

THE MIRROR

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upcoming retreats
with
chögyal namkhai norbu

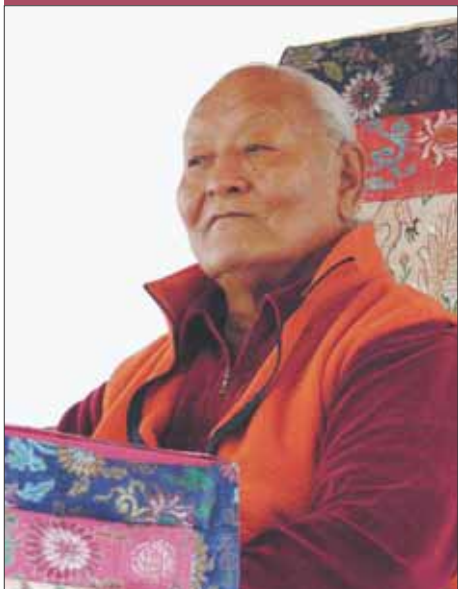


Photo: Romain Piro

MERIGAR WEST

October 5–11
Teachings and practice of the prayers
to the 21 different forms of Tara by
Buddha Shayamuni

November 1–4
Teaching and collective practice
dedicated to all the dead

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SPAIN, BARCELONA

November 25–29
Longchenpa's Nyintgam Sumchu
(Thirty Pieces of Advice from the Heart)

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Retreat venue:
C.E.M. la Mar Bella
Avinguda Litoral 96, 08005 Barcelona

Brazil
Sao Paulo
December 7–12
Paltrul Rinpoche's Shri Gyalpo'i Khyadchos
(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



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Merigar East.

Photo: Romain Piro

sky and earth

chögyal namkhai norbu's first retreat
at merigar east, romania

july 14–22, 2007

liz granger

A vast empty dry plain stretching to the horizon under a scorching sun. A local herdsman driving his small herd of bony cows across an expanse of sparse weeds. Dust billowing behind the car as it races along the white road that dips and turns through the bare fields. Then a sharp left turn and there at the end of the dirt track is Merigar East – a flat bare field with an enormous white rectangular tent, the teaching hall, flanked by a smaller sister tent that serves as an office and refectory at lunch time. A few strings a five-colored prayer flags flapping in the wind between them. Behind, two rows of chemical toilets and little huddle of washbasins. A parking area marked in white lines. Baking sun, occasional heavy gusts of wind lifting a fine dust powder from the scorched earth. Welcome to Merigar East!

After hours (days for some people) of traveling to this distant unknown place in a forgotten corner of Romania, the reality is something of a shock. The simplicity,

the sparseness, the impact of that huge white tent in the middle of nothing and nowhere leaves many of us in a state of wordless surprise.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's opening words at the opening of the retreat summed up the situation and gave valuable advice to those attending: "This is something new for us because it is the first time that I have been here in Romania. Many of you may be a little surprised. You had the idea that you were going to do the retreat at Merigar East and many people already had an idea about how Merigar is. Then you think – 'What happened to Merigar! Here there is only sky and earth when you look around!' But it is really a very interesting place for us because all our preparations and program are not only for today but also mainly for the future of the Dzogchen Community. So in this case it is a very interesting place.

This time we are in this big tent and there are not many comforts for everybody. But in general we often make a

sacrifice for the teaching. Many Westerners may not have had this experience but when I was in Tibet we made many sacrifices in order to receive teaching. When we compare these situations, this one is very comfortable. You may feel that it is a long distance to walk here and there is nothing to see in the fields. I also saw people walking along the road to come here in very strong sunshine. We have a few difficulties but that is relative. We must think a little for the future. And of course then when we do retreat the most important thing is the teaching and practice."

The new Merigar East is located on the Black Sea in southeast Romania south of the Danube Delta very close to the Bulgarian border. This strip of coast (litoral) is a well-known holiday resort area in East Europe with its sandy beaches and bustling night-life but also boasts historical links with ancient Rome as can be seen in the archeological remains to be found in and near to the urban centers. (The Roman poet Ovid, for example, was exiled here

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In these days we have learned about how to get into a calm state. This calm state is called *shine*. When we are in that calm state, we can discover that our real condition is not only the calm state or emptiness, but that we have many thoughts and movement of energy. Our thoughts are related to different kinds of emotions. We are judging, thinking and creating so much and most of the time we are distracted. When we are in a calm state we know how to integrate with this movement. This is the principle or base of what we call *lhagthong* in the Dzogchen Teaching. In the word *lhagthong*, *lhag* means something more, more than being only in a calm state, *thong* means vision, we see, we notice and we discover something; the meaning of *lhagthong* is something like that.

In sutra teaching there is a different consideration. For example, in sutra they always speak of *shunyata* or emptiness. According to sutra, when we go a little deeper and that knowledge becomes more familiar, one day there will be some manifestations of *lhagthong*. It means something that happens in a more passive way. It doesn't mean that we apply something in order to experience *lhagthong*, because then it becomes something we are waiting for. What we should do is to continually be in a calm state. We have more and more knowledge of emptiness and then one day this *lhagthong* arrives, something with which you can have more knowledge of wisdom, etc. So this is more or less what *lhagthong* means in the sutra teaching.

In the Dzogchen teaching, *lhagthong* is not that way. *Lhagthong* means that we discover that movement. From the beginning, when we learn the Dzogchen teaching, Dzogchen being our real nature and the Dzogchen teaching a means for discovering that nature, the Dzogchen teaching introduces you to your real nature. The Dzogchen teaching talks about the non-dual nature of *kadag* and *lhundrub*; *kadag* means pure since the beginning and that is *shunyata*, emptiness, but that emptiness has infinite potentiality. If we do not have that knowledge, then only being in emptiness or the experience of emptiness has no benefit. So *kadag* means emptiness and *lhundrub* means its qualification of the infinite quantity and quality of wisdoms, also infinite in the ordinary way, for example, including all our thoughts and judgments. We have many kinds of emotions. When we follow each of these emotions we understand how we produce *samsaric* vision. This kind of movement, movement that is the consideration of pure and impure movement, movement of any kind, is all part of *lhundrub*, the self perfected quality. When we have that non-dual knowledge, this knowledge of Dzogchen, we can then understand what *lhagthong* means.

The Paramitas

In sutra they always speak of the six paramitas. Paramita means beyond. There are paramitas like generosity and morality or *dana* paramita and *shila* paramita, for example, which are two of the six paramitas. Although they have the name "paramita", they are not really a paramita until the sixth consideration, the last one, or *prajna* paramita. *Prajna* means intellect, so if we have intelligence, that is *prajna*. We can develop intelligence with our mental level. We establish everything with the three logics and we believe this is the correct way, but in the real sense we are not in the real knowledge. To be in the real knowledge we need to go beyond that. For that reason in the sutra teaching they say *prajna* paramita. All other paramitas are something like members of the *prajna* paramita. There are the explanations in the text of Shantideva, the *Bodhisattvacharyavatra*. All these secondary paramitas are for the purpose of the *prajna* paramita. That is why Buddha explained all the paramitas. *Prajna* paramita is really the state of *lhagthong*, and being in the state of *lhagthong* means being in the *prajna* paramita. So it is not sufficient that one day the paramita will arrive by only practicing *shine*. Maybe we wait all our life and the paramita does not arrive. The paramita does not arrive at your door saying, "Now I am *lhagthong*".

"What does your mind look like?"

From the beginning, when we do *shine* practice in a Dzogchen way, we must understand what *lhagthong* is. For example, when we examine our thoughts, sometimes we say *sem so*, which means to research the mind. When thoughts arise we observe from where thoughts arise, where they go and where they reside. We can even search for days and days and not find anything. This is our real nature, but most people don't know that.

There is a very nice example from my father. My father told me that once he and his friends wanted to receive meditation instructions from a Kagyu master called Trungram Gyatrul Rinpoche. This master lived on a mountain doing meditation and my father and his friends went there to learn. The teacher said, "Now you should research your mind. You



photo: romain piro

shine and lhagthong

calm state and movement in sutra and dzogchen

merigar east, romania,
wednesday, july 18, 2007

transcribed and edited by naomi zeitz

observe your thoughts. When thoughts arise you observe where they come from and where they go, etc. You practice this and when you discover how it is, you can get into a state of meditation." They did this practice for two or three days and went to the teacher. He asked, "How is your mind, what does it look like?" They said they didn't find anything. Then he said, "You still need to research", and so they thought there was still something to find. They searched again for one or two days and could not find anything. They went to the teacher and he asked what they found. They all said they did not find anything, but there was one old man who said that maybe he almost found something. The teacher asked, "What did you find?" The old man said that when he sat and thought from where thoughts come or where they go, something like a little red color appeared and disappeared. The teacher said, "It is better you don't look too much at this", and said that the old man should do practice of purification. The teacher gave the old man a practice method of *Vajrasattva* and told him to do that practice for some days. When the others explained that they didn't find anything, the teacher explained that is real because there is nothing to find.

When you do not find anything concerning where thoughts come from, that is called *kyewa mepa*, which means non-birth. If you find nothing concerning where thoughts remain, that is called *nepa mepa*, meaning that nothing remains and that is the basis of *samboghakaya*. If you don't find anything concerning where and how thoughts disappear, that is called *gappa mepa*, without interruption, the basis of *nirmanakaya*. Then the teacher gave this teaching: "Now that you know that principle, you observe. Your thoughts arise and you don't go after them and you only observe how they disappear." My father told me that about his experience. Teachers always teach in that way. Our real state is non-dual, with movement and emptiness.

When you search and a thought arises and you search again, it disappears. You can repeat this hundreds or thousands of times, but it is always the same. The reason is that the base of thought is emptiness. It doesn't mean that when thoughts disappear, no more will arise. Immediately another thought arises. So this is *lhundrub*, without interruption, we have that quality or condition. So *lhagthong* is related to that; there is not only emptiness but there is also infinite movement. In the Dzogchen teaching there is advice for practitioners to not only remain in a calm state. Some people are happy when there is no thought. They think now they have realized more than a *shine* or *dharma-kaya* state. But it doesn't correspond. For example, if you are

very agitated, with all your emotions and movement that cause confusion, in that moment if you relax you are doing a kind of practice of *shine* and maybe you find a little calm state. You think that this is really very useful and a good practice. In a real sense, you are resting in a calm state just a little and even if you are resting in a calm state for one hour and for that moment you have no confusion, when you are in ordinary life and you have your function of mind in an ordinary way, then you are thinking, judging and applying, everything. If you notice, that *shine* did not help you. Maybe you are more agitated now than before. This is the reason why we need to become active for *lhagthong*.

Some people like doing *shine* practice or being in a calm state. Then when they do practice and someone or something makes noise, for example a car or airplane or helicopter arrives and makes noise, then you think how bad the noise is and how it is not easy to do *shine* practice here. So you think this is not a comfortable place. If you have this tension and tomorrow this helicopter or car comes again making noise, then it seems worse than yesterday. In the real sense it is the same, but with your tension you feel it is much stronger today. Then tomorrow it is worse and you say that you cannot do practice there and you want to go to a mountain somewhere. You renounce this place and go to mountain. Then you find a nice cave. You think this place is very nice and quiet. No one is making noise. Then you try to do *shine* practice and mosquitoes bite you, or in the night there are many night birds making noise, and you think it is not so easy to be here. That is an example. There are always problems.

Integrating with Movement

The only method we have to overcome these problems is that we really know that our real condition is not only the calm state but also movement. We should integrate with movement. We don't stay there and think, "Oh there is someone making noise. I am here and I have a problem". This is dualistic vision. We integrate. If you integrate with this sound, you have no problem. For example, when we do the practice of *Guruyoga* or other practices of Dzogchen, we sound A or HUM, etc., so if there are some objects making noises that sound like A or HUM, that is very comfortable. We don't need to always pronounce A. I always think that when I fly in an airplane. Sometimes if you have a seat somewhere in the back, then you can feel a very strong HUM. If you think how noisy it is and that you cannot stay there, then your tensions develop. You have more problems. When you realize there is the sound of HUM, you become happy and can integrate. If all during the flight until the arrival the airplane is always singing HUM, it is wonderful. This is called integration with movement.

To integrate with movement at the very beginning may not be so easy. But when you become a little familiar with it, it is really not so difficult. It is very easy. Then it is also easy to be in a state of Dzogchen in ordinary life. Our ordinary life is not always sitting in a *Vairocana* position. After a little while we finish sitting practice and we get up. We go to the toilet. We go to the kitchen to eat, drink, work, and everything is related to movement. If we have the capacity to integrate, then everything becomes part of our experience and our experience becomes part of our practice. So you see how you can understand the sense of *lhagthong*.

Wrathful Manifestations, Kadag and Lhundrub

When I taught in Singapore some students asked me why Dzogchen practitioners always like to do transformation with wrathful manifestations. In our practice *thun* book there are the manifestations of *Dakini Simhamukha* and *Guru Dragphur*, etc. The students said that they prefer peaceful forms. They said that when they do a peaceful practice like *Tara* or *Avalokitesvara*, for example, they can get in a little more peaceful state. I explained that because we do these transformations does not mean we always like to manifest in a wrathful way. We have a famous practice called *Shitro*. *Shi* means peaceful form and *tro* means wrathful manifestations. The peaceful mandala is in the center of our body. For example, we transform into *Vajrasattva* and in the center of that form is the peaceful mandala and in the head *chakra* is the wrathful manifestation. Even if there are two different kinds of manifestations, the essence is the same. There are not two kinds of beings, only the aspect of our real condition is manifesting in two aspects. One represents the calm state, *kadag*, and the other represents *lhundrub*, the wrathful manifestation. So it is very important in our practice to integrate movement into our real nature, otherwise we never integrate our practice into our life. For that reason we use more wrathful manifestations so we do not have problems. That is an example. So this is very, very important when you are learning *lhagthong*, the quality of *lhagthong*. ☸



the trip to galenting, east tibet

interview with luigi ottaviani,
director of the shang shung institute, italy

translated by liz granger

The Mirror: Luigi, you, Yeshe Namkhai and Migmar Ciren went to Tibet in August. Could you tell us about this trip?

Luigi: Our destination was Galenting in Derge Province, East Tibet.

We arrived in Chengdu by plane and from there we covered 1000 km overland passing through the towns of Kangding and Ganzi.

The trip was quite tiring but it helped us discover how very different Tibet and China are. The most obvious differences

women) and bore themselves really proudly.

Galenting is a small village situated in valley with a river cutting through it. The houses have all been built around the monastery, the heart of the village. The houses are mostly in wood and plaster with stables in the lower part and the living quarters on the first floor, practically without electricity and running water. The monastery's college, which was recently built by ASIA, is set above the village on one side of the valley.



go from the buildings (Tibetan houses are works of art in stone and wood) to the lifestyle and to the landscapes which at over 4000m. in the eastern areas are beautiful green valleys.

