don't think that this is really the important thing even if, funnily enough, it is often these very things that stay in our minds: the memories of many different moments.  
What is important for me is the strength with which Terry searched for her path, the devotion she always showed towards the Teaching and most of all the way in which she managed to face her illness; with great gentleness and an open heart and with courage and lucidity. She spoke to each of us on the phone and succeeded in giving us good advice for the future. She brought together all our friendships and gave us strength without asking help for herself. Then she left us, gently, subtly, with dignity, knowing that this was a necessary passage for which she had been preparing for some time, thanks to the precious Teachings. Her passing was the lesson of an entire lifetime and personally I am very happy to have been her friend.

Lucia Antonelli



And now Terry passes towards the next dream

after the incredulous end of the voyage  
she encouraged us spontaneously  
to consider ourselves fortunate

telling us about her most magical visions  
she asked us not to forget  
a single detail

her car and her ashes  
go to the most important gar

her objects  
to her precious children

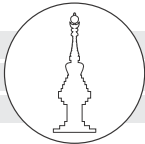
her eyes smiling with gently irony  
to all those who met her

See you soon Terry  
you were really great  
right to the end

Mario Apicelli



## merigarwest



### Accommodation Service at Merigar

Information for people who intend to come to Merigar for retreats or to follow courses

If you are looking for accommodation, airport transfer, local car hire or only logistic assistance, you can contact the following information and reservation service:

### Accommodation Service

(Information available in English, German, French and Italian)

Information service and reservation of accommodation during retreats, local transport, & logistic solutions:

Christina von Geispitzheim

Email: [acomodationservice@libero.it](mailto:acomodationservice@libero.it)

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.

## Europe

### Czech Republic

Spring Retreat of 7th Lojong with Oliver Leick

April 28 – May 2, 2007 in Prague

The Czech Dzogchen Community has invited Oliver Leick from Austria to explain Yantra Yoga since 1999, when the first practitioners began to practice in Prague. We appreciated to have such a skilled Austrian neighbor as Oliver. This time, he held a retreat on the 7th Lojong. The retreat was organized in a spacious hall, with two gyms, one for Yantra Yoga and one for Vajra Dance. We practiced each regularly every day. Despite going through precise explanation, indication for the practice and practicing the 7th Lojong together, Oliver accentuated the integration of the experience of the formal practice into our every day life. We appreciated Oliver's way of understanding the teachings, especially about the breathing and being aware of breathing as often as possible, and the Santi Maha Sangha study.

On Sunday, Oliver gave a public talk in City Library Hall called *Treasure of Tibetan Culture and Inspiration for Everyday Life*. Many friends and relatives of practitioners came and we all enjoyed Oliver's fresh and respectful way of sharing these topics with public. Oliver went through the main principles of Tibetan medicine, Tibetan Buddhism as a path to the liberation, and Yantra Yoga as the way of working with breath and movement. As the representative of Shang Shung Institute, Oliver also emphasized the importance of saving ancient Tibetan texts and working on translations.

During the retreat, Oliver asked to hold a small meeting with the Czech Gakyil and the representatives from the Czech Publication Committee (CZPC) to present current news on the changes in the Shang Shung Institute and outlined the future.

Thanks to our precious Master we can study and practice these precious teachings together!

May the teachings lead us all to liberation!

Tereza Stárková

\*

Dream Yoga with Michael Katz

June 29–31 in Prague



([mart.viires@gmail.com](mailto:mart.viires@gmail.com))  
Andres Zelmin, Red ([zelmin@hotmail.com](mailto:zelmin@hotmail.com))  
+372 6572560  
Alar Kukk, Blue (President)  
+372 56910977  
Contact email of the Gakyil:  
[dzog.est@gmail.com](mailto:dzog.est@gmail.com)

### France

upcoming

Welcome to Vajra Dance this summer at Dejam Ling

Dejam Ling is the French Community Practice and Retreat Center in Southern France (Near Ganges, about one hour from Montpellier, and one and half hours from the beach)

Here are some opportunities to join us for the Vajra Dance in August:

Course of Perfecting the Dance of the Song of the Vajra

August 3–8 with Adriana dal Borgo  
This course is intended for Advanced Practitioners with good knowledge of the Dance of the Song of Vajra. Participation is limited to 25 people. Please confirm your participation as soon as possible.

Price: 245 € with usual discounts for members of the International Dzogchen Community

Practice Retreat of the Dance of the Song of Vajra

August 9–11  
Intensive Practice Retreat together after the previous Course

Course of the 2nd Part of the Dance of the Song of Vajra

August 12–18 with Stoffelina Verdonk  
This course is for beginners and advance practitioners.  
Price: 245 € with usual discounts for members of the International Dzogchen Community

To participate in any of these Courses or Retreat Practices, please register as soon as possible.

Contact: Helene Bureau, 7 rue de Saint Pierre, 66500 Villefranche de Conflent  
Tel: 04.68.05.26.16  
Email: [helene.bureau@wanadoo.fr](mailto:helene.bureau@wanadoo.fr)

Lodging at Dejam Ling: 8 € per night in dormitory, 3 € camping.

Meals: 12 € per day.

Lodging and meals are paid on the spot directly with the person responsible for each course or retreat.

For more addresses for lodging around the Ling, do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

Welcome all to Dejam Ling, “Place of Infinite Bliss”, as named by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The Gakyil

\*

Dream Yoga & Lucidity Workshop

With Dr. Michael Katz  
July 27–29 in Paris

Editor of “Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light” by Namkhai Norbu. Michael Katz, editor of “Dream Yoga” and author of “The White Dolphin” is a psychologist who has lectured and led workshops on dream yoga and lucidity for personal growth. He has studied Ericksonian hypnotherapy, Reichian therapy, Gestalt, Embodied Dream Imagery and psychodrama. He has practiced Tibetan Buddhism and Dzogchen meditation since 1974.