The rural areas of China seem to be fairly poor; outside big cities people live with really very little. East Tibet, however, appears to be quite well off even though the main activities are still herding and agriculture. The difference between the two cultures clearly emerges over 4000m.; the 'natural' limit beyond which it seems that Chinese development has stopped.

The little piece of Tibet that we had the luck to see showed the great industriousness of the Tibetans in each and every detail. During our trip we passed by a great number of stupas, monasteries, some of which were very large and a large number of houses (some being built) all of which were in excellent condition and decorated in the greatest detail. The Tibetans, whether they were monks or not, were always dressed very well, always working (especially the

Most of the population, however, lives as nomads in the surrounding valleys. The economy is based on breeding livestock and crops of medicinal herbs, of which the latter brings considerable wealth to the village.

The inhabitants of Galenting are extremely courteous, respectful and ready to give a hand. So much kindness and formality in showing their respect is almost embarrassing for Westerners. Then when you manage to become a little friendlier with them, you seem to become part of a large family, even without understanding anything of their language. Men and women often wear elegant clothes and decorate their hats with coral, turquoise and other precious stones.

The Mirror: Was there any particular reason for this trip?

Luigi: At Galenting, Yeshe Namkhai is considered to be the trulku (reincarnation) of Khyentse Ciokyi Wangciug Rinpoche (who was the mind incarnation of Khyentse Wang po and an im-



portant tertion with his residence at the monastery).

In fact, when we arrived there, all the local people and those from the surrounding areas rushed over in celebration and in the following days the ritual dances taught by the last Khyentse Rinpoche were performed in honor of Yeshe Namkhai.



The trip itself was made at the request of the population of Galenting, and in particular on the part of the older monks who had known the previous Khyentse Rinpoche and who wanted to meet Yeshe at least once in their lives.

For a Tibetan village a trulku is a reference point in every sense and without one it is difficult to have development and harmony among the people.

The role of a trulku is a little similar to that of village chief. He is consulted about each problem or question in which a decision for the whole community has to be taken, on every occasion of birth, death or sickness.

And if he is considered to be the reincarnation of a very wise Master, the population has the greatest respect for his each and every decision and is willing to follow suggestions about behavior or practice explained by the trulku.

In Tibet where people often abide by the laws of the nomads rather than those of the Chinese state, a trulku becomes both advisor and judge; when there are disputes between families, the village elders often come to ask his advice.

The trulku is also considered to be a source of well being for the village (and especially the monastery). His presence brings



prestige and growth for everyone.

The Mirror: It must have been a very moving moment for the older disciples, the monks and the local population ... and a profound experience for everyone.

Luigi: It was moving to meet the old disciples who at this point were very old. They had the utmost devotion and trust in their trulku (Khyentse Rinpoche/Yeshe) who had come back to help them,



Their wish is that Yeshe may be able to come back again and take care of the village.

The trip was also important for collecting more information on the life of Khyentse Rinpoche. It is precisely this aspect that has become a project at the Shang Shung Institute, which has taken on the responsibility to help the monastery to carry out cultural projects including a new written work on the life of Khyentse Rinpoche.

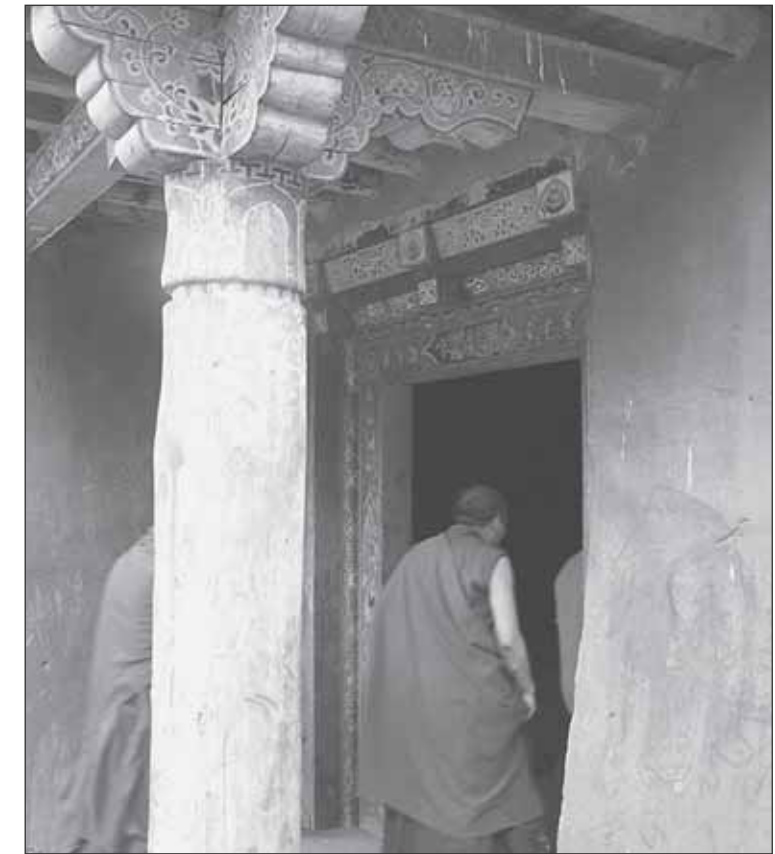
The Mirror: What projects are there for Galenting in the future? Will you be going back?

Luigi: Yeshe intends to go back to Galenting again and, in the meantime, with the Shang Shung Institute and ASIA to go ahead with projects to alleviate some of the difficult situations in the village.

Galenting has no system to take care of non-biodegradable rubbish, the current buildings at the monastery are in need of repair and the precious murals and frescoes there require restoration (ASIA has already started this work).

Besides this the general level of education is still low and the monks who live at Galenting have indicated the current lack of access to higher forms of education.

In the coming months the Shang Shung Institute will be dealing with these problems by outlining a series of projects aimed at helping Galenting. We will keep you informed about them and will be asking support from all those who would like to help us to realize them. ©



new coordinating gakyil of russian speaking countries

karin eisenegger
red international gakyil

On July 23rd 2007 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche held a meeting with about 200 of his disciples from Russia, Ukraine, Estonia and Lithuania. The meeting took place in the big white tent on the land of Merigar East, Romania, close to the village of “23 August” at the Black Sea, after the first Retreat there had finished.

At the beginning of the meeting, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche welcomed everybody and stated that an organisation such as the International Dzogchen Community is organised only for the purpose of the Dzogchen Teaching.

Rinpoche then spoke about his plan to form a Gakyil for all Russian speaking disciples. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu explained that since his Teachings are now also transmitted via closed Webcasts, the need for well organised Gakyils, Lings and also Gars has become more important.

Rinpoche asks all Russian Gakyils and Lings to collaborate and connect with each other. He also said on this occasion that he personally had not been informed about how many groups of practitioners or Gakyils existed at the moment in Russia. To have the situation of his many disciples in Russia and adjacent countries a little bit clearer, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu encouraged the practitioners there to collaborate with each other and also in the new form that Rinpoche proposes:

His advice was that different regions should elect representatives to this coordinating Russian speaking Gakyil. Everybody agreed that a Gakyil of nine people would be sufficient. This would also avoid a complicated situation for communication.

Since only a few hundred of the 1500 Russian speaking members of the International Dzogchen Community were present at the meeting, it was decided to wait

for written nominations before choosing the members of this Gakyil.

It was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s expressed wish that the nominations should be sent to himself and the International Gakyil. “Especially as my son Yeshe takes care of the International Dzogchen Community at this time”, as Rinpoche stated.

One member of this future Russian speaking coordinating Gakyil is supposed to act as a bridge between Merigar East and Russia by also being at the same time a member of the new Gakyil of Merigar East.

On this occasion Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche also advised those present that the most important thing for the members of the coordinating Russian Gakyil was to keep communication alive. “Then everything becomes easy” stated Rinpoche, “and if things go wrong, we are informed about it, and we can immediately understand and help.” “Choose well who is the best for this,” said Rinpoche, “it has to be someone who knows English, who has all the electronic means of communication and who communicates well and easily with everybody.”

Members should choose practitioners who are willing to share information with everybody in their Community and who are not interested in personal power.

“You should not always complain about the problems of language – you have to learn English, this is the language of the International Dzogchen Community!” said the Teacher at the end of the meeting.

The following regions will each elect one representative for the Coordinating Gakyil of Russian Speaking countries made up of nine people:

Five from Russia:
1 from the Far East of Russia
1 from Siberia/Baikal
1 from Central Russia
1 from St. Petersburg
1 from Moscow who has already been chosen by Rinpoche, Uliana Sokolova, who will also represent the Gakyil of Russian speakers by being a member of the Merigar East Gakyil

Four from nearby countries:
1 from Lithuania
1 from Estonia
1 from Latvia
1 from the Ukraine/Crimea

(This article is based on the minutes taken at the meeting by Karin Eisenegger, red International Gakyil)

Since the meeting the members of the Gakyil of Russian-speaking countries have been chosen and approved by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu.

Svetlana Kollyakova, Estonia: svetlanakollyakova@hotmail.ee
Irina Pustovita – Latvia; ircha.p@gmail.com
Algis Lukoshavichus – Lithuania; algluk@gmail.com
Andrei Besedin – Ukraine; andrei.besedin@gmail.com
Anastasia Zemskih – Far East region;
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Sergey Sablin – Baikal region; ssablin@gmail.com
Vadim Arzamastsev – Central Russia region; vadarzamas@gmail.com
Elena Polagayeva – Saint Petersburg; pola@iephb.nw.ru
Uliana Sokolova – Moscow ; uliana.sokolova@gmail.com

For all general questions you can write to the secretary of the gakyil:
Elena Glinskaya
gakyilru@gmail.com

“i dwell in possibility”

pier francesco donati
asia country representative in sri lanka

I dwell in possibility. This is the motto from a poem by Emily Dickinson, under which the community center complex of the Weregama resettlement was inaugurated on Saturday 21st July. This is the second phase of the project started up by Asia Onlus following the tragedy of the Tsunami. The areas of Panadura and Waduwu on the western coast of Sri Lanka, about 30 km south of Colombo, were also damaged by the extraordinary event which struck the coasts of south-east Asia on December 26, 2004. The first phase of the intervention by Asia Onlus in this area regarded the construction of a village with 130 homes which was carried out together with other international organizations. Asia Onlus made it possible to resettle many families which had lost everything to the tsunami in a safe internal area, close to a pre-existing village.

In July 2007, precisely a year after the handing over of the houses to the beneficiaries, the community buildings for Weregama Village were inaugurated. ASIA’s intervention here is part of the Project called “Support for the revival of the Community of Fishermen and the Cooperative Society System in the Southern and Western Provinces of Sri Lanka affected by the Tsunami”, financed by the Region of Lazio and coordinated by the Inter-

regional Observation of Cooperation for Development – OICS.

The community center

The new complex has a community center with a large multi-purpose hall, a large covered entrance hall, two offices and a bathroom which will allow easy access for the disabled. At the side of this building there is a semi-circular veranda which unites the community center to the nursery constructed by the Italian NGO Ucodep. The complex encompasses and faces onto a very pleasant public space: Piazza Italia, with an area paved in stone and a garden area. The complex of buildings and the square are in the exact center of the settlement at Weregama and will be a meeting area for the entire community.

The buildings have wooden roofs, built in pine from Trentino. All the areas lead onto the veranda facing the square and there is an internal garden at the back shaded by a bower of climbing plants. The spaces are permeable and have been constructed in such a way that, in a country with a tropical climate, they permit the creation of excellent natural internal ventilation which brings about a general lowering of the temperature inside the building.

The inauguration ceremony was very impressive with the minister for the western province, some of the local authorities and the Italian Ambassador in Sri Lanka, his Excellence Pio Mariani, attending. The presence of the Ambassador was particularly appreciated by the community because he had followed events from the beginning of the construction of the settlement: last year he had been present for the consignment of the homes. The community participated enthusiastically and organized dances by the school of the hosting community and groups of young people from the resettlement.

“I dwell in possibility” because the development projects were not meant to bring riches to places where there are troubles but rather access to resources and precisely the possibility to realize them. The Weregama community center complex has an additional importance in that it can really strengthen and define the lives of the inhabitants here. A year after the resettlement of the families at Weregama, the first steps have been celebrated by those who are no longer a



The new community center.

group of people that share the same village but a community.

Thanks to the new community areas potentiality can become possibility

The possibility to build something together such as a community, to have a flexible space available that can be transformed into a cinema, a conference or meeting hall, a place where vocational training courses can be organized, a space where people can spend time together.

Our best wishes to the Weregama community to dream a thousand possibilities to carry out, with the continuing support of ASIA for the community,

within the space of the community center.

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During the inauguration.



oliver leick’s summer visit to the uk to talk about the shang shung institute

richard steven

We were delighted to welcome Oliver Leick to the UK and to Kunselling for the first time this summer to talk about setting up a local branch of the Shang Shung institute in the UK. To conclude our Open Day on the July 7th, so as to celebrate our tenth anniversary of purchasing Kunselling, Oliver gave a wonderfully inspiring talk about basic Buddhist principles and the aims of the Shang Shung Institute to an enthralled audience. Over forty people attended the Open day celebration at Kunselling altogether, many of who were local, and we were lucky to blessed with a beautiful sunny day for the various events.

Then on Dakini Day July 16th, Oliver Leick visited London in order to talk specifically to members of the UK Community. After the Ganapuja, he very kindly introduced to us the work and aims of the International Shang Shung Institute (SSI), and also spoke about his own dedication to this project.

Oliver became seriously involved with the SSI in 1986 after

Rinpoche shared, through a very moving experience, his deep concern and sadness that if action were not taken immediately, the immensely valuable traditions of Tibetan culture would wither and die. Seeing that this was very close to the heart of the Master, this inspired Oliver to devote what is now a large portion of his life to the activities of the SSI and is inspiring many others to actively participate in the activities of the institute both directly and indirectly.

After introducing the SSI in this way, he explained how things are developing in the present with regard to the reorganization of the community as a whole and the SSI in particular. He also made the point that the SSI is not just about publishing books, DVDs and CDs! (Which is what many people seem to think). In fact Shang Shung Editions was only incorporated into the SSI as recently as 2006. The publishing aspect of the institute is definitely the most visible but there are many activities going on ‘behind the scenes’ that require an immense amount of work, time and money (see below).



If you are interested in collaborating with the SSI then a very easy way is to become a member of the institute or become a donor. We are also in the process of setting up a local branch in the UK so it will become even easier to become involved here. There are already over fifteen people in the UK who have shown an interest in this project and we will keep everyone informed of news of this new and exciting development. If you wish to offer your time or have any other resources to offer, there are also many things that need doing, both at a local and international level.

For more information about the Shang Shung Institute in general, please contact Oliver Leick: office@ssi-austria.at

Now in 2007, the activities of Shang Shung Institute includes:
The Archive project: dedicated to preserving all of the precious teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, related texts and materials so that they may be available

for the benefit generations far into the future.

Tibetan Medicine Program: The 4 year educational program under the guidance of Dr Phuntsog Wangmo is now well in it’s way to being fully accredited in the USA. There is also the Shang Shung Healing Center that provides treatments and education in Tibetan Medicine that has now been running for two years. The SSI is to organize conferences and symposiums on Tibetan Medicine, inviting eminent physicians from Tibet to come and share their knowledge, and also organizes Ku Nye massage courses that take place worldwide. In the future, it also plans to organize educational talks on Tibetan Culture in general.

The Ka-Ter Translation project: 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 wisdom, 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’ (SSI). This project also includes the training of new translators

and providing the main translators with financial security in old age.

Production and Selling of products related to the Teachings: Producing increasingly high quality products and practice materials, online shop. Book publishing by Shang Shung Editions.

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 (SSI).

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. ©

shang shung institute USA

fall 2007

Autumn has arrived to New England: as the weather gets cooler and leaves begin to turn, the Tibetan Medicine students have begun the Fall semester, and the summer intensive courses in Tibetan Kunye Massage and Tibetan Astrology have come to a close. The Shang Shung Institute has already hosted the Tibetan Herbal Medicine course with Dr. Kelsang Wangyal, and on the near horizon are the Pioneer Valley’s *The Many Flavors of Buddhism* event at Smith College, and incoming applications for the new class beginning in February 2008.

Summer Break?

Summer break, you say? Well, the Shang Shung Institute’s Tibetan Medicine program was indeed on break for the summer, but activities at the Institute continued.

Traditional Tibetan Kunye Massage Level 1 was offered in Conway with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo early this June. Positive feedback from students included: “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 continues to be a popular speaker and guest at many conferences and for interested students around the world. As the director and resident teacher for the Tibetan Medicine Program, she is busy teaching, lecturing, giving Tibetan Medicine consultations, and organizing events, while maintaining the humble position of a Tibetan Doctor. She was a return honored guest and lecturer at International Herbal Symposium held this past June where she presented at the following sessions: Visions of Healing, Properly Harvesting & Processing Herbs in Tibetan Medicine, Treating Mental Illness in Tibetan Medicine, and Understanding & Treating Menopause. This summer she traveled back to Tibet, arranging books for students, the collection of Tibetan Herbal medicine for the school, as well as coordinating and working on the inauguration of Khyentse Rinpoche in Tibet.

Tibetan Astrology with Dr. Chime Rabten

Dr. Chime Rabtan and translator Khenpo Sonam presented Tibetan Astrology to a group of 20 people that gathered at the school at the peak of summer’s heat. There is an expression that

says it takes three years to learn astrology and a few days to forget it. However, these two teachers were able to give students the necessary tools to create charts, learn the calculations and have the means necessary to understand the foundations of astrology. Knowledge of Astrology is essential to become a Tibetan Medicine Doctor.

Fall Returns

With the return of the fall season comes a new semester. The fourteen Tibetan Medicine students are back in class and have already resumed their studies with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo. The Class of 2009 is now continuing to receive herbal medicine lectures, while for the Class of 2011 the curriculum is now focused on physiology. Both classes however will attend jointly (together with other outside students) the Herbal Medicine course led by Dr. Kalsang Wangyal and Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo.

Tibetan Herbal Medicine Course with Dr. Kelsang Wangyal

At the beginning of September we had the honor of Dr. Kelsang Wangyal, a Buddhism monk and Tibetan Doctor, joining us to teach on herbal medicine and plant identification. Dr. Wangyal studied Buddhism at the Jokhang monastery in Lhasa, Tibet. Later he graduated from the prestigious Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute in Dharamsala, India, in the field of Tibetan

healing and medicine. He was awarded an honorary degree of Menran-pa (T.M.D.). Dr. Wangyal was personally trained by Dr. Tenzin Choedrak, senior physician to the Dalai Lama. This course was an unique opportunity for students to spend in the field. 70% of the course was spent outdoors with Dr. Wangyal and Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo gathering and recognizing herbs.

Shang Shung Healing Center

The Healing Center is offering a free introductory session for Traditional Tibetan Kunye Massage this fall. For information contact them directly at 413.585.1081. Located in Northampton, Massachusetts, the center continues to offer Tibetan Medicine consultations and Tibetan Kunye massage. Additionally, some of the Tibetan Medicine and Tibetan Language classes are conducted on-site in the environment of center’s Tibetan décor with various thankas, herbal medicine, and Tibetan arts.

Many Flavors of Buddhism

In its past incarnation, this local Pioneer Valley event was known as the “Many Flavors of the Dharma”. It brings together the various Buddhist groups from different traditions in the area to celebrate the diverse expressions of the Dharma. Held and hosted by Smith College on October 13th and 14th, this year’s event features lectures, workshops (including one with Dr. Phuntsog

Wangmo), a dinner, informational tables, and the construction of ‘butter sculptures’ by several monks from the Gyuto Monastery. Shang Shung Institute joins this event with an informational table on the center, medicine program, and intensive courses. Additionally, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo will give a lecture during the event.

Accepting Applications for February 2008

We are now accepting application for the Spring 2008 semester. Applications can be found on-line. If you have any questions or clarification on the curriculum on the Tibetan Medicine Program please contact Shang Shung Institute by phone or email:

413.369.4928
info@shangshung.org

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. For information on the various levels of membership please visit: <http://www.shangshunginstitute.org/pages/mission/membership.php>

Available: Tibetan Literary Arts Catalogs

The Tibetan Literary Arts Catalog was prepared for the recent Tibetan Literary Arts Exhibition

to mark the visit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama to Smith College in May 2007. The exhibition featured the history of the Tibetan written language from ancient times to the 19th century. The catalog contains a collection of wonderful essays and poetry from the exhibition, such as an article on Tibetan Literature by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, as well as poetry and prose by Per Kvarene, Tulku Thondup, Thup-ten Jinpa, Steven D. Goodman, Per K. Sorensen, and Jacqueline

Gens. It also contains a translation of the Song of the Vajra. Catalogs are available to purchase for \$20 through Shang Shung Institute.

Please contact SSI at **413. 369. 4928** or **greta@shangshung.org**

Be on the watch for the release of the new, updated [www.Shang Shung.org](http://www.ShangShung.org) website!

May All Beings Be Healthy! ©



phonya

oliver leick, luigi ottaviani, paola zamperini

Dear members, supporters and friends of the international Shang Shung Institute,

We are very pleased to present you our first edition of the official magazine of the Shang Shung Institute called Phonya (speak: Po-nya).

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave the name for this magazine. Phonya is Tibetan and means “messenger” or “courier”.

In this international newsletter our worldwide activities and projects for the preservation of Tibetan culture are presented.

We hope that this information about the work of the Shang

Shung Institute will find your interest. You can download the Phonya as a PDF-file. Please also visit our updated website: **www.shangshunginstitute.org**

Have you already got a ticket of the first international lottery of the Shang Shung Institute? Getting a ticket or becoming a member of the Institute is the best way to support all our activities and projects.

Thank you very much for your support and your generosity, Very best wishes, Oliver Leick, Luigi Ottaviani and Paola Zamperini International Shang Shung Institute **www.shangshunginstitute.org**

first international shang shung institute lottery

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**>.

All of 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 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**



Garab Dorje.

international Shang Shung Institute. The total income of this lottery is a donation for all our undertakings and every donor can win really wonderful 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, medium and low. 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. For a description of the prizes see Mirror issue 86 or go to: **www.shangshunginstitute.org**

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

Get your tickets now, as we do not have more than these tickets. Please send an email with your precise name and your address to Oliver Leick at: **office@ssi-austria.at** 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**

the training for translators from tibetan at merigar west august 2007

first year of the second series

report from paul medi and carisa o'kelly with the kind collaboration of everyone

Literally: Words into effort collaborative ineffable nearby place. Sort-of-English: A collaborative effort to place the ineffable nearby to words. Sense of it: We worked together to stir up this report on a hard to describe experience. A title: A collaborative report from the group

The Tibetan translators of yore underwent great hardships, traveling from their homelands to the hot plains of India in order to study Sanskrit, the sacred language of ancient India, and to gather a variety of texts to bring back with them. The fruit of their many journeys, undertaken over a long period of time, is found in the vast corpus of Tibetan translation literature covering Buddhist, medical, historical and other fields of knowledge. The Tibetans themselves, from that time and continuing down to the present day, added to this body of works with their own literature.

Fast forward a thousand years or so, and we find a motley crew of twelve aspiring students from different nations, converging together upon the Tuscan countryside at Merigar, with the aim of studying and gaining skills in how to render Tibetan literature primarily into English. The physical journey is much easier these days. As for the journey that is learning to translate from Tibetan, well.....

To facilitate this pursuit the Shang Shung Institute, under the auspices of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and largely in the person of Oliver Leick, has organized a marvelous course of study. Each course focuses on reading and translating a particular Tibetan text.

Our instructor Fabian Sanders was a participant in the first four year course, and this year had the responsibility of guiding the 12 students and members of the ISSI who came together at Merigar West to participate in the first year of the second round of the TTT organized by the ISSI

– Austria. Right from the beginning his kindness, patience and generosity was evident, as he rose to the challenge of working with the raw material presented to him. Each student brought their own combination of strengths and weaknesses with the language, and Fabian's style of teaching, which he attributed his teacher of the previous four years, Elio, allowed each student to present their understanding of the text to the group, and to clarify any misunderstandings and to develop greater understanding of the language and the methodology of translating.

The title of the text being studied is the *bka' babs dun ldan gyi brgyud pa'i rnam thar* or Seven Transmission Lineages by Taranatha. This work is a collection of spiritual biographies or *Rnam thar* of some of the ancient Indian Mahasiddhas; those of seven lineages as the title suggests. The stories include examples of their amazing behavior and Doha or spontaneous spiritual songs, which express their realization. *Rnam thar* is an abbreviation of or should we say is related to the phrase *nam par thar pa*, which literally means completely liberated or completely freed. It translates the Sanskrit term *Vimoksa* and this inner meaning of the word “biography” right away clues us in to the extraor-



The translators group.

dinary nature of these biographies. These are stories of practitioners who in the course of the lives being described and by the methods and teaching prescribed for them come to realize what is called (in the case of the first lineage that is) the state of Mahamudra. These stories serve as inspirations and examples to those who come afterwards providing a glimpse into non-dual point of view.

The author *Jo nang Rje btsun Taranatha* aka *Jo nang Taranatha kun dga' snying po* lived from 1575 to 1634. He is generally placed in the *Jo nang pa* transmission lineage. (From Gene Smith's Among Tibetan Texts.)

Taranatha's style, in this work at least, is spare and concise. He does not go into grand elaborations on the lives of the characters he is relating to us. This gave our teacher ample opportunity to remind us to work with the

words as they appear and to resist the temptation to make up a story based perhaps on what we have heard or read before about Virupa or Luipa or Saraha, etc. From day one he cautioned us on the dangers of adding things that are not written.

Jo nang Taranatha tells his story sometimes citing a source and sometimes interjecting his opinion as to the veracity or lack thereof of a particular source. (Revealing, in the process, his bias toward Indian versus Tibetan views.) But this is not a random bias but an expression of confidence in his teachers from whom he received many of these stories.

The people of the Shang Shung Institute at Merigar very kindly provided us with refreshments

and a comfortable classroom. We were cozy there and the room had enough electrical outlets for everyone. However, after one serious electrical storm, which burned out the Institute’s modems, we took to unplugging everything between sessions. So, we were happy to be protected from the elements and our little group consumed great quantities of tea in the wafting haze of incense smoke.

In the early days of the course we set about organizing our computers with the text installed in PDF format. Additionally, most people liked to work from the paper copy. Surprisingly, there was a very even distribution between PCs and MACs. Lunch at one thirty at the Yellow House was sandwiched between our

two sessions each day. The basic format was to work for several hours on a section of the text, usually individually and for the last hour or two work together under Fabian’s patient, compassionate and skillful guidance to divine, distil and decoct a coherent meaning from the words.

One characteristic of the Tibetan Language is that one word or phrase can have quite disparate meanings so context is very important, as too is a thorough understanding of how the grammar works. We found that being able to translate properly relies on a certain level of understanding, and this understanding does not merely come from understanding the meaning of the words, but goes to a deeper level wherein one needs to understand

the content, the context, the style of the author and a seemingly indefinite number of other factors, which made what we were trying to do a humbling and at times a daunting task. Nevertheless, because the text for this first year was chosen so carefully, there were moments where we felt that we understood quite well, and also many more challenging moments which pointed out to us the long term nature of our endeavor.

So far, our studies have introduced us to the first two of the seven lineages, viz., the Mahamudra Lineage and the Chandali or Tumo Lineage. We are captivated by the stories and the challenge to find a cohesive translation. Sometimes we have to just rest (for the moment) with the

fact that for now we cannot be sure exactly what is being said as there is indeed ambiguity and any number of readings may be as accurate as the next.

All in all working with this text was challenging, instructive, interesting, and mind-boggling – and often all of these at the same time! It was a thoroughly enjoyable way to spend almost eight hours a day for three weeks.

As for the future: Through the kindness and generosity of our teacher and everyone’s technical collaboration we are planning to meet in our virtual classroom once or twice per month to continue our studies together and we look forward to meeting again where and as we may. ©

review of tibetan literary arts catalog

neilson library, smith college
published by shung shung institute
edited by marit cranmer, may 2007

jacqueline gens

Some years ago I became interested in learning more about Tibetan poetry. Not being a native or learned scholar of the Tibetan language proved a great obstacle to my studies. At one point, I wrote to a few translator scholars and some lamas who responded without much interest or answers to my many questions about poetic forms other than good luck and general encouragement. The exception was Professor Robin Kornman (1946–2006), a scholar and translator of the Gesar of Ling epic, who engaged me in a lively conversation about *doha*, Milarepa and the influence of the Gesar epic tradition before he was diagnosed with a rare cancer and our conversation discontinued. The other exception is poet, Louise Landes Levi, who can speak about these literary traditions with great fluency, authority and intimacy and who generously shared her knowledge over long conversations in not a few cafes, via email and by phone.

I’ve probably read close to every article related to Tibetan literature including some rather obscure books in English ordered from India via inter library loan services to inform my interests. After many attempts (at Louise’s recommendation), I finally located a pristine book in English in America of the influential *Kavyadharsha* 7th century text on Sanskrit poetics by Dandin at the Amherst College library whose only other brief visitor in thirty years was a Professor Robert Thurman. So we are not talking about a mainstream scholarly presence here but a topic still rather esoteric and unacknowledged even among most Tibetologists and certainly among most Buddhist scholars. However, it was one article (written by well known Buddhist scholars), in

particular, that inflamed my interest and “lit my fire,” as they say. This was the entry for Tibetan poetry in the gigantic and definitive academic reference book for world poetry, *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. What I read there deeply, (I say deeply like an arrow through my heart), disheartened me for unlike other non-western world literatures (Persian, Arabic, Turkic, Burmese, Senegalese, Tamil, Bengali, to name a few), Tibetan poetry was characterized as unevolved, codified back in the 12th century, and essentially a dead tradition. The two brief examples (selected from all the magnificent Tibetan literary canon) cited were so simple; one would think that the Tibetan people were deficient in literary imagination. Here’s one uninspiring example cited from the great master, Longchenpa:

Life is impermanent like clouds of autumn
Youth is impermanent like flowers of spring
The body is impermanent like borrowed property
Wealth is impermanent like dew on the grass.