Librairie les 100ciels  
12 avenue Jean Aicard 75011 Paris  
10 h–17 h  
180 €

This workshop is intended to enhance develop the capacity to dream lucidly, enhance creativity, self-exploration, and spiritual/psychological growth



through powerful techniques of dream yoga and lucid dream. Please bring writing materials and sunglasses to this workshop.

To register contact Regina Martino:  
[regina.m@noos.fr](mailto:regina.m@noos.fr)

### Germany

Upcoming:

Course of Vajra Dance of Three Vajras with Karin Heinemann  
September 21–23, 2007  
in Oldenburg/Holstein (near Hamburg)

The German Dzogchen Community is pleased to announce that Karin Heinemann, an authorized teacher of the first level Vajra Dance, will teach the course “Vajra Dance of Three Vajras”.

This course is for beginners and offered for those who have already received

Tentative course schedule:

Friday 19:00–21:30 pm

Saturday 10:30 am–18:00 pm

Sunday 10:00 am–16:00 pm

Info and Registration:

Natalia Gershevskaya

Phone: +49 (0)211 9179047

Email: [natalia@bdax.de](mailto:natalia@bdax.de)

Dzogchen Gemeinschaft Deutschland e.V.  
Stadtsparkasse Duesseldorf  
Account number: 110 478 91  
BLZ: 30050110  
For transfers from other €-Countries:  
IBAN: DE40300501100011047891  
BIC: DUSSEDDXXX

### Hungary

Dream Yoga with Michael Katz

July 5–9 in Budapest

▼



\*

upcoming:

Advanced Yantra Yoga

with Laura Evangelisti

July 26–30, 2007

3rd, 4th, 5th Series of Yantras & Kumar Kumari

For more information and registration please contact us by email:  
[dzogchenhu@yahoo.com](mailto:dzogchenhu@yahoo.com)

### Italy

Dance of the Vajra in Molise

The Dzogchen Community of Molise in the south of Italy has 15 practitioners including those who have received the transmission and people interested in the Teaching. The group has existed for about four years and the recent course of Dance of the Vajra of the Six Spaces of Samanthabhadra, which was open to all, was the second retreat organized by the local Community. The course was held from May 4–6 at the gym in Guglionesi where local practitioners meet twice a week to do the Dance together. In fact after the first Dance of the Three Vajras retreat held in September 2006,



# Europe (continued)



Photo: Attilio Russi

▲ local practitioners got together to build a mandala about 8.60 m in diameter. The course held this year was led by the local aspirant instructor Enzo Terzano with the supervision of Prima Mai who very kindly accepted the invitation. Prima followed all the sessions with attention and offered precious advice for understanding the value of the Dance of the Six Spaces and applying it in our internal work with our emotions and passions. The Mandala was perfectly balanced with six Pawo dancing the male part and six Pamo the female part throughout all the practice sessions. The day after the retreat we went with Prima Mai to see a piece of land with a wonderful view and a dream to build a Mandala that overlooks, day and night, the changing colors of the sea.

The Molise Dzogchen Community

**Dance of the Liberation of the Six Spaces Teaching Retreat** with Cindy Faulkner at Kunselling UK, which was held from the May 25th–28th, 2007. ▼



## Slovakia

**The Slovak Dzogchen Community has a New Gakyil**

Blue: Mirka Reissova, Oliver Chmelik – [blue@dzogchen.sk](mailto:blue@dzogchen.sk)  
Red: Ivana Jurisova, Marek Guga – [red@dzogchen.sk](mailto:red@dzogchen.sk)  
Yellow: Monika Budacova, Zuzana Karlikova – [yellow@dzogchen.sk](mailto:yellow@dzogchen.sk)

Best Wishes,  
Slovakian Gakyil

\*

**Chöd Retreat with Nina Robinson**

May 14–20, 2007 in Trenc. Teplice.

▼



## UK

**New UK Gakyil**

The UK Gakyil is pleased to welcome three new members following their May 2007 AGM.

The UK Gakyil is now as follows:

Yellow:

Anne Patterson – *Company Secretary*

Alex Studholme – *Financial Management*

Red:

Nick Segust – *Kunselling Bookings*

Robin Russell – *Karma Yoga Co-ordinator*

Blue:

Judy Allan – *Communications Co-ordinator & Events*

Barbara Terris – *Kunselling Library & Web Site design Co-ordinator.*

\*

Please contact Rowan Wylie at

[rowanwylie@hotmail.com](mailto:rowanwylie@hotmail.com) if you're interested.

Om Ah Hung!

\*

**His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the UK**

We are delighted to announce that Dharma Network 2008 have now signed contracts at the Nottingham Arena for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's teachings from May 24–28, 2008.

Over the weekend His Holiness will give a series of talks on the theme of Bringing Meaning to our Lives followed by three days on Investigating the Nature of Reality with a Vajrasattva Initiation. We are well on the way to finalizing

the arrangements and it is hoped that tickets will go on sale in mid-August. A website with full information is under construction.

Dharma Network 2008 wishes to start publicizing the teachings and would be very grateful for your help in reaching as wide an audience as possible. The Buddhist Directory is in the process of being updated so if you could pass this email onto your affiliated groups, that would be very helpful. If that is not possible, could you let us have a current list of contact email addresses.

**Advance Publicity**

We aim to use the website as the main source of information about the teachings. Printed publicity will be available only in postcard format and A3 posters. We hope that you will support our aim of reducing paper usage and

that if you have a website and email database, you will be happy to use these for publicizing the teachings.

Please could you let us know as soon as possible if you will be able to circulate advance publicity – whether by electronic or printed means. If you can help please contact:

[tking@dharmanetwork.co.uk](mailto:tking@dharmanetwork.co.uk)

## Ukraine

**upcoming**

**Retreats in Crimea, Ukraine**

(a beautiful place by the Black Sea)

September 15–21: **Mandarava Chüdlen practice retreat** with Nina Robinson.

September 23–29: **Chöd practice retreat** with Nina Robinson.

September 22–October 1: **Yantra Yoga Teachers' Retreat** with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti.

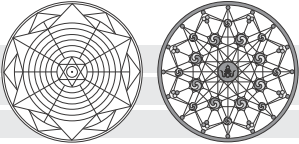
If you would like to take part, feel free to contact [andrei.besedin@gmail.com](mailto:andrei.besedin@gmail.com)

Best wishes,

Andrei Besedin, Kiev Gakyil, blue sector

\*\* \*

# tsegyalgar east



**DCA Tsegyalgar East**

PO Box 277

Conway, MA 01341 USA

Phone: 413 369 4153

Fax & Bookstore: 413 369 4473

[secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)

[www.tsegyalgar.org](http://www.tsegyalgar.org)

**Please note:**

**A New Post Office Box for Tsegyalgar**

**East:**

PO Box 479

Conway, MA 01341

USA

**New Gekö**

Tsegyalgar East is happy to announce the first day of work for our new Gekö, Joey Mella. Joey is a dedicated member of the Community, a recent graduate of Hampshire College, and is currently enrolled in the Tibetan Medicine program. We also wish to thank our retiring Gekö, Leela Whitcomb-Hewitt, for her hard work and commitment. We will miss her presence.

Warm wishes,  
Tsegyalgar East Gakyil

\*

**upcoming**

The Tsegyalgar East Gakyil is happy to announce our

**Annual Santi Maha Sangha Summer Intensive**

On the Sacred Land of Khandroling

Buckland, Massachusetts USA

August 3–21, 2007

**Santi Maha Sangha** with Jim Valby

**Yantra Yoga** with Oni McKinstry & Paula Barry

**Vajra Dance** with Bodhi Krause

**SMS Base:** Aug. 3–6 & 8–11

**SMS Level 1:** Aug. 13–16 & 18–21

Four 4-day sessions

Every 5th day is a day to rest, participate in Karma Yoga, & enjoy Khandroling \$800 full retreat

\$230 each 4-day session

\$60/day or \$20/individual sessions

Membership discounts apply

(Participants are also encouraged to add a 20% donation to Khandroling)

Work-study exchange available

To register, or for more information, please contact the Tsegyalgar East Secretary:

Phone: 413-369-4153

Fax: 413-369-4473

[secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)

(Register now: enrollment limited to a maximum of 24 people per session)

## New York City

**The New New York City Gakyil**

June 2007

Blue: Mark Fulton, *President*

Mariano Gil

Vladimir Kogan

Yellow: Jane Fulton, *Treasurer*

Kevin B. Heaney, *Vice President*

Inna Vicherevina

Red: Devjani Huggins

Pilar Trusgnach

Julia Murphy Red

Dina Ostrovsky as *Secretary*

\*

**upcoming:**

**Vajra Dance in NYC in August**

Join us on the Mandala at Kundrolling 151 West 30th St. 4th floor, New York, NY 10001

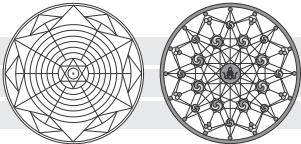
August 22, 23, 24 (Wed, Thurs, Fri) and 27 (Mon) 2007:

6.30 pm for a 6.45 pm start – 9.30 pm





# tsegyalgarwest



<b>Tsegyalgar West/Baja Mexico</b>	755 Euclid Ave.	cabass@prodigy.net.mx
<b>Dzogchen Community West Coast</b>	Berkeley, CA 94708	carolfields@aol.com
<a href="http://www.bahasangha.org">www.bahasangha.org</a>		

upcoming  
The Southern California Dzogchen Community is pleased to announce a **Santa Maha Sangha teaching and practice retreat with Jim Valby.**  
October 19–22, 2007  
**Location:** Shiastu Rincon, Carpinteria, California  
**Cost:** TBA  
**Contact:** Arthur Flynn  
[atiyoga@mindspring.com](mailto:atiyoga@mindspring.com)

**New Tsegyalgar West (Baja) Gakyil**  
Blue: Carolyn Bass  
Julia Deisler (*Director*)  
Michael Hass (*Vice Director*)  
Yellow: Carol Fields  
John La France (*Treasurer*)  
Andres Orvananos  
Red: Daniel Kuzma  
Doug Lingard  
Vincent Moore



## The Retreat on the Seventh Lojong in Crimea (May, 2007) with Fabio Andrico

**Marina Soukhanova**  
Yantra Yoga instructor, Moscow, 2007

It was about three years ago at the time of the Yantra Yoga retreat in Kunsangar that Fabio generously shared his memories with us. He told us of the retreat on the Six Yogas of Naropa that Rinpoche held many years earlier in the Italian mountains with his first students. For many days they practiced tummo. Fabio told about the experiences of this famous practice and the atmosphere at this unusual retreat. Fabio spoke, as always, in such an interesting and picturesque manner that a strong desire arose in me to attend a retreat of the same kind.