Even cultures long gone and far more undeveloped had more to say about themselves than the entry on Tibetan poetry. This just did not seem right to me nor indicative of what I had already been introduced to over the past 25 years by the late Chogyam Trungpa through his magnificent anthology, *The Rain of Wisdom* and the many poets from the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa influenced by Tibetan poetics. Surely, with the millions of Tibetan pages surviving into the present and more discovered every day, there must be something to say to elevate Tibetan literature, particu-



The exhibition at Smith College.

larly poetry, to a world-class level such as with other non-Western cultures.

While an MFA candidate in poetry back in 2004, I decided to do my final thesis on Tibetan poetry using the opportunity to further my knowledge by investigating the tradition from several vantages. At one point, my professor, a Patrician sort of fellow, asked me with a note of dry sarcasm (the kind of tone academics know all too well), “You say Tibetan poetry is so great but where’s the proof? I don’t see any evidence.” Even the work of the 6th Dalai Lama failed to rouse his interest, perhaps among the most accessible and widely translated poems for Western readers with their simple folk inspired lyrics, yet complex worldly mix of mundane and sacred love, and politics. Amazingly too, Milarepa fell on deaf ears. In fact, my professor/mentor, I later found out, had consulted that mighty compendium over 1200 pages long on world poetry mentioned above, which no doubt colored his perceptions of my paper’s topic and to substantiate his claim that Tibetan poetry was inferior. While my thesis in his eyes was “shabby” (his own word), barely passable, yet when lecturing with the exact same material to my poet colleagues and general college students, on the other hand, I discovered something different. The response was one of overwhelming

interest and enthusiastic discovery. People couldn’t believe what they were hearing. One such lecture included a room of about thirty advanced technology students who, much to my surprise, were totally enthralled with the topic, especially since Tibetan literature as it entered the modern era is no stranger to digital technologies in its preservation strategies (a fact I exploited to gain their interest). And so, shamelessly and without academic credentials, I have made it my life’s mission to continue in my quest to explore Tibetan poetry as an outsider and amateur poet/scholar, speaking my mind free from the dreary sanctions of academic endorsement and reputation. However, I also deeply respect those many individuals who have taken the topic to task in a more conventional academic context and the great effort required to study the Tibetan language in depth - not an easy task as I’ve discovered numerous times when I have tried to take it up again and again.

This somewhat long winded introduction is but a prelude to emphasize just how unique the Tibetan Literary Arts exhibit Marit Cranmer curated for Smith College and the accompanying catalog is at addressing this essential question of what’s so great about Tibetan poetry. Marit’s curation of this exhibit with its predominant emphasis on the experiential poems of great masters

(*nyams mgyur*) brings together her expertise in museum exhibition, library science/rare books, textile artistry and depth of spiritual understanding in a remarkable fusion that creates a concrete introduction to Tibetan poetry combining both visuals and text at the same time. The catalog she put together and in part sponsored by the Shang Shung Institute is not only aesthetically gorgeous and well organized but by combining multiple views in the essays by diverse scholars, for the first time a new paradigm emerges that can begin to address some critical issues such as literary genre classification, ancient influences, formal stylistic elements, and the rich display of literary diversity within the Tibetan canon. It will serve as a tremendous resource for budding students of Tibetan literature and the general public. The exhibit, largely inspired by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to honor His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s presence on the Smith campus in May of 2007, is homage to Rinpoche’s own scholarship and contributions to revealing the importance of Tibet’s ancient literary heritage and toward setting the record straight.

The great tragedy of Tibetan people in the modern era has in some sense liberated Tibetan culture from the flat plane of dogmatic insistence on placing the origins of Tibetan language, and therefore its literature, solely with the onset of Buddhism that has misinformed the tradition for millennia. Unlike other cultures, Tibetan history has been subject to the shackles of its own making in defiance of archaeological and historical records in service of spiritual orthodoxies far beyond any other world civilization. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s book, *the Necklace of Zhi* (1974) seriously addresses this conundrum by placing the burden of reconciling the historic record on the young people of Tibet. To some extent this is our legacy as well, since as practitioners we have benefited so enormously from the Tibetan Diaspora. We, too, need to take up this ban-



ner by supporting translation projects, training translators, funding schools inside Tibet and respecting the multi-dimensions of Tibetan culture (much as the missions of Shang Shung Institute and A.S.I.A. aspire to).

The good news is that the writing of great and lesser poets everywhere emerges into the modern era as newborn as the day they were composed whether named or anonymous, even in translation, to speak directly to us. Ultimately, save a few scholars, most people don't care where poems come from only that they exist in every conceivable form and culture being somewhat plastic in translation to communicate universally transcended themes, And to be really prosaic here – wow! Does Tibetan poetry ever have universally recognized transcendent themes! What can be more universal than the nature of mind, the heritage of all peoples throughout time? Thus, many ordinary people outside the Tibetan spiritual traditions recognize the special contribution that Tibetan literary works convey when first exposed to them. The exhibit for which this catalog represents proves this by the desire on the part of Smith College to extend the exhibit's presence on campus. The truth of the matter is that people off the street have immensely enjoyed coming into the literary exhibit spaces and contemplating the large-scale texts – some even daily.



It is a rare occasion to walk into a room and see displayed large-scale excerpts of the cream of Tibetan verse, translated with elegance and presented so artis-

tically. We see here the hand of many fine independent translators, including Erik Pema Kunsung, Constance Wilkinson, Thubten Jinpa, Steven Goodman, the Padmakara and Nalanda translation committees and Keith Dowman, among them. While most practitioners in the Dzogchen Community can not view the exhibit first hand, the catalog is an enduring representation to the field of literary studies that the Shang Shung Institute can be proud of and which is available for purchase.

In the catalog, each essay is laid out with excerpts from the exhibit – Tulku Thondup presents a fairly traditional exposition on the five fields of knowledge (rig pa'i gnas lnga: language, medicine, logic, arts, Buddhism) including Tibetan literature with an exhaustive catalogue of key texts in all the genres and sub genres. While not particularly analytical, his essay does offer an important reference for the breadth and scope of Tibetan texts presenting the conventional categories according to traditional monastic training. For the uninitiated to read his essay, it would come as a great surprise that he covers material that is but the tip of the iceberg.

Professor Thubten Jinpa's is one of the first Tibetans seriously to examine Tibetan poetry on its own terms but within some context of Western literary articulation. Educated at both Cambridge where he received a Ph.d and Ganden monastic college where he received a Geshe lamdra degree, his understanding of poetic versification in both Tibetan and English has placed him in the exceptional position to discuss subtle distinctions and stylistic elements of versification rarely looked into or considered especially relevant. In his essay, "Poetry and Spiritual Experience in the Tibetan Tradition," Jinpa discusses various types of poetic composition. Through his own poetry mentor, Zemye, Rinpoche, Professor Jinpa brings the complex influence of the kayadharsha training to life in the context of some of Tibet's greatest writers and scholars by examining aspects of his own training on the use of metaphor in his essay.

The love poems of the 6th Dalai Lama are not only beloved by all Tibetans but are widely appreciated by Westerners for their individualized expression. Per K. Sorensen's essay on the 6th Dalai Lama, "Divinity Secularized," also presents key literary analysis that discusses the formal elements such as the prevalence of trochaic meter (long/short two syllable) and lack of alliterative use that has its own distinct quality so different than the English language predominance of an iambic meter (short/long two syllable). The modern sensibility of the 6th Dalai Lama's lyrics derives its potency from his artistic dilemma that presents a tension between his worldly and religious aspirations encapsulated within a succinct few metaphors cast in a general context of rich figurative language about nature or society that one encounters over and over in Tibetan verse. "The poems," Per Sorensen, is right to assert, "therefore paint a canvas of a complex personality and run the gamut of emotions."

Steve Goodman takes great risks with his essay, "The Transmission of Presence in Tibetan Poetics of Ineffable Experience," with free-form translations of experiential poems, that brings the interpretation up a notch from more traditional scholarship. His translation are fresh, contemporary and best of all – melodious.

My own essay in the catalog, "A Small Stone Casts Its Ripple," was an impossible challenge at Marit's invitation to write something about women poets of Tibet because after all Smith is a women's college and I'm an alumna. Humm, well there just aren't that many Tibetan women writers translated into literary English, let alone available in the original Tibetan to speak of much of a women's writing tradition comparable to other cultures. Somehow, by the grace of the lineage masters and devas and dakinis whom I invoked to help me out here, I managed not to embarrass myself or Shang Shung too much. After all, one can't go wrong with Yeshe Tsogyal or Machig Labdron. The exercise was actually a further indication for me to apply myself to learn classical Tibetan. While many songs of spiritual experience (nyams mgyur) by female masters have been preserved and incorporated into other texts, they simply are not available for public distribution because they are transmission based, which was a limitation. Nonetheless, I found a lot to talk about after all. This was in part, thanks to Tsultrim Allione's groundbreaking book, *Women of Wisdom*.

A number of other essays illuminate this catalog including Chapter Two from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's, *The Necklace of Zhi* on Tibetan language with the text in both English and Tibetan. Donatella Rossi contributed a brief

explanation of the *Light of Kailash* (publication forthcoming) also by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu that outlines the general topics of each volume. Per Kvaene's excerpt from his *Introduction to the History of Bon* presents the evolving scholarship over the past three decades regarding the historical interdependence between Bon and Buddhism resulting in a far more complex relationship than previously acknowledged.

In conclusion, I would especially like to thank Marit for her inspired exhibit and beautiful catalog. May we all manifest our gifts in the service of our spiritual heritage. I would also like to encourage the many young people in our community to make use of online resources and training in Tibetan literature and language (becoming more sophisticated each year) to fur-

ther their education and to support the important activities of Shang Shung Institute. Younger practitioners in our community have many years to develop their expertise and so make a contribution to these exciting studies. Such efforts can benefit many people by introducing them to the vast treasury of Tibetan literature through well-crafted Western language translations that will someday take their rightful place among the world's great literary masterpieces.

The Tibetan Literary Arts catalog is available through the bookstore at Tsegylgar for \$20.00 or through the Shang Shung Institute.

Jacqueline Gens
Brattleboro, Vermont
August 4, 2007



This lunatic child
Who lost his mother long ago
Will soon learn by pure chance
That he just failed to recognize her.
She was with him all along!

Perhaps mother is the yes and no of emptiness,
As whispered to me by my father,
Dependent origination. All duality is
Mother's benign smile; the cycle
Of life and death, her verbal display.

Always truthful mother, you have fooled me!
I now seek salvation through my father's lore.
Yet, ultimately it is in you alone
That I can hope for freedom.

If the world is really what it seems to be,
Even the Buddhas of the three times cannot save me.
But this world of diversity and change
Is actually my changeless mother's moods.
So I can hope for freedom!

Changkya Rolpai Dorje's "Recognizing my Mother,"
18th century, translated by Thubten Jinpa and Jas Elsner

observe the thought that arises

the september retreat at merigar west
with chögyal namkhai norbu

raimondo bultrini

“When you think: what is the mind? That is the mind”. But it isn’t easy “to understand its nature”. This then is the advice: “Observe the thought that arises”. If you observe it, the thought disappears. What remains? “It’s real nature...”. As always it is difficult to explain, even more than thirty years after Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s first teachings, why the Master’s words continue to strike the perceptive capacity of his students with so much precision and at different levels. At times, for example, simply a phrase can help to understand even more profoundly the essence of Dzogchen.

During the seven days of the first September retreat at Merigar, the opportunities for practitioners to take an even greater leap into awareness were so many that it wasn’t possible to summarize them or separate them from all the other advice they had already received in the past. Just like a string of pearls threaded onto the same cord, the miraculous alchemy that unravels the knots of doubt was repeated this time through a Testament (very similar to that of Garab Dorje), transmitted by the great master Migyur Namkhai Dorje who was a disciple of Jigmed Gyalwai Nyugu, in his turn a student of Jigmed Lingpa. A Testament which is difficult to interpret without the clarity of the commentary of Patrul Rinpoche who transmit-

ted it to Zhenga Rinpoche who in turn transmitted it to Khyenrab Chokyi Ozer, one of the masters of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

For many days there was a clear sky at Merigar, especially the last day of the retreat, so free of clouds as to create a perfect, almost symbolic setting to help the hundreds of students gathered inside and outside the Gompa to visualize the essence of this teaching called Odsal Nangcha. Our real condition – explained the Master – is like a sky without clouds: in space that is without knots, there is nothing to untie and liberate. For this reason, “when a thought arises”, it is easier to notice it. You recognize it just like a face you already know, like a cloud which suddenly crosses pure uncontaminated space. No cloud with its fleeting nature can change or correct the nature of empty space, neither can thought (nor concept, nor method) modify the nature of the mind.

The Master repeated this example several times during his explanation of Patrul Rinpoche’s commentary. Most of all to clarify the great difference between Dzogchen and the various schools that propose following this or that “path of liberation” or this or that method which, by modifying and correcting, actually perpetuate the obstacles at the root of dualistic vision. “We cannot free ourselves until we



Rinpoche showing the photo of his teacher Khyenrab Chokyi Ozer.

Photo: Romain Piro

consider that there is something to liberate”, because “every thing is free from the beginning”. And those who consider that liberation is gradual offer, in actual fact, only a type of logic which is unable to describe the state, our real nature, and to explain how to remain in it. There is direct logic (indicating an object such as a pen and saying “this is a pen”) and indirect (there is smoke and, hence, fire). “Many things are established with indirect logic”, explained Rinpoche. But when we have to describe what happens after death, neither direct logic nor indirect are sufficient. Then faith comes into it. If you are a Buddhist you believe what the books attributed to the Buddha say, even though others don’t give much value to them. In this way we create limitations. Dzogchen has no limitations. It goes beyond methods, schools and the criteria that create divergences and frictions, disagree-

ments and misunderstandings. Just like when Patrul Rinpoche, the author of the commentary that the Master was explaining, avoided being beaten up by some Gelugpa monks who were looking for any excuse to pick a quarrel with him. When they asked him which school he belonged to he replied that he was Buddhist. When they asked him which method he followed he replied that he practiced Tara which is common to all the traditions and so on.

The consequence of a “way of seeing” that has no limitations and definitions goes beyond the

ment. “Always remember the words of the Buddha: everything is unreal, just like a dream”. Then why should you give importance to everything? At the relative level you cannot say that it is not necessary to go to work. But there is no need to give it too much importance and continuously get agitated. Or then: you are about to go on a dangerous journey and you ask the Master what you should do. “The Master cannot tell you: don’t take the left road or the right one, but he can advise you not to get distracted”.

And now we come back to the principle of the mind and its na-



Children welcome Rinpoche at the Gompa.