I thought that we also could organize such a retreat. But would it be possible, taking into consideration that the retreat had been very long (it lasted almost 20 days) and the fact that Rinpoche

led it? On the other hand, nothing is impossible.

And after a couple of hours I was already discussing this idea with Fabio. “Can you come and hold this kind of retreat with us”, I asked him. “Yes, it is quite possible”, he answered with no hesitation, and added: “But this is a very special retreat. There haven’t been retreats like this since Rinpoche held it. For that reason some not very easy requirements must be met for the organization”.

Terrific!!! Fabio agreed!!! All the conditions will be fulfilled!!! Nothing is impossible!!!

Nothing is impossible, especially when efforts of several people, several like-minded persons, are united. Last winter Victor Krach-

kovsky, the Yantra Yoga instructor from the Ukraine, reminded me of this conversation with Fabio, and we decided that the time had already come and we were ready to organize such a retreat. Thanks to Victor, as a tireless instructor and organizer, he did very much for that retreat to take place. Thanks to all those who helped us!

Then there was correspondence with Fabio, discussing the timetable and conditions. Fabio personally addressed Rinpoche and got his permission. As a result, for the first time in the worldwide Dzogchen Community, a 7th Lojong retreat given by Fabio Andrico took place. A very unusual and special retreat!

We all know that Yantra Yoga is a very important secondary practice in the Dzogchen Teaching, and we know the main goal of Yantra Yoga is kumbhaka, the famous kumbhaka, indispensable for having possibility to do such important practices like the 7th lojong, the Pranayama of the 3rd series, the Tsalung practices

and so on. Every one of us knows something about the “famous kumbhaka”. But are there many of us who actually do it? And do those who do perform it correctly? This is the point where the role of Yantra Yoga teacher is so important.

From the very beginning, our beloved instructor Fabio Andrico designed the plan of our retreat in a very wise and subtle way: we spent two days performing full breathing as the foundation of kumbhaka, three days were dedicated to special exercises that enable one to feel very precisely the kumbhaka being formed. Then there was training of the rhythmic breathing, and the remaining days of the retreat were dedicated to the 7th lojong.

It turned out that the breath work could be done in a virtuoso manner like playing a sophisticated instrument. Breathing is similar to music, it has rhythm and continuity, power and beauty, and the instrument is our own body!

Working with breathing... The action that gives possibility to experience concrete sensations! It was great, unbelievable, and fantastic! Enormous thanks to Fabio!!! In what an exact and professional way he explained to us the important details of the practice, what patience and wisdom he manifested towards us so that each and every one of us could get correct sensations, how generously and openly he shared his precious experience with us! How easy it was to carry out the most difficult things in his presence. And how much power, humor and charisma Fabio is able to radiate while working with his students. All the participants of the retreat were happy both to have the experiences that arise as a result of the practice and to have possibility to learn from a really skillful person, to practice together with him.

Ten incredible, unforgettable days! Everything was so harmonious: the beautiful spot in Crimea, the mountains and sea and fresh air and dense cypress-

es, the so dear and happy faces of the Vajra relatives, and the cozy house in which we all exercised together, and the homey, family-like atmosphere, and the intensive training and Fabio’s amazing stories coming from the very depth of his experience. These were stories about the main principles of Yantra Yoga, about its absolute difference from all other existing kinds of Yoga in the world, about this marvelous and unique practice coming directly from Rinpoche to us!!! Emaho! Thank you, Rinpoche! Thank you very, very much!!!

How wonderful! What bliss! How lucky we are!



The retreat is over, so we can summarize. For those who are interested in the results of the intensive breathing practice of kumbhaka and the 7th lojong, especially when guided by a super instructor, I can say that besides special sensations of heat and different nyams, which depend on the individual capacity of the practitioner, there arise a number of very simple, not mystical at all, but very important signs of the practice: the body gets more gentle and flexible, the breathing more balanced, the emotions more harmonious, and the mind gets relaxed, calm and capable of more awareness and presence. A feeling surges of huge inner power and joy, the feeling of happiness and oneness with the Teaching, with the Master!

The retreat finished, and we experienced personally the results of the practice. But the main task now is not to forget transferring this state into our usual daily life, into our business and work, into our relationship with those who are dear to us, and with the entire world!



tashigar

norte



Tashigar North /Finca Tashigar

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

Tel: 0058 0295 2580332  
tashinor@mail.dzogchen.ru  
www.dzogchenvenezuela.org

Omission:  
Gekö of Tashigar Norte: Ales Ryznar  
\*  
Yantra Yoga 3rd, 4th and 5th series  
with Amare Pearl at Tashigar Norte,  
Margarita, April 2007.



tashigar

sur



Tashigar South  
Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar  
Calle pública S/N

Tanti 5155  
Pcia. de Córdoba  
Argentina

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

Tibetan Calendar available for down-  
load  
From the Tashigar South (Sur) Web Site  
  
You are invited to download the Tibetan  
Calendar for the Fire Boar Year and  
Namkha software from <[www.tashi-  
gar-sur.com.ar/tibecal/products.  
php](http://www.tashigar-sur.com.ar/tibecal/products.php)>. This software runs on Windows  
platforms. Linux and Mac OS X are not  
supported. Also remember to register  
your copy of the Tibetan Calendar to get  
your personal password for free at:  
[www.tashigar-sur.com.ar/tibecal/  
registration.php](http://www.tashigar-sur.com.ar/tibecal/registration.php)  
  
For any question email:  
[tibecal@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:tibecal@yahoo.com.ar)  
Enjoy!!!  
  