Photo: Romain Piro

During the September retreat at Merigar West, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu invited local officials to visit the Gompa to greet the participants attending the retreat and those listening to the webcast around the world. The Mayors of

Arcidosso and Castel del Piano, a local Member of Parliament and a former Mayor of Arcidosso spoke briefly to those present and then drank a toast with Rinpoche. The Master thanked them for coming and told them that in the Dzogchen Commu-

nity we are all connected and even though many people had never visited here, the name Arcidosso had become famous. In traditional Tibetan greeting, he presented each of the officials with a white kadag.

very concepts of the three levels of Base, Path and Fruit. If the Base of phenomena is self-liberated (Dzogchen) from the beginning, there is no Path through which to purify that which is perfect from the beginning, nor Fruit to desire or receive. “If you are a Dzogchen practitioner” – said the Master – “and the idea to kill arises, that thought arises and disappears from where it has come. Then how can you enter into action and produce karma?” In the same way when a positive thought arises, perhaps a “good idea”, the risk is to follow it, to charge it up, to create attach-

ture. The Fruit is like a clear sky. If you do not follow the mind, you do not produce karma, the consequence of thought and of action is neutralized “like a pen writing in water”.

So we do not live searching for nirvana while living in samsara but like our two legs, the right and the left, which go ahead spontaneously and relentlessly towards their destination. A destination which we already have within each one of us. “A great perfection for every sentient being”. ©



sky and earth

>> continued from page 1

for 10 years by the Emperor Augustus in the 1st century AD.) It is also the area with the greatest number of ethnic groups in Romania with Turks, Bulgars, Tartars, Ukrainians and Bulgarians living side by side.

Within this colorful ambient, the Gar is situated just a short distance from the coast in a quiet rural area, about 2–3 km from the tiny village of 23 August and can be reached on foot or by car from the village, however, during the retreat a bus service was organized to shuttle participants back and forth from different areas along the coast to the Gar. The open fields that surround the Gar are still and silent except for the rustling of the wind over the plain or the merry chirping of the flocks of tiny birds that wheel around in formation like small black clouds. One day during the teaching a pair of them zoomed into the tent and raced up and down until they finally came to rest on a metal rod at the side of Rinpoche where they remained quietly for the rest of the session.

But then it is important to back-track just a little to let readers know how much hard work was done by a small nucleus of practitioners in order to ready what was little more than 'sky and earth' for the large numbers of people expected to attend the Master's teachings. When the small group making up the Romanian Gakyil arrived at the Gar in June it was just a simple bare field. There was an enormous amount of work to be done and they began by getting construction material to start putting up a small building in which to store material and took turns spending the night there to keep a watch-

ful eye on things. Rinpoche also arrived well before the retreat and an appeal was sent out to the Dzogchen Community to come to the Gar early in order to help ready it for the many visitors that were expected. People gradually started to arrive and helped with preparations which went on night and day to ready the enormous tent, the floor, the office/refectory tent, organize toilets, water, the road and parking, buses, catering, transport, web cast facilities and the myriad of items and organization things that go into making a retreat not only possible but comfortable.

The weeks of hard work bore their fruit and by the opening day of the retreat – July 14 – everything was ready as Rinpoche took his place on his brocaded platform in front of 500 people who had gathered from all over Russia, Europe, Ukraine, the Baltic countries, the USA and Latin America. The daily retreat sessions were in two parts: during the first Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave teachings on Shine and Lhagthong from the Dzogchen Ati Yoga system while during the second part Rinpoche and those attending the retreat did a simple practice of Mandarava Chüdlen. The teachings were successfully transmitted around the world by web cast.

As the days of the retreat progressed, I started to feel that there really was no difference between this temporary teaching hall of white plastic and the elegantly painted Gonpa at Merigar – both places were equally sacred in that they hosted the Master and his precious teaching and gave us all the opportunity to receive them.

After the Ganapuja on the evening before the last day of the retreat, the by now traditional end of retreat raffle was held with Rinpoche, as always, donating many precious and sometimes unusual personal objects. The raffle is Western style with numbers up to 100 but based on the 5 Tibetan elements of Air, Space, Fire, Water and Earth and participants can buy different numbered tickets belonging to the different elements. This was followed by the auction of several objects to raise money for Merigar East and possibly help towards building a Gonpa for future retreats. Rinpoche had already said the same day that while we were now doing the retreat in a tent, "Next year we want to be in a big Gonpa if we are still alive". In fact, after the first objects in the auction had been sold, when Rinpoche's personal *melong* was produced the bids rose alarmingly in leaps and bounds until this precious object finally sold for 71,000 euro (\$98,000 US)! An auspicious opportunity for future development at the new Merigar East.

On the final day of the retreat, after giving advice for daily practice and the *tridlungs* of the collective practices of the Dzogchen Community, we did a short *thun* practice together. Rinpoche drew the session to a close by kindly thanking the organizers of the retreat for their dedicated work and giving each person a gift. He also said that when he first came here he saw a big field of sunflowers that had remained in his mind and this flower would represent that Merigar East.

Our heartfelt thanks to Rinpoche for giving us, once again, his precious teaching and to the core of hard-working and dedicated organizers who gave their very best to make the retreat possible. ©



the story of the sunflowers

gabriella schneider

I have a little story to tell related to Merigar East and to the retreat there this summer.

One day, I was driving Rinpoche and Rosa home from the Gar. It was late afternoon and the sun was shining in the West, in front of us. We left the Gar behind us on the right. After we had passed by a small apple orchard, a field of sunflowers came into sight on our left.

Rinpoche said: "Look, Rosa, at all the sunflowers. They aren't looking towards the sun, they are looking towards our Gar". It was true; they were standing with their backs to the sun, their faces turned towards us. And

there and then Rinpoche decided to choose the sunflowers as the symbol of Merigar East. At the end of the retreat we offered him a Murano vase, hand-painted with sunflowers.

Yesterday, August 30th, I spoke to Duci, our yellow Gakyil member. She had just got back to Merigar East from her holidays. She told me, that at the Gar, the area where the teaching-tent had stood and all around it was full of sunflowers. You may have seen Michael Moehle's photos on Norbunet and know that this area was only a harvested cornfield, between sky and earth. And now a sea of sunflowers, which nobody ever seeded, is growing there...

The story of Buddha recounts that where his feet touched the earth, lotus flowers grew.

For Rinpoche, sunflowers... ©





meeting the romanian gakyil

ida pazman, attila frugyik and
gabriella schneider

After the first big retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in July 2007 at Merigar East, the current Romanian Gakyil talked to *The Mirror* about the activities to prepare the Gar for its first international retreat.

The Mirror: Can you tell us about your community in Romania and how you had your first contact with Rinpoche?

Ida: The people in the Romanian Community are based in Oradea (north Romania, close to the Hungarian border) and the group came together in 2003. We are a small community with very few people. I met Rinpoche in 2003 through the worldwide transmission. We first came to this area last year in November when the Community bought the land and the house where Rinpoche lives.

Gabriella: I was born in Romania but have lived in Germany since 1982. My first contact with Rinpoche's knowledge was in 1992 through "The Crystal and the Way of Light" but I really met Rinpoche in this life for the first time in 1998 when he came to Germany and gave Dzogchen Teachings at Chiemsee. Since then I have followed retreats with him at different places like Merigar West and Tashigar Norte, etc.

The Mirror: Could you give us a little background on the land and why this area was chosen?

Ida: Rinpoche chose it. I came here for the first time with Fabio in July of last year and we found some land near the lake but it was sold before we could buy it. Then we came here again in August



Attila Frugyik, Ida Pazman, Gabriella Schneider.

Photo: Liz Granger

and at that time we found this piece of land. We sent Rinpoche photos of it and a description of the area and he replied immediately that the place could be bought.

Gabriella: A few days after Duci (Ida) and Attila moved here, I visited them and we went to the land. On the road we met a lot of goats and remembering the story of Merigar West, we took this for a good sign. The land was only a vast space between sky and earth and I found this vast space simply beautiful.

Why in Romania and at the Black Sea? These are Rinpoche's decisions. We knew that the land in Crimea couldn't be purchased, and Rinpoche looked for another place at the Black Sea and so it was in Romania.

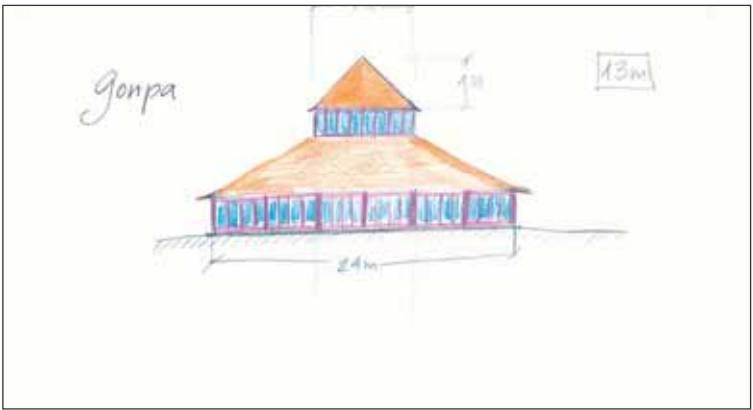
The Mirror: We've had a fantastic retreat here at Merigar East. There were about 500 people participating and it must have been an enormous job to prepare things from scratch. When did you start preparations for the retreat and what kind of things had to be done?

Ida: Attila and I moved here last year in November and we now live here. The first thing we did was to get legal permission for

building because this land is agricultural so we had to get lots of licenses before we could do anything here. And then we didn't know until the end of February that there would be a retreat here in July because Rinpoche hadn't announced his schedule so then we had very little time to prepare everything.

A short time ago there was nothing here, just a piece of land. And then after February we started to look for a company to make the road and a company that could bring a good Internet cable here. There was parking, water and everything else needed for the retreat to get ready.

Gabriella: Parallel to the construction on the land we looked for teaching materials in the Romanian language. We translated the 'Thun' book and 'Collective Practices' into Romanian and organized the publication of a second (corrected) edition of the "Crystal and the Way of Light" because only about 60 copies were available from the first edition. Also a Romanian version of the DVD "The Three Paths of Liberation" has been made. Through great collaboration with the Shang Shung Institute and the Arania publishing house, the



Drawing of Rinpoche's vision of the new gompas.

books and the DVD were issued in time for the retreat.

Intensive work was also needed for making our website in two languages and also for organizing the retreat program, inviting teachers, asking for Vajra Dance Mandalas, etc.

Ida: At the end of May the real physical work started. The first thing that was done was get the road here made, the parking and one hectare of land was prepared for the retreat. The company worked here for 3 weeks and then a company came to dig a well. In fact all the water here comes from our own well. The well was dug after Rinpoche's arrival here on June 30th.

The Mirror: And what about the future?

Ida: We have received some plans from Rinpoche and we will see what happens. We have a plan for a big Gonpa that is more than 700 sq. meters that Rinpoche has drawn by hand. Then there are plans for a building for the office and a shed that we have already started to build.

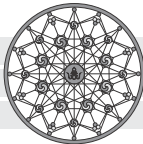
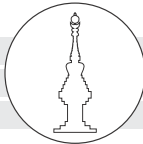
Gabriella: What we want to do in the future, too, is to translate Rinpoche's books and DVDs into Romanian, of course respecting the copyrights, because people are asking for them. It's a big job but besides the actual material construction here, preserving Rinpoche's teachings and

making them available in the language of Romania are things that are also part of our work. We have been very fortunate because – as I mentioned – we have had very precious and generous help from the Shang Shung Institute up to now. And I think it will be the same in the future. There is a good collaboration.

We also want to underline that Merigar East, even if situated in Romania and even if it is open to all Dzogchen practitioners from around the world, is mainly the Gar of the East European countries and, regarding future plans, we have to pay attention to the circumstances and needs of the practitioners from each of these countries. We think that after Rinpoche's meeting next week with participants from Eastern Europe, we will be able to say more about the future of Merigar East. [Please see the article on page 4, "new coordinating gakyil of russian speaking countries" about the meeting]

The Mirror: Thank you all for your hard work that contributed to making the retreat possible.

merigarwest



Merigar West

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merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
www.dzogchen.it

calendar
of events
2007

General Program

In case of any changes to the current calendar, we suggest you check our website – 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 indispens-

able 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.

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)

upcoming

Yantra Yoga for Beginners

October 12-14, 2007

Led by Tiziana Gottardi

Yantra Yoga or the Yoga of Movement is an ancient system of Tibetan yoga based on the text *The Union of the Sun and the Moon*, written in the 8th century by the master and translator Vairochana. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu wrote a detailed commentary on the root text and started to transmit this teaching in the West at the beginning of the seventies.

Yantra Yoga is a fundamental method to integrate the profound essence of the Dzogchen Teaching in the three doors (body, voice and mind) of the practitioner. Through positions and movements combined with breathing one's energy

is coordinated and harmonized, so as to let the mind find the authentic balance and relaxation that is the basis for getting into contemplation.

Who can attend?

This course is open to all.
The course starts on Saturday October 11 at 10.00.
The cost is 60 euro with discounts for members.

Important! For organizational purposes, we ask that you please register before the course starts, by email or phone. It will also be possible to register on the first day of the course with the secretary of Merigar.
Telephone: +39 05 64 - 96 68 37
Email: merigaroffice@tiscali.it

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upcoming

Courses of Yantra Yoga for Beginners

October 2007 – March 2008

with Laura Evangelisti and Tiziana Gottardi

Rome and Merigar West
This Yantra Yoga Course will take place over 4 weekends: the first 2 weekends will be spent introducing the preliminary exercise, the 5 exercises to loosen the joints, and the coordination of the breathing through the 8 movements. The next 2 weekends will be spent introducing the first and second series of Yantras. Each series includes 5 sequences of movements linked to different phases and types of breathing.

Rome: October 27-28, 2007

with Tiziana Gottardi
Explanation and practice of the 9 purification breathings, the 5 tsjong, and the first part of the exercises for the purification of the prana or the Eight Movements (*lunsang*).

Rome: November 10-11, 2007

Explanation and practice of the second part of the movements of the purification of the prana of the Eight Movements (*lunsang*).

Merigar West: January 3-6, 2008

Rome: February 2-3, 2008

with Laura Evangelisti

To deepen the understanding of the Eight Movements (*lunsang*) and explanation and practice of the first series of yantras.

Merigar West: March 7-8, 2008

Rome: April 5-6, 2008

Explanation and practice of the second series of yantras.

For more information contact:

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posta@zhenphenling.it
www.zhenphenling.it
Merigar West: tel. 0564 96 68 37
merigaroffice@tiscali.it
www.dzogchen.it

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▲
A course in breathing methods for instructors

with Fabio Andrico

by Naomi Zeitz & Oni McKinstry

In the Merigar Gonpa, from August 20-23, 2007, a group of about 12 practitioners came together to expand their knowledge of different methods and techniques of breathing taught by Fabio Andrico. A good percentage of the class was already Yantra Yoga instructors and very interested to learn new methods, not only to help themselves by deepening their own experience of breathing within the context of Yantra Yoga practice, but also to learn techniques that may help their students be able to have a more beneficial and satisfying experience of breathing; a kind of warm up exercise for the breathing. Fabio has devised a wide assortment

of various very useful and helpful techniques taken from his experience in different forms of yoga, as well as the many years he has dedicated as a one of the two main international teachers of Yantra Yoga authorized by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Fabio's intention was keep the class smaller so that he would have more opportunity to observe how people were doing and how much they were really understanding the principle of the complete breathing, as well as the many positions and techniques taught. In this kind of small group, people had more time to ask questions and clarify doubts and concerns.

The participants learned how to focus awareness on different aspects of the complete breathing, on how to feel the breath move in separate areas of the stomach, the chest and the ribcage.

Throughout the course, Fabio advised them on how to teach the segments and how to observe whether people were doing it correctly or not.

The participants found the class rewarding and valuable in terms of the their own understanding of complete breathing and also came away with more tools and methods that they can incorporate in their own practice of Yantra Yoga, as well use when helping their students understand the principle of breathing in Yantra Yoga.

This course based in Fabio's vast experience and willingness to help us with our understanding of breath through his skill, patience and humor, was, as always, a delightful and rewarding time!

*

Breathing and Kumbhaka

with Fabio Andrico

September 1-3, 2007



passages

Born: On Wednesday June 6 at 15.00 in Tuscany, Italy, a baby boy, Darien, was born to Mila and Fabian Rawnsley, the Gekö at Merigar. All the members of the Merigar Community and the Gakyil express all their best wishes for a long and prosperous life for the new arrival!

*



Yantra Yoga Advanced and Teacher Training ▲

with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico, August 24-31, 2007

*



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: accomodationservice@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.

mandarava initiation, practice and ganapuja

the gonpa at merigar west
august 31, 2007

On the last day of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's month long personal retreat of Mandarava done in his retreat cabins at Merigar West, Rinpoche granted almost 700 new and old practitioners the marvelous opportunity of participating in the final Mandarava practice and Ganapuja. Rinpoche also gave a Mandarava initiation and explanation that included some changes, as well as some new indications about

the practice he received while on retreat. People came from all over Europe, South America and even New York City to participate in this glorious day. Some people traveled hundreds of miles only to remain long enough for the initiation and then to return home immediately after. After Rinpoche said that there were too many people for everyone to pass by for the initiation, with his enormous compassion and tireless energy he proceeded to

have this vast crowd of almost 700 people come up one by one to receive the initiation. This passage went on for more than one hour. The weather changed several times during the day and as the crowd went to leave the Gonpa, the initiation concluded with a torrential downpour descending like an expression of the unending outpouring from our supremely generous Master and the realm of the infinite Dakinis.

The Mirror



Photo: Naomi Zeitz

Europe

Austria

Upcoming
Course on Breathing and Kumbhaka
led by Fabio Andrico
October 26 – 28, 2007
Vienna, Austria

Time: Friday 26 October 10:00
– Sunday 28 October 18:00

Place: Shambhala Taichi Zentrum,
Bennogasse 8, 1080 Wien
Costs: 130.- euros with the usual discounts

For registration and further information please contact Elisha Koppensteiner at dzogchen.wien@gmx.at

Czech Republic

Vajra Dance Retreat
with Margit Martinu
May 16 – 18, 2007 near Prague
by Jiri Kucmas

The Vajra Dance Group of the Czech Dzogchen Community organized a small retreat of the Dance of the Vajra combined with short Mandarava Practice. The number of participants was limited to 12, and the key issue was that one of the participants was Margit Martinu. Margit is an instructor of the Vajra Dance. Her presence motivated us to present ourselves in the best possible way and to get as much as we could from her advice concerning our way of dancing. We concentrated on the position of hands and correct timing, with further emphasis on the moments of Pawo and Pamo passing by on the Mandala. It has helped to each of us to discover that we are not alone on the Mandala, but that there are also others and that we are relating to each other in space and time. I'm writing it in plural because there were more participants of the retreat who were expressing similar impressions in our discussion breaks.

We started Saturday morning with Short Thun to create contact with the Protectors. We continued with the

Mandarava practice and then with the practice of the Dance of the Three Vajras. Afterwards Margit showed us some of the mistakes that we made and sometimes commented briefly in a few words concerning the context of the Dance, so that we could understand it more thoroughly. We continued the same way with the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra. We also danced the whole thun of all the three Dances of Vajra a few times.

During the two breaks we read excerpts from Rinpoche's dreams relating to the discovery of the Vajra Dance. On Sunday afternoon we practiced Ganapuja with Marme Monlam and we concluded the whole retreat singing Marme Monlam once again on Monday afternoon. We spent a great time together.

Though I must confess that I do not participate at the Dance regularly and that I still don't remember steps of the second part of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra, this experience has helped me a lot to better understand the Vajra Dance and as I have already mentioned, according to my Vajra brothers and sisters, it was not only my experience. It was an intense meeting with a really strong atmosphere. I really want to express my gratitude to Rinpoche for his teaching and to the organizers of this retreat, without whom all of that would not have been possible.

*

Summer Seminar of Dream Yoga
with Dr. Michael Katz
June 30 – July 1, 2007 in Prague
by Petr Lisj
Since Rinpoche sometimes points out the importance of the practice of the night, Czech Community was happy to welcome Dr. Michael Katz from New York, editor of *Dream Yoga* and experi-

enced psychologist. His seminar was intended to help to develop the capacity to dream lucidly and to enhance creativity, self-exploration and spiritual/psychological growth.

The seminar, which about fifty people took part in, was located in the gymnasium equipped with a soft surface comfortable to lie on. Michael's relaxed way of teaching was refreshing and we appreciated the depth of his understanding and experience. Together with presenting several practices included in the second edition of *Dream Yoga*, he also shared his knowledge of different kinds of lucidity with people who introduced their personal experience. We used various means to bring closer the day and night consciousness, trying to create in ourselves the awareness, that our everyday life is a dream.

Michael taught us different ways to increase our capacity to become lucid in the dream. He clearly explained the difference between dream yoga and the practise of natural light and stressed

the importance of the dream practice. We also worked with the dreams some of us had during the collective practice or during the Saturday night, both lucid and usual, using various techniques based on Michael's broad psychological knowledge and experience. This was particularly worthwhile, because we could then better discriminate among several kinds of dream experience and understand their relative value.

The seminar proceeded in relaxed and friendly atmosphere with lots of fun.

Thanks to our precious Master that we can study and practice together these precious teachings! May the teaching lead us all to liberation! ©



Europe

(continued)

August retreat of Shitro practice
with Jakob Winkler

August 24 – 26, 2007 in Prague
by Petr Lis

The Czech Community was happy to welcome Jakob Winkler again in Prague, this time to lead the retreat on the practice of Shitro. The retreat of about forty people, was located in our Prague Gonpa. In the beginning, Jakob talked about Anuyoga principles of non-graduality, since the Shitro practice belongs to the Anuyoga system. Then he presented the Tibetan view of the process of dying based on The Tibetan Book of the Death

(Bardo Thödol) and the list of basic rituals used in Tibet within the context of death. He mentioned Mingyur Dorje, from whose cycle of terma teachings, *namcho*, the form of Shitro we practice in Dzogchen Community.

During the explanation of the practice itself, Jakob shared his broad knowledge of peaceful, joyful and wrathful manifestations and some fundamental principles of their setting in mandala, which we found especially interesting and useful. Later we did several *thuns* of the Shitro practice. We appreciated the depth and breadth of Jakob's knowledge he willingly shared with us, his precise and structured way of explanation and ability to put the



things into wider context, as well as with his particular sense of humor.

The retreat proceeded in friendly, concentrated atmosphere with many questions and discussions, and on Sat-

urday we did large Ganapuja together.

Thanks to our precious Master that we can study and practise together these precious teachings! May the teaching lead us all to liberation! ©



France

upcoming

Vajra Dance Course – Six Spaces of Samantabhadra in Dejamling
with Stoffelina Verdonk

October 28 – November 4, 2007

From October 28th to November 4th, the local Council of Mont de Marsan is kindly letting us use a hall for the Vajra Dance and we have invited Stoffelina Verdonk, our local dance instructor, for a Vajra Dance course of Six Spaces of Samantabhadra, from October 28th to 30th, 2007.

Then, on October 31st and November 1st, we invite you to practice a Vajra Dance of Six Spaces, in order to learn it even better. November 2–4, we will continue to dance (the program to be decided, depending on the wishes of the participants), with a possibility to deepen our understanding of other practices (for example the Shitro, at the same time as Rinpoche does the practice for the dead in Merigar).

We can also play Bagchen in the evening – and if there are interested persons, we can invite Michel Bricaire, a great expert of this fantastic Tibetan game. For this you should calculate some additional expenses, which will be decided between the participants.

The fee for the Vajra Dance course: depending on the number of participants it will be between 32€ and 45€ a day, with the usual reductions for Dzogchen Community members. There's no fixed charge for the other days of dance, but we will gladly receive any offering.

Lodging: you can stay in Zeljka's place for free, or with Marie-Neige Lefevre (in a mobile-home, with modest participation). Otherwise, if you need, we can look for a hotel in town for you.

Transport: train station Mont de Marsan, TGV to Bordeaux or Dax, then TER. We can fetch you at the Mont de Marsan train station.

Ganapuja

For the full moon day on September 26th, we invite you to spend a day with us in Mont de Marsan, around a Big Ganapuja. We can also watch the DVD of the Gana Puja with Rinpoche's explanations. We invite newcomers who would be interested in discussing different practices, and particularly the Ganapuja.

If you feel like it, we can continue the feast in the home of the Frenglish couple in Bourriot-Bergonce (not far from Mont de Marsan) – with other practices, a healing visit to the magical healing water springs of Les Landes, a taste of foie gras (it's the season now! nyams!) and a game of Bagchen.

NB Frenglish = Thomas (English) and Marie-Neige (French)

Contact:
Zeljka Jovanovic, tel + 33 558 06 82 76
Marie Neige and Thomas
+ 33 5 58 933 622
email: zeljka.jovanovic@gmail.com

*

upcoming

Two Yantra Yoga courses in Paris
Level I, Level II

November 10th–November 18th, 2007

Level 1 from November 15th to 18th with Tiziana Gottardi

This course is focused on the Yantra Yoga preliminary practice: the eight movements. Level 1 course is open to all.

Thursday, Friday (18.30 h – 21.00 h)

Saturday, Sunday (10.00 h – 12.30 h + 15.30 h – 18.30 h)

Level 2 from November 10th to 13th with Laura Evangelisti

This course is intended for practitioners who have already follow a Level 1 course and will be focused on the first and the second series of Yantra.

Saturday, Sunday (10.00 h – 12.30h + 15.30h – 18.30h)

Monday, Tuesday (18.30 h – 21.00 h)

The cost of each session for ordinary members is of 150 €, of 75 € for low salary members and free for meritorious members.

The course will take place in:
Compagnie Blanca Li — Calentito
7–9 rue des petites écuries
75010 Paris

We kindly ask you to register before October 31st.

Registration will be confirmed upon receipt of the registration form and a deposit of 75 € to be sent to:

Elisabeth Dong, 14 square Dunois – Apt 260, 75013 Paris

Please consider that there will be a limited number of 30 people for each session.

Contact:

Arianna De Toni

Phone: 0033 67 88 259 51

ade_toni@hotmail.com

Elisabeth Dong

elisabethdongparis@hotmail.com

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Dream Yoga Retreat

with Dr. Michael Katz

July 27–29, 2007 in Paris

◀

*

Advanced Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra

with Adriana dal Borgo

August 3–8 2007 at Dejamling

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Moving on the Mandala

Vajra Dance retreat at Karmaling

Des Barry

I'm on a train from Kunselling to Karmaling going to a retreat to deepen my knowledge of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra. Karmaling is housed in a chartreuse, or monastery, that originates in the 12th century. The Dzogchen Community and the Sangha Rimay of Karmaling is now connected through the Damdrog, or Samaya Fellowship, agreed between Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Lama Denys.

When I arrive, I'm shown to the campsite. It's a long time since I've slept in a tent. Dark green pines press close together on the steep slopes above my one-person tent. More pines crowd the slopes on the opposite side of the river. The water roars down the valley toward the hydroelectric power plants.

The mandala of the Dance of the Vajra represents symbolically the earth we live on, its connection with our individual and collective energy, and our state of instant presence as it connects with the transmission of that state from teacher to student. So my journey is from the mandala at Kunselling – situated in a courtyard that nestles in the centre of a low stone tower in the

17th century precincts of a Welsh farmhouse – to the Temple of the Vajra at Karmaling in the hall of a 12th century monastery in the French Alps, in order to find the state of instant presence with another dedicated combination of Vajra Dancers.

I've been to Karmaling once before so I enter the grey stone building and follow the ancient arched cloister that runs beside a lawn. Above the gardens, on the steep hillside is a huge white stupa. It's bell clangs as some unseen practitioner spins the prayer wheel inside it.

I climb broad stone steps, worn down over centuries by the feet of contemplatives, and make my way to the upper floor. I open the heavy wooden door

and inside there is a traditional altar with a massive statue of Padmasambhava on one side of the room and a huge photograph of the 17th Karmapa on the other side. A mandala of Chakrasamvara adorns the ceiling and the wooden floor is painted with the tigles and triangles of the Vajra Dance mandala. Fifteen people, led by the dance teacher Prima Mai, take their places on the periphery of the mandala for the opening practice of this retreat. We begin with the A-kar Lama'i Naljyor and then we start to dance. The clear piano notes of Roberto Cacciapaglia's playing of the Song of the Vajra mark step onto precise points within the thigles: the meaning of the dance being to activate, resonate

and integrate the energies of the dancers within the instant presence of the Vajra Master's transmission, the source of each move and mudra of the Vajra Dance. The intention of all the dancers at this retreat is to perfect the timing and precision of each dance step in harmony with the other practitioners who share the space of this dimension of the Dzogchen teaching.

From the first somewhat uncoordinated steps of the dancers who adjust between the Gurdjieff-like 'objectivity' of Roberto Cacciapaglia's recording and the sitar-based swirls of Costantino Albini's music, which is punctuated by shawms and cymbals, over the course of the days a harmony emerges, so that these

arms and feet rise and fall in perfect patterns; transitions and passages flow along the pathways around the mandala; and each movement helps the practitioners to find a state of presence and grace; the Dance for each practitioner becoming far more than the sum of its parts, as each dancer pays attention to, and becomes more aware of, the whole mandala to which each of them belongs.

On the night of the full moon, LamaDenys and the Sangha Rimay practise a ganapuja of Mahakala together with the Dzogchen Community practitioners who are

participating in the Vajra Dance Retreat. The traditional orchestra of Karmaling offers the blast of horns, drums, the clash of cymbals, the skirl of shawms as the sun sets over the distant rock ridges behind Chambery.