Kind regards  
Daniel Simonelli@Tashigar Sur  
\*  
Santi Maha Sangha Update  
from The Tashigar South Gakyil  
The new guide for SMS trainings and  
exams is now on line in Spanish at  
<[www.tashigar-sur.com.ar](http://www.tashigar-sur.com.ar)>. You  
must click into “actividades”, and at  
the end you will find it.  
  
Greetings



La nueva guía para el entrena-  
miento y examen del SMS se en-  
cuentra en español en la página  
<[www.tashigar-sur.com.ar](http://www.tashigar-sur.com.ar)>. Deben  
ir a “Actividades”, y al final de esta los  
encontrarán.  
  
Saludos  
Ricky Sued at [rickysued@gmail.com](mailto:rickysued@gmail.com)  
Tashigar South Gakyil

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Chile  
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– [alonso@luzandina.cl](mailto:alonso@luzandina.cl)  
Gaston Iroume  
– [gastoniroume@yahoo.com](mailto:gastoniroume@yahoo.com)  
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For the Fifth (Quinta) Region  
Blue: Elizabeth Lopez  
– [phuntzokdolma@gmail.com](mailto:phuntzokdolma@gmail.com)  
Yellow: Jasmin Caceres  
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namgyalgar

and pacific rim



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Namgyalgar  
Santi Maha Sangha Study and Prac-  
tice  
Explanation of Collective Practices  
Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance  
A Santi Maha Sangha Program with  
regular SMS Base and Level 1 study  
sessions, guided by qualified SMS Base  
Teacher, Elise Stutchbury has com-  
menced at Namgyalgar. These sessions  
will occur every 2 weeks (as below).  
There will also be explanations per-  
taining to the Collective Practices for  
Auspicious Days, as well as Vajra Dance  
practice and Yantra Yoga.  
Yantra Yoga Level 1 Classes led by  
Intermediate Yantra Instructor, Emily  
Coleing,  
Every Saturday, and also daily YY prac-  
tice sessions at 11am in the Namgyalgar  
Gonpa.  
Vajra Dance Practice led by Intermedi-  
ate Vajra Dance Teacher, Jean Mackin-  
tosh; daily at Namgyalgar at 3 pm, and  
on the monthly SMS study days.  
  
Wednesday, monthly  
· 10 am –12 noon Yantra Yoga Class 1st  
Level  
· 12 noon and / or 5.30 pm Vajra  
Dance practice  
· 2 to 3:30 pm Level 1 SMS study group  
  
· 4 pm to 5:30 pm SMS Base Level  
Session  
· 5:30 pm dinner.  
· 7 pm –9 pm /9.30 pm Explanation of  
one of the collective practices, fol-  
lowed by a practice.  
In the course of the day if anyone is  
interested in doing some Karma Yoga,  
there are opportunities to help out with  
some tasks at the Gar – please ask  
Emily or Eze about this.  
  
Saturday, monthly  
· 10 am –12noon Yantra Yoga  
Class 1st Level  
· 12 noon Vajra Dance practice  
· 1 pm Lunch  
· 2 to 3:30 pm SMS Base Level Session  
· 4 pm to 5:30 pm Level 1 SMS study  
group  
In the course of the day if anyone is  
interested in doing some Karma Yoga,  
there are opportunities to help out with  
some tasks at the Gar – please ask Em-  
ily or Eze about this.  
  
For Further Information, including the  
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Red: Rebecca Hayden: Red  
Yellow: Slavica Voglar  
We can still be contacted at:  
[nzgakyil@yahoo.co.nz](mailto:nzgakyil@yahoo.co.nz)

Namgyalgar Maintenance Raffle  
The winners of the Namgyalgar Raffle  
that was drawn at the Jim Valby retreat  
at Easter are:  
1st prize  
Elise Stutchbury [Round trip airline ticket  
to see Rinpoche anywhere in the world]  
2nd prize  
Sharon Dewar [Thanka]  
3rd prize  
Heather Hyde [1 week free cabin retreat at  
Namgyalgar]  
  
Congratulations to the winners!  
Thank you to everyone who purchased  
raffle tickets which helps to support  
Namgyalgar.

bodhi

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## passages

**Died:** Mario Franchini  
August 19, 1952–June 5, 2007

Mario was born in Varese in Northern Italy. One thing I can say about him, and perhaps this had a great influence on him, was the love he had for his parents. It was a natural bond and he counted family life and love as a great joy that gave meaning throughout his life. Mario was also a person able to enjoy his own solitude. He was a sweet and kind man (of course I am biased – reader, I married him), could easily express a perceptive and inquiring intelligence and had a fabulous sense of humor.

Mario met Rinpoche in the latter half of the 1970's. Already at that time he had begun his yoga training, having been to India several times, and began to teach in Varese and Milano. He became one of the early Yantra Yoga teachers in the Dzogchen Community and taught many people in Italy, England and New Zealand.

I remember him being the Yantra Yoga demonstrator and being twisted and turned in various postures at the Yantra Yoga retreat at Merigar in 1983, where Rinpoche began the translation of the Vairocana text with the task of translating the translation into movement as the focus. We later moved to London and immersed ourselves in Dzogchen activity and our studies (he was at art school) and it was the happiest of times. The mode of transport was bicycle – Hamstead Heath, our Yantra Yoga room – a place to practice Semdzins and Shine. A place to enjoy a glass of wine and food with friends, to

read, and of course Mario would be sketching too.