The teaching, practice and location of this retreat of the Vajra Dance are an expression of the Damdrog of the Sangha Rimay, the Karmaling Community, and the Dzogchen Community, in action. And as we finish the retreat in Karmaling, many of the practitioners decide to go on to Merigar, by car or by ship, where we arrive just in time to receive the

initiation of Jnana Dakini Mandarava, in company with over seven hundred other practitioners from all over the mandala of the world, which is given on the last day of the retreat of the source of the Vajra Dance teaching and the Dzogchen transmission, our Vajra Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. ©



Germany

upcoming
Advanced Course of the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra in Düsseldorf with Prima Mai
September 29 – October 2, 2007
The German Dzogchen Community is pleased to announce that Prima Mai will teach the course of the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra for advanced practitioners in Düsseldorf, Germany.

This is a special opportunity for advanced Vajra Dance practitioners to deepen their knowledge of the practice and make it more precise. To attend this course one should know one part (Pawo or Pamo) of the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra well.

Membership in the Dzogchen Community is required.

Cost:
Sustaining: 62 €; Reduced: 156 €;
Ordinary: 250 €

Address:
Waldorf-Schule, Diepenstr. 15
40625 Düsseldorf

Tentative course schedule:
Friday 18.00 – 20.00 pm
Saturday – Monday 10.30 – 12.30 am + 16.00 – 19.00 pm for practice
Tuesday 10.30 – 12.30 am + afternoon by request

Info and Registration:
Natalia Gershevskaya
Phone: +49 (0)211 917 90 47
Email: natalia@bdax.de

Dzogchen Gemeinschaft Deutschland e.V.
Stadtsparkasse Duesseldorf
account number: 110 478 91
BLZ: 30050110
For transfers from other Euro-Countries:
IBAN: DE40300501100011047891
BIC: DUSSEDE33XXX

Spain

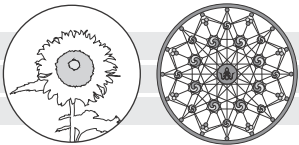
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forming the new merigar east gakyil

July 23, 2007 – Merigar East
Shortly after the first international retreat finished at Merigar East last July; Chögyal Namkhai Norbu called a meeting to select a Gakyil for the new Merigar East. He opened the meeting by saying that the Gars in the Dzogchen Community are important because they are all related to the Dzogchen Teaching, which he has taught and continues to teach. The first Gar to be formed in Italy where the Master lived was Merigar, which became the origin of the other Gars around the world and a reference point for European people in the Community. As the Community steadily grew around the world, Tashigar was formed in Argentina and Tsegyalgar in the USA. As things progressed and the Community continued to develop, Tashigar North was also created in Venezuela later on and the old Tashigar became Tashigar South while in the USA Tsegyalgar West came into being in Baja, Mexico while the original Tsegyalgar in Massachusetts became Tsegyalgar East.

Now with the growth of the Dzogchen Community in Europe there was need for another Merigar, Merigar East while the

original Merigar has now become Merigar West.

Up to now the new Merigar East has had a small Gakyil of three people who worked very hard to organize for the first recent retreat held there. As the meeting progressed Rinpoche gave a very clear outline of how the new Merigar East Gakyil should be made up. First, there would be nine people on the Gakyil, with the three people who had worked in the Gakyil up to now, continuing their work. Rinpoche said that they had already had plenty of experience and should take the main responsibility for the Gakyil and become like a “pillar”.

Then there would be six more people who should collaborate with them. The Master said that he would like people from nearby countries to be on the Gakyil and suggested one representative from each of the following countries: Hungary, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Moldavia and Poland and a newly elected representative from the new Gakyil of Russian speakers. Rinpoche pointed out that it was essential for people on the Gakyil to be active and in particular collaborate and communicate.

Since there were not a large number of people present from those countries at the meeting, Rinpoche suggested that

the countries which have no Gakyil, should try to form one. In that way each of the countries involved would have their own Gakyil and could put forward a representative from their country to be a member of the Merigar East Gakyil although this person would not necessarily need to be from their own national Gakyil. He asked the Gakyil of each country to send the name of their representative to the International Gakyil who would forward it to Rinpoche for approval.

At the time of writing, the members of the Merigar East Gakyil are:

Blue: Gabriella Schneider
blue@dzogchen.ro
Yellow: Ida Pazman
yellow@dzogchen.ro
Red: Attila Frugyik
red@dzogchen.ro
Gekoes: Josef Imre
geko@dzogchen.ro
Russian speaking countries representative: Yana Sokolova
yana.sokol@gmail.com

for the place and climate and that are not too expensive. He underlined the importance of using the money of the Community carefully and in a correct way.

Liz Granger &
Karin Eisenegger
International Gakyil
garuda@bluewin.ch

The meeting drew to a close with the Master's advice about building the large Gonpa and other buildings that he has designed for the Gar. He urged the Gakyil to investigate the situation well and look around for building materials that are appropriate

passages

Married: On 17th August 2007 Dorjo Dugarov married Natalia in Ulan-Ude, Buryatia.
Dorjo is the son of Batodalai Dugarov, a celebrated Buryat artist and Dzogchen practitioner who is known in the Dzogchen Community for his precious work decorating the Gonpa at Merigar.



tsegyalgar east

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retreats and courses

October

October 5-11

Open Webcast with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Teachings and practice of Buddha Shakyamuni's Praises to the 21 Taras

October 13

Karma Yoga at the Schoolhouse, Conway

October 27

Karma Yoga Day at Khandroling

October 27-28

Purification of the Six Lokas Practice Retreat Weekend

October 28

Explanation of the practice for receiving the Worldwide Transmission of Guruyoga 3 pm

November

November 4

Anniversary of Adzom Drugpa Worldwide Transmission of Guruyoga

November 9-11

Introduction to Yantra Yoga Course

November 17-18

Medium Thun Practice Retreat Weekend

November 25-29

Open Webcast with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Teachings on Longchenpa's 30 Nyingtams [Sung Thorbu vol. I P. 354]

December

December 5-10

Advanced Song of Vajra

Dance Course with Adriana Del Borgo

December 8-9

Bagchen Practice Weekend in honor of the birthday of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

December 8

Rinpoche's Birthday

Mandarava Long Life Practice

December 9

Ganapuja and Birthday Party

December 27-Jan 3

Open Webcast with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche

Retreat of Teaching on Longchenpa's Choszhi Rinchen Phrengwa [Sung Thorbu vol. P. 247]

Weekly Practices

Collective Practices: Sundays at 9:30 am

Vajra Dance: Sundays at 11 am;

Thursdays at 7 pm; Fridays at 9 am

Yantra Yoga: Tuesdays at 6 pm

santi maha sangha base level retreat with jim valby yantra yoga with paula barry and oni mckinstry vajra dance with bodhi krause

khandroling, tsegyalgar east massachusetts, usa
summer 2007: base level, aug 3-11; level 1, aug 13-21

laurie blumberg

The Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat on Khandroling with Jim Valby was an absolutely wonderful experience. The days were full of activities, but never overwhelming. This was my first time at Khandroling, and as much as I've heard about the sacredness of the land, it could not prepare me for actually being there. I have heard stories of other practitioners' experiences, such as seeing Goma Devi rising over the pond, and of course Rinpoche's experiences. While I did not have such experiences, I did have the intense feeling that I was never alone, and was surrounded by the Guardians and many other sentient beings.

To wake up early in the morning and practice the Vajra Dance was an invaluable experience. Bodhi Krause, the dance in-

structor, taught in a simple, clear manner, and instructed us not only on the body level physical steps, but also the voice and mind components.

It was a pure pleasure to receive Jim Valby's teachings twice a day. The teachings were held in Rinpoche's cabin, and sitting there seemed like the perfect environment to work with the transmission and continue our learning. I'm sure many practitioners would agree that the book The Precious Vase can be overwhelming in that it is so packed full of information. Jim was able to break it down and explain it in digestible, understandable sections. The teachings were also very applicable to daily life. When listening to him, it was easier to recognize how I get caught up in my emotions and spiritual trips. Jim also walked us through sev-

eral practice meditations that can be done not only in the context of a thun, but also on a daily basis given a few free moments. I've been lucky enough to attend retreats with Jim twice before, but every time I feel like I leave the retreat with a huge amount of new information.

Paula Barry taught Yantra Yoga in the afternoons. The classes were held outside, where Paula instructed us on the eight movements. It is always helpful to practice yantra with a group, and this was no exception, especially with such a patient leader. In the evenings, a group practice was offered in Rinpoche's cabin. There was a different practice every night, including the Medium Thun, Chöd, and Shitro. And certainly not to be forgotten, the food was wonderful.

All in all, about thirty practitioners attended the retreat, and it seemed that we really came together as a group, and formed wonderful new connections. I feel it was a perfect example of the collaborative effort that Rinpoche has requested of us. I would highly recommend the retreat to anyone who is considering attending next year. The land, the practices, and the Sangha are certainly something to be experienced.



SMS Base Level Participants and Jim Valby. Photo: Joey Mella

New online bookstore

We are happy to announce that our new online bookstore is now up. We had to rebuild it due to problems with our old site. To visit the new site, go to: www.tsegyalgar east.org/bookstore

Best wishes,
Matthew Schmookler
Tsegyalgar Bookstore
413-369-4473 (Ph/Fax)
PO Box 479
Conway, MA 0134 1

New York City upcoming Dream Yoga and “Lucid Dream Theater Work” with Dr. Michael Katz

Sponsored by the NY Dzogchen Community

4 evening classes Monday September 17, 24, Oct 1, 15 (no class on Columbus day 10/8) at Kundrolling 151 W. 30th Sat. 4th Floor

Cost; \$ 20. per class; \$ 75. full course

Michael Katz, editor of “Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light” by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and author of “The White Dolphin” is a psychologist who has lectured and led workshops in over 10 countries on dream yoga and lucidity for personal growth. He is the originator of “Lucid Dream Theater Work, and is also completing a book on dream work to be published by Snow lion Publications spring 2008.

The course is intended to develop the capacity to dream lucidly, enhance creativity, and transpersonal spiritual/ psychological growth through powerful techniques of dream yoga and psychodrama.

Dr. Katz has practiced Tibetan Buddhism and Dzogchen meditation since 1974.

www.nydzogchen.com/dream.html

<http://picasaweb.google.com/zak10016/DreamYogaPrograms?authkey=bY6orHkgoOk>

Please register in advance to hold a place;
zak10016@yahoo.com

upcoming SMS Base Level Retreat Kundrolling NYC with Jim Valby

Jim Valby will be returning in November 2007, to offer the following: SMS Base Practice retreat emphasizing Anuyoga Friday, Nov 9, 5–7 pm, Shitro Ganapuja explanation Friday, Nov 9, 7:30–9 pm, New Moon Shitro Ganapuja Saturday, Nov 10, 10 am–12 noon, 2 pm–4:30 pm Sunday, Nov 11, 10 am–12 noon, 2 pm–4:30 pm \$25 per session, \$100 for all weekend, 10% discount to kundrolling donors and sustaining members

Best wishes,
the New York Dzogchen Community
Location: Kundrolling 151 West 30th St. 4th Floor, New York, 10001 www.nydzogchen.com hotline: 212 564 10 24

upcoming Yantra Yoga Kundrolling NYC November–December 2007

There will be a beginner's weekend and intermediate on going Yantra Yoga course at Kundrolling, New York City, led by Naomi Zeitz.

Beginner's Weekend Open to all November 16 and 18 Friday November 16 7–9 pm Sat + Sun 10 am to noon + 2:00–4:00 pm

Intermediate Course For those who know the tsijong and 8 movements at least. Focusing on the yantras and pranayamas of the 1st and 2nd series. We will also review the preliminary series focusing on the 8 movements. November 15–December 13 5 Thursday evenings 7 pm–9 pm: November 15, 22, 29 + December 6 and 13 December 1, Saturday morning, 10–noon

Cost: Beginner's Weekend \$ 20 per session For all 5 sessions prepaid \$ 80

Intermediate \$100 for 5 Thursdays and one Saturday to be paid at the beginning session

Location: Kundrolling 151 W. 30th Sat. 4th Floor
Contact: Jane Fulton jane.fulton100@hotmail.com

Schedules: Weekends: 9:30 a.m.–7:30 p.m. Weeknights: 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Closing Day, Nov. 4th: 6:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. \$ 180.00 dollars

pioneers needed for baja
dzogchen community land at
the tsegyalgar west winter
gar, jardin de los naranjos,
baja california sur, mexico

As many of you know, we have been given a wonderfully large (3,000 acres) and beautiful piece of wild ranch land in Baja California Sur, Mexico, near the towns and beaches which are most attractive to tourists and to ex-patriots who have retired there. Small groups of rural ranchero families live scattered throughout the valley

We are looking for members or close friends of the Dzogchen Community who would be comfortable living in this wild and unspoiled landscape, and who would be able to commit themselves to a stay of a minimum of 6 months, but preferably up to a year if this is agreeable to them and to the Gakyil. All volunteers are on probation during their first three months and may be invited to stay longer.

Pioneers are responsible for their transportation to and from Baja. While working at the Gar, they are supplied food, camp lodging, transportation, and coverage of sundry expenses. They also earn credits toward personal retreats at Tsegyalgar West/Los Naranjos and



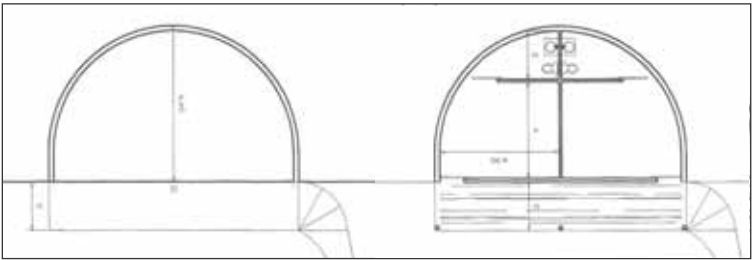
attend Dzogchen Community events on the land free of cost.
For more detailed information, and an application form, please contact:
office@jardindelosnaranjos.org

*

by Robin Bennett, Red Gakyl
We are working away at the famous retreat cabin. We have unfortunately encountered some obstacles, however we are going ahead all the same and have started the foundation. There is a

lot to consider because of the position of the retreat house. If the house was on stilts it would be too visible because the stilts would need to be 2 meters and 20 out of the ground. Wood is not an option, as it would get eaten in a short time, and concrete would be ugly, so we have carved into the mountain after doing the necessary *sang* with the Community. This option provides shelter from the sun on three sides. It is quite hot at the site. The carved out shape is a half moon and the front will face north. All of the half moon will be covered, but only a quarter of it will be the retreat space and the other part will serve as a

This is a serious retreat house that will be built in adobe bricks to keep the temperature of the practitioner's body down. High-tension cables to the retreat house would be expensive, so there will be no air conditioning, therefore the idea of the adobe half inside the mountain. There should be no problem with humidity because the ground has



great drainage. This retreat house is going to be the yogi and yogini's dream. The adobe brick is part sand mud and a little cement, compacted by a huge mechanical compressor that gives it stone-like durability without the heat. This is a method developed by an American that is now getting governmental approval.

in Venezuela. Many luxury condos are being constructed like this in Margarita, so why not the **Tashigar North adobe retreat house**? We hope people will flock to it. ©

Tashigar South	Tanti 5155
Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar	Pcia. de Córdoba
Calle pública S/N	Argentina

Yantra Yoga Tashigar South
January–February 2008
Dear Vajra brothers and sisters,
The Gakyil of Tashigar South has the intention to organize a Teacher's Training course for the First Level of Yantra Yoga, led by the two main teachers, Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico, from next January 29th to February 2nd, and also a course on the Variations of the Yantras, with Laura Evangelisti, from February 13 to 16.
As the organization of these courses represents a very important amount of money for our Gar, they will not take

place if there are not a minimum number of participants.