We moved to New Zealand in 1987 and Rinpoche came a few months after the birth of our son Emmanuel in 1988 and gave his first New Zealand retreat. Mario was studying business computing at university – determined to weave bohemian life in with supporting his family in an interesting way. He was a beautiful father; very devoted and loving. A Dzogchen Community began to grow in New Zealand, both on the North and South Islands, and there were several Community retreats where Mario taught Yantra Yoga and explained practices. I especially remember the Semdzins. Mario's instinct was towards contemplation. He had become interested in Vipassana practices of the Theravadin tradition even in London and had participated in retreats here with Western Monks, disciples of Ajahn Chah, often engaging them in lively debate.

In 1990 he suffered a major brain hemorrhage and who would have predicted that for seventeen years he would have to contend with results of that. Epilepsy, hepatitis C from bad blood and later diabetes followed the initial neurosurgery. Medication became a feature of his life – changing his body shape at times – making him sleepy and, at different periods, it caused many difficulties. There was also brain damage, which would take time to be revealed. A status epileptic seizure wiped out his short-term memory about nine years ago and eventually Mario went to live in a Community where he received full time support.

The brain. As mysterious as the universe. The universe inside our body. Mario never lost his intelligence – his sense of humor – his love. Sometimes I would say, “How is your Rigpa?”, he would bring finger and thumb together and say “Always present, darling”

He eluded death many times. I heard him complain about our not living together – I rarely, if ever, heard him complain about his fate.

I can feel sad when I think about what happened to him, but I didn't really feel that so often when I was with him. He was always himself or maybe an exaggerated version. He went to live at Mt Tabor – after I refused to sign the papers to release him from a hospital ward to go to live in an old peoples' home. Although there is a Social Welfare system in New Zealand, there was no provision for someone in his situation. Through thinking outside the square and some political intervention, we managed to get funding for him to live at Mt Tabor. Mt Tabor was started some twenty-five years ago based on the philosophy of the French Jean Vanier for people with intellectual disabilities. Mt Tabor operates as a spiritual community where residents and workers share in the living together. They have about six houses and a farm around Auckland. People who live in this community are genuinely empowered to live to their fullest capacities and an interesting bunch of supporters and friends have grown around the core groups.

Mario found his way at Mt Tabor – to be fully himself to live in the present and to not fight his fate. A great joy was his art, which was



always recognized, appreciated and rediscovered anew when he would return to the studio.

His dying was remarkable for the calm way he proceeded. It was as if his massive disability disappeared – as he lost weight he seemed to lose the last seventeen years and the Mario of the past was revealed.

His connection with the Dzogchen teachings and his devotion to Rinpoche was often present. When shown a photograph of the Master, he would see it afresh, as if for the first time, take off his beanie and touch the photo to his forehead. All those days we sat in the kind Autumn sun – singing the Song of the Vajra – saying what needed to be said – not much and just being. And then the last moments – the calm that followed his almost imperceptible last breath. The three of us – Mario, our son and me.

His body lay untouched for nearly four days. The first few

days there was a smile - almost a chuckle on his face.

We practiced Shitro and I remember a beautiful space here through all those days. On the day of his funeral at Grey Lynn Community centre - we lifted his body on a sheet and placed it in a simple cardboard coffin and into the back of Bill's red van. Later he was cremated. He did say once he would like his ashes to be scattered on the Ganges or another time blasted to outer space. But I'm sure I can remember him saying he just didn't care.

As he said to the nurse who visited from Hospice, “We've all got to kick the bucket sometime”.

Thank you Mario for your beautiful and mysterious life. Thank you for your beautiful and mysterious death.

May you be liberated!

Love, Gabrielle

Gabrielle Kearney

## mario, the medical miracle man

cheh goh

Many years ago in London, I was a stiff, inflexible and curious university student. After having the good fortune of meeting our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, one day I met this couple who had just arrived from Italy: Gabrielle, the New Zealand girl, and an Italian who introduced himself as Mario. Mario Ultimo Franchini.

Mario quickly told me, proudly, that he had been chasing his amore for many years and now had even come all the way from Italy to this “rather strange, cold and damp country” called England.

Soon after our first meeting, it was clear that his awesome sense of humor, his directness in expressing his mind, his passion, and above all his knowledge of yoga, really meant that I had a lot to learn from him. Mario was passionate about Yantra Yoga, and was equally passionate about showing anyone who was interested how to do it well. The

stiff, inflexible and curious me began the journey of learning about the body, bodywork, and all the practical aspects of how the body links to energy and the mind.

We were all pretty penniless at that time. We lived in our own tiny rented rooms in squat-like conditions. However, when we met, invariably Mario would produce from his bag a bottle of red wine. Being an Italian, he was prepared to sacrifice almost anything just so that he got to have his glass of wine and share it with everyone present, just like in Italy.

He taught me the “spiritual” side of Yantra after every session of practice. He demonstrated the correct way of cooking Italian pasta. He transmitted the knowledge of finding the best red wine under £2.00 to go with the spaghetti. He also indignantly declared it unfair that I could pronounce an Italian “rrr” better than him as an Italian, because

he was born with his tongue unable to roll with that sound.

We did many practices together. Once, in the beginning of the first month of Tibetan New Year, we did Ganapuja in seven consecutive evenings for accumulating merits. At other times and on our bikes, we went to many practitioners' houses in London to do group practices, and enjoyed many golden moments.

Mario learned like a bee without any limit, be it Theravadin meditation or life-saving skills. He kept trying to understand the teachings better through talking about the subtleties of self-liberation, of arising of thoughts and the disappearance of that same thoughts, and so on. I happily became a willing discussion partner.

After affectionately and fondly talking about the “horrible weather in London”, about “having to teach yoga to (me) the ‘bloody Chinese’”, about having to pay an arm and a leg just to have a drink of low quality red wine, Mario finally got married to Gabrielle, the love of his life. And that marked the beginning of his and Gabrielle's journey through India to live in New Zealand, where the air is clean

and the water is pure, and where Gabrielle preferred to bring up their soon to arrive baby.

I went to New Zealand for the first teaching retreat over there at Little Akaroa. Mario had just pulled his back muscle jumping into a cold swimming pool and I pulled mine trying to help clear the fallen trees after a storm at the retreat site. So we had a good laugh at each other. Little did we know that it was the last time we would meet in a normal way, because nature was not so kind to him: he was struck down by a brain hemorrhage.

He went into coma, and there was less than one in a gazillion chance that Mario would survive. News spread around the world, and we did endless practices of all sorts for him.

Against all odds, Mario came back to life and became a medical miracle.

Later he wrote to me to say that he was advised against drinking alcohol, but still he was in very good spirits because he felt that his years of Hatha and Yantra yoga had made him a miracle man.

Nonetheless, his brain had been damaged. He would have epileptic fits and other problems with

his behavior. It gave the closest people around him a very difficult time, in spite of himself. Later, Mario's condition deteriorated and he suffered from short-term memory loss.

When I last visited him, he was in care. He definitely remembered me, and remembered me well. He was a different person, but I noticed his indelible hallmark remained intact: his heart for his Maestro and his love for his wife; they never diminished even an iota.

Mario was a quiet, humble, unassuming, sincere and devoted practitioner, as well as a great yoga teacher, who always talked kindly in a tongue in cheek manner. I can almost hear a voice from the bardo saying, “You know this thing about the yellow peril...this Chinese who surprisingly can speak with a good Italian accent...” followed by a chuckle.

That was Mario, a most wonderful person, Vajra brother and friend.



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## new membership numbers

from shang shung institute

These days we’re putting DC’s membership data in the new worldwide membership database. This means that you could receive a message with the new membership number.

That number is unique in all the Dzogchen Community and will be the official one in future.

During this year (and probably next half year) of transition both numbers (old and new one you’ll receive) will be used.

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All the best,  
*The Staff of Shang Shung Institute*

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# how i met chögyal namkhai norbu

brett arlidge

I had the great good fortune to meet Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at Namgyalgar in January 1996. Over the years I have read many of these stories in the Mirror of “How I met Rinpoche”. I have often felt that the stories are more an account of the practitioner’s life, than an account of how they came to meet Rinpoche. I would think to myself while reading them, well I wouldn’t tell a long involved life story, I would just explain how my first meeting with Rinpoche eventuated. Now as I actually sit down to do so, I realize the practitioner’s previous life really does need to be explained. In my case, as with so many others, it was events and circumstances over many years that finally led me to meet Rinpoche when I did.

So here’s the story.  
I was born in New Zealand in 1956. I had a comfortable upbringing in a healthy loving family environment, and received a good education, which included instruction in the Christian (Church of England) religion. From my early teenage years, my

faith and interest in Christianity waned. At University in the mid 1970’s, I was more interested in surfing, partying, and having a good time than in any spiritual pursuits. However, like so many others of that generation, I did begin to develop a fledgling interest in Eastern philosophy and religion.

By late 1977 I was traveling in Asia; first in Southeast Asia and later throughout the Indian subcontinent. I remained living in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and Nepal for almost a year, and inevitably absorbed the spirit of religious devotion common to all the major religions there. I was awoken by the Muezzin’s call at dawn, listened to Sufi stories on the train from Peshawar to Karachi, experienced a host of religious festivals, including the incredible Kataragama Perahera in Sri Lanka, spent time in the company of sadhus at Hampi, Manali and Varanasi, stayed in Buddhist Viharas, made my first real contact with Tibetans at McLeod Ganj and so on. I still remember all this fondly, as a marvelous time in my life, and in a real sense it was

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also like preliminary training, preparing me for what was to come.

In November 1978 I traveled with an Australian friend from Varanasi to Nepal. We went to stay at Balaju, just north west of Kathmandu, not so far from Swayambhunath. One of the residents of the house was a certain Swami Vidyananda. He was an amazing teacher, but not at all well known. He became my first Guru, introduced me to actual spiritual practice, and changed my life forever. "Vidya" in Sanskrit corresponds to the Tibetan "rigpa", but this meant nothing to me at the time. His tradition and teaching was essentially Hindu Raja yoga style, but he had also received Buddhist and Christian teaching and training, and integrated all of it in instructing his students. For example, most new students were encouraged to read the Dhammapada as an introductory text. And one important practice for me, which he carefully transmitted to me personally, was based on the very beautiful Mantra of the Ten Paramitas.

What I am about to recount some people may find difficult to believe.

I practiced meditation day and night, chanted mantras, did prostrations and circumambulations, fasted, made offerings, and studied various sacred texts, mystic poems and so on. Very quickly my world changed.

I entered into a different dimension (which some no doubt would classify as madness!) and began to have powerful visions and dreams, and experiences of communicating directly with various deities and great masters of the past. Normal constraints of time and space did not apply. It seemed like the consciousness of all beings throughout beginningless and endless time was open to me.

I experienced the presence of dark, powerful, wrathful female beings, who I thought of at the time as "the Mothers". They were incredibly ancient, and arose out of a deep dark empty void. I now realize they were dakinis. I also encountered many fearful entities like Yamaraja. But the most powerful and important communication was with Guru Padmasambhava. I experienced meeting him many times (during that period I felt he was always nearby), and communicating directly as if speaking telepathically with him. He demon-

strated infinite compassion, patience and kindness toward me. In fact he treated me like a beloved son. He had a great sense of humor, and demonstrated complete mastery over all the other powers and deities, which inhabited my awareness at the time. Shiva and Vishnu, for example. His main instruction was that I was, like him, already liberated in my own natural condition; fully enlightened from the beginning. But it was not possible to realize this without practice.

Naturally, I developed a great trust and devotion for him. During this time, I also discovered the Evans-Wentz text the Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation in Kathmandu, and read the story of Guru Padmasambhava's life. And from the same text I learned of the existence of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen) Teaching. Gradually, my practice became more stable, and I returned to a more normal condition. The visions declined and eventually ceased altogether. I continued to practice according to my teacher's instructions, which I now understand were teachings based on the path of gradual purification, leading step by step to the final goal of Nirvana. They were not direct, resultant teachings like Anuttara Tantra or Dzogchen. I also continued to have complete faith in Guru Padmasambhava, and my own Buddha nature. I wanted to learn more, but was unable to find any more information about him or the Nyingma tradition. And my teacher Swami Vidyananda had no knowledge of that teaching.

After returning to New Zealand I continued to practice sadhana, and later returned again to live in Nepal and Himachal Pradesh (in particular Dalhousie where there was a small Tibetan community and a beautiful rock painting of Guru Padmasambhava) to practice more with my teacher. In early 1981 he advised me that it was time for me to go back to my own world (New Zealand/Australia) and to practice sadhana living in my own society. He said I needed to do practical work and make my way in the world. I followed his instruction, returned home, and never saw him again. Swami Vidyananda passed away in 1985 and our sangha scattered to the corners of the globe.

I settled in Australia, married my wife Lisa, and had children. I became a fam-



ily man, working hard to support my wife and kids. In 1987 we moved to Cairns where we still live today. I continued to practice as I had been instructed, but as the years passed I felt I was making little progress, if any. In hindsight, my biggest problem was that I had no idea how to integrate practice in my daily life. And I had no transmission that corresponded to the essential instruction I had received from Guru Rinpoche in that early period of visionary experience.

By about 1990 my wife and I both agreed that I was stuck in a rut. I still felt the need to practice, but was not benefiting from it. My shamatha and vipassana type meditations, mantra recitations, etc., were not leading to development of understanding or compassion. My heart was not open. My family relationships were suffering. I was also plagued by a chronic illness. I began to pursue alternative spiritual practices. Shamanism helped to a degree.

And then it happened. Maybe it was 1992 or 1993. I was in the only esoteric bookshop in Cairns. As always I checked the Buddhist section to see if there was anything relating to Guru Padmasambhava and the Great Perfection. And this time there was!

*The Crystal and the Way of Light*. I was very happy. I bought the book and read it again and again. At last! It was truly amazing to be reading the words of a realized Master of the Dzogchen teaching. Now if only I were able to meet Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and actually receive and practice Dzogchen teachings. But of course

the book did not indicate that there was any chance of Rinpoche coming to Australia. And there was no internet to consult at the time....

Time passed as it does. *The Crystal and the Way of Light* occupied my bedside table. I still chanted the mantra of the ten paramitas sometimes. I practiced visualizing Guru Padmasambhava perched above my head.

In 1995 my wife Lisa said to me, "Brett, there's a Buddhist Teacher just arrived in Cairns. He's giving a talk. Why don't we go along?"

We went. The teacher's name was Laurence Mills.

The flyer for the talk said Laurence was a student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. As soon as the talk was over I went up and introduced myself and asked him about Rinpoche.

Laurence said "Oh yes, he's coming to Australia at the end of the year".

It still makes me smile to think of that moment.

The end of the year came and so did the summer school holidays. We drove about 3000km from Cairns to southern New South Wales. I took the whole family. We stayed in a nice little house overlooking the harbor at Bermagui. Not so far from Namgyalgar. We couldn't make it in time for the Boxing Day to New Year retreat, so I booked to do the Yantra Yoga course with Fabio, starting January 3rd.

Rinpoche was around, but I didn't get the opportunity to meet him until about the third day when there was a Ganapuja. After the Ganapuja I went up and met Rinpoche for the first time. I was shy to be in the presence of such a great Master but he spoke kindly to me, asking me about Yantra and how was it going. That night I had a dream.

*I was with Rinpoche. He was very jovial and happy. We were on a high platform maybe two or three hundred feet up off the ground. It was just a flat timber deck with no safety rails. I never noticed how it was supported, and I have no idea how we got up there.*

*I was very excited at the prospect of receiving Dzogchen instruction from Rinpoche. But I was also fearful because the deck was very unstable. It would lean this way and that as we moved around. I stayed on the opposite side from Rinpoche to keep the deck balanced.*

*Rinpoche said "Don't worry, there's nothing to fear".*

*So I moved over closer to him to better hear what he might have to say.*

*But when I did, the deck swayed crazily, and then tipped up so that it was vertical, and Rinpoche and I both fell off backwards. We were falling backwards towards the ground, looking up at the sky as we fell. Death was inevitable!*

*Next moment we both crashed to the ground.*

*We stood up, unscathed. Rinpoche was laughing. "See, I told you there was nothing to fear" he said.*

*Now I was laughing too. We had a good laugh for a long while.*

*A bit later, I realized I had no shirt on and the air was cold.*

*Suddenly Rinpoche had a pure white garment in his hands, some kind of long Asian style shirt or shawl. He gave it to me. I wrapped it around me. It was warm.*

*Then we went our individual ways.*

*That was the dream.*

And that is the story of how I came to meet my master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at Namgyalgar eleven years ago.

Precious one, I bow down at your feet!

Brett Arlidge  
Cairns, March 2007