To participate in these courses it is necessary to have a good knowledge of Yantra Yoga, as the first one is intended for people who want to deepen their practice or aspire to become an instructor of the First Level of Yantra (preliminaries, first and second group of Yantras with their pranayamas and Vajra Wave), and the second one is for people who already know the yantras and now want to learn the variations.

The price for the courses (no discounts available) is 150 dollars for the

first one and 85 for the second. If the number of participants is high, the fees can be reduced a little.

So please, if you are really interested and you think you will be able to participate, communicate your intention to our secretary as soon as possible at **tashigarsur@gmail.com**, with copy to **tashiti@yahoo.com.ar**.

Thanks a lot and best wishes to all of you

Gakyl of Tashigar Sur

tashigarsur@gmail.com
www.tashigar-sur.com.ar
Tel: 03541-498356/885

Died: *Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters*
We are sorry to inform you that Dante Kabakian, 27 years old, a member of the Dzogchen Community from December 2006, died on July 24, 2007, at 14.30 hs in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Please do practice for him.

Gakyil of Tashigar Sur



Namgyalgar	PO Box 214 Central Tilba
Dzogchen Community in	NSW 2546
Australia	Phone/Fax: 61 02 4473 7668

Born: Tara I Te Rangi (which translated into Maori means Tara – top not or pinnacle of the sky). Tara I Te Rangi was conceived on pilgrimage to the Maratika caves. She was born to Rinpoche's students Paora Paul Joseph and Janine Martin on June 29th, 2007 in Taranaki, New Zealand.



In the last issue of The Mirror, #86, there was an error in a photo caption on page 10 in the ASIA article “Golok traditional Tibetan school”. The man referred to was not the Dutch Ambassador, but Tsering Tar from Amdo, Tibet.

passages

Died: Dear Vajra family,
We are sad to inform you that our Vajra sister Marina Kiseleva tragically died August 16th at 11 p.m. Moscow time (7 p.m. GMT). She fell down to her death from a rock at Caucasus where she was away on holiday with her husband and teenage daughter (both are also from Community).



Marina was one of the most active people in the Russian Dzogchen Community – she was a member of Moscow yellow Gakyil and also official director of Moscow Dzogchen Community. She was sincere and openhearted person and many people loved her. Please do Shitro practice for Marina. Take care,
Gakyil of Moscow DC Rinchenling ©

passages

Died: Tenzing Tsewang passed away unexpectedly on Monday evening, August 13 in Canada, where he had been living for the past 2 years. He was healthy and happy and had taken an evening walk, when he had a heart attack. He was rushed to hospital but they were unable to revive him.

Tsewang was one of Rinpoche's early students, and was very committed to the teachings. His grandfather and father in Tibet practiced Nyingma Buddhism, and Rinpoche's teachings were a profound connection to his heritage. As a musician and actor, Tsewang touched many people all over the world with his beautiful music and stories.

From Jan Cornall, Long Time Friend, Co-Creator of Tsewang's One Man Show, Hanging on to the Tail of a Goat, Australia

I first met Tsewang in the early 90's at an Australia-Tibet Youth function in Sydney. I can still see him standing across the room in a white shirt, handsome, laughing, as if lit with a glow, in the way all the important people in my life seem to be on our first meeting.

We met again when I was selling books at a street stall to raise money for our Sydney Dzogchen Community. I gave him a brochure about the visit of my teacher, Tibetan Dzogchen Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who was coming to lead a retreat in Australia. Of course Tsewang had met many Tibetan teachers and spent 12 years as a monk in HH Dalai Lama's monastery in

Dharamsala, but he had never met Norbu, as we used to call him then.

When he stepped off the bus outside the retreat place, I was there to meet him and greet that grin again. When he met Rinpoche he knew immediately, as we all did, he had met his master, and after the retreat Tsewang joined our Sydney Dzogchen practice group.

Tsewang became an important part of our spiritual community, a friend to all of us, and a real Vajra brother, never once using his status as a Tibetan ex monk, to differentiate himself in any way. In fact for a long time we knew very little about his past. It wasn't until years later that I learned all the stories of his childhood and his journey out of Tibet. His then partner, Sabina Lauber, and my ex partner, Brian Joyce, Tsewang and myself collaborated on his biographical theatre show, Hanging Onto The Tail Of a Goat. This was a very special time for us as we listened and work-shopped all the stories of his earlier life. Later when I was working on the script alone I remember being so happy every day to sit down and step into his shoes, becoming Tsewang - the young boy playing with his goats, or meeting the yak that led them across the difficult mountain terrain to Nepal, or later as the small boy in a Nepalese school who never gave up hope of being reunited with his family.

The show was a success and had repeat performances at the Sydney Opera House and toured to other venues over 3 years. We started work on another one-man show about the Bardo Thödrol – A series of instructions for liberation at the time of death, with the same team. We even performed a work in progress at Carnivale Festival in Sydney but were forced to shelve it when funding for the next year's festival was cut. Tsewang was to play a chödpa, a lone practitioner who made a living performing sky burials on a high Tibetan plateau. The play would also be an instruction on the Bardo – the in between period between death and rebirth. We had many long discussions about how to approach this topic. Tsewang wanted to wake people up, to shock them and inspire them with a very real experience of the Bardo, and to show them – if you are prepared for death, there is nothing to fear.

Early in August when I heard news of Tsewang's death, I realized he had jumped the gun on the Bardo performance. It worked. It shocked me, woke me up, and made me remember what is in store for all of us. Death caught me out again – showed me what a fool I was to expect one day to have more conversations with Tsewang about our play, to blithely assume that I would bump into him again ...



Tsewang and Kirsty Barclay.

Photo: Erin Wallis

Kirsty Barclay, Tsewang's wife – from her Verbal Tribute at the Memorial Service on Salt Spring Island, BC, Canada, August 25, 2007

Tsewang left us a great inheritance. The nature of his death is itself a teaching on impermanence, and on the importance of life. One of the things he gave to me was a teaching on how to enjoy a cup of tea, really enjoy a cup of tea. He used to say to me "Relax, relax and just enjoy the tea." So instead of thinking about other things I felt I should be doing, I would just sit and take an extremely stress-busting pause to deeply enjoy a cup of tea. He often said things like, "Baby, a millionaire can't buy this," and "As for Samsara, this is as good as it gets." He also knew how to really focus at work, really be there and make it a meditation. That's what was so amazing about him, and probably why he touched so many people. He was really present.

I think Tenzing Tsewang was well prepared for death. He had read the Tibetan Book of the Dead many times, worked on a script about it, had copious notes in his files, had written a rough translation of it himself, and read the entire book of the Bardo cover to cover earlier this year. He was very inspired by its beauty. Also, despite his apparent good health, he used to say to me, "we shouldn't put off our practice in life; death comes suddenly." I thought he was talking about me.

How did such a person evolve?

an extremely dangerous pass, and Tsewang thinks it could have been months before the day finally came when the Lama said, "Now is the time." Anam looked up at the blue sky and roused the entire party of relatives, yaks, goats, and horses and told them to start walking.

Tsewang remembers walking through the high snowy pass, which could have erupted, into a blizzard at any moment; the place was strewn with frozen bodies. There were so many of them that they couldn't walk around them, they had to walk right over top. Tsewang remembered seeing a man sitting bolt upright in the lotus position, frozen solid. He also saw a horse standing upright, frozen solid. His grandfather told him to keep walking. Before the end of the day, they were clear of the pass; just as the party had made it safely through, the sky clouded and a blizzard began behind them. If not for the Teacher, they surely would have joined the frozen dead.

The second of Tsewang's important teachers who I want to mention was of course the Dalai Lama himself. Tsewang was placed in the Namgyal Tantric College in Dharamsala, His Holiness's private monastery, and stayed there through his youth, until he reached his early 20's. He was very privileged to receive direct teachings as a monk. This period of his life was extremely valuable to him, but he left the monkhood and chose to become a layman. Many years later in Australia, he encountered Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Tsewang was one of Rinpoche's early students, and therefore he got to spend a lot of personal time with the Master. They watched a lot of Bollywood movies, they cooked together, and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu also sang on one Tsewang's CDs, Gawala (How Happy).

This was a wonderful time for Tsewang, and he remained devoted to Chögyal Norbu and his Dzogchen teachings to the end of his life... Tsewang really liked the directness, the subtlety, the fully integrated practice, and the lack of outward show that Dzogchen offers. He recorded his feelings in his life story, which has only one chapter left to be finished. I intend to write that chapter, with a little help from his loved ones. ©

Tsewang told me he had about 200 teachers in his life. But today, I want to mention three that came across to me as being especially important. When he was a little boy, as you may know, he traveled out of Tibet to escape the Chinese army, with family members. On the way his party encountered a very high Lama leading another party. They decided to stay together for some time, and Tsewang's entire party received direct transmissions from this teacher. It was a very special time for the family. They had to eventually move along through a very dangerous area. The Lama began to pray for guidance.

One day he finished his prayers, and he told Tsewang's grandfather, Anam, that a very large wild yak, a *dong*, about double the size of the domestic yak, would come to lead them through safely. Shortly thereafter, one night Tsewang was awakened by a loud commotion outside. He could hear yaks fighting and struggling, and trampling toward the tent. He alerted his grandfather, who looked out and saw a huge crush of yaks surrounding a large wild dong who had come into their midst. They were stampeding straight toward the family tent. Anam ordered everyone out of the tent just in time before the yaks completely trampled it.

In the morning, the *dong* was standing up high on a ridge, away from the domestic yaks. He seemed just to be waiting for them. The Lama said, "there he is, he will lead us out of here." They began to follow the *Dong* and he led them all the way to the most treacherous mountain pass of all. There they had to wait and again the Lama prayed. This was

mig-mang a tibetan game

adriana dal borgo

Rinpoche said, “Mig-mang is an old Tibetan game. Sakyapandita (12th–13th century) wrote in one of his books, “You should be present without getting distracted, as in the game of mig-mang”. Sakyapandita said that you should be present and should not reason, you should not get distracted just like when you play mig-mang. Mig means ‘eyes’, mang means ‘many’, and so the name means ‘many eyes’”.

Games are an activity that is often underrated and in fact, people say, ‘it’s only a game’ to make something seem less important. However, at the same time, we all know the great educational, social and relational value of games. But what have

games got to do with the Teaching?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: “Here in Margarita, every Sunday we relax and play bagchen...” And not only does this happen in Margarita. The Master often gives us a little of his precious time and spends entire afternoons playing games. The favorite games are “bag-chen” and “mig-mang” but there are also others such as the Tibetan dice game “sho”, and “the horn and the hare”. Like all the activities we do with Rinpoche, these games are not just pastimes, but opportunities to receive profound Teachings.

When we play, we relax and, in a less serious and formal context, a little freer than our usual limits, expectations and ten-

sions, we can discover how we relate and observe our minds. Perhaps it is because ‘it is only a game’ that we are able to maintain the slightest detachment from our emotions that allows us to observe them.

We train in presence especially when we play mig-mang. The game becomes more interesting when we play quickly, without thinking too much about possible moves, and leaving more space for intuition. When we play, we develop a vision of the whole game rather than concentrating only on details and then being inevitably distracted by them. We should also be attentive and, at the same time, flexible in order to be able to modify our game according to circumstances (in this case our adversary’s moves). Why don’t we try to train our presence together playing mig-mang?

It isn’t necessary to wait for the Master to be with us. We can ‘practice’ in any circumstance and with anyone.

The rules are simple and everyone can prepare the materials necessary at home, and then find

someone to play with and ... have fun!

You need: a board with 9 squares along the sides, 30 white counters and 30 black (or two different colors, you can use shells, stones, colored chips).

How to play: two people sit on opposite sides of the board, each chooses a color and places part of their counters along the side of the board as shown in figure 1. The person with the white counters starts the game and the players take turns. A player wins when his/her opponent has only 3 counters left on the board.

Rules: you can move the counters any number of squares horizontally and vertically, backwards and forwards. When one player closes one or more of the opponent’s counters between two of his, we say that he ‘eats’ them and removes his opponent’s counters substituting them with the same number of his own color. E.g. the white moves next to the black (fig.2) imprisoning it

and substitutes the black counter with a white one (fig.2a).

In order to ‘eat’, a player has to be active in imprisoning his opponent’s counters. For example, if the black moves between two white counters (fig.3), in this case the black isn’t eaten.

When you have a little more familiarity with the game, you could try this variation: the rules are the same but you can move the counters in all directions – vertically, horizontally and also diagonally.

Some advice: try to move your counters quickly, without reasoning too much (use your clarity...). Keep your attention on the whole board as much as possible, otherwise you will find your counters rapidly decreasing in number! It is important not to move – as long as you are not forced to – the counters at the corners of the board (each player has two of them) because they occupy a strategically important position. You’ll find out with your first game!!! ©

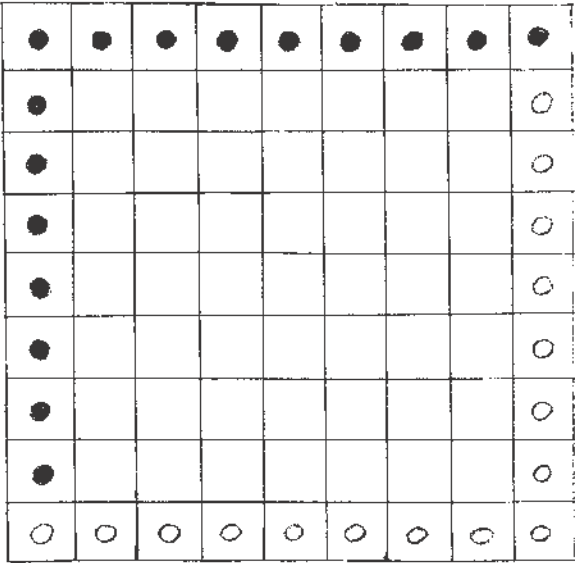


fig. 1

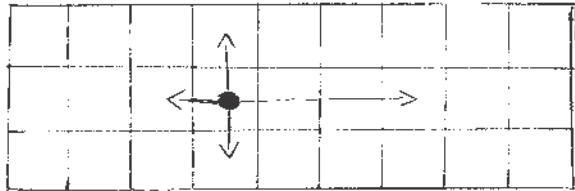


fig. 1a

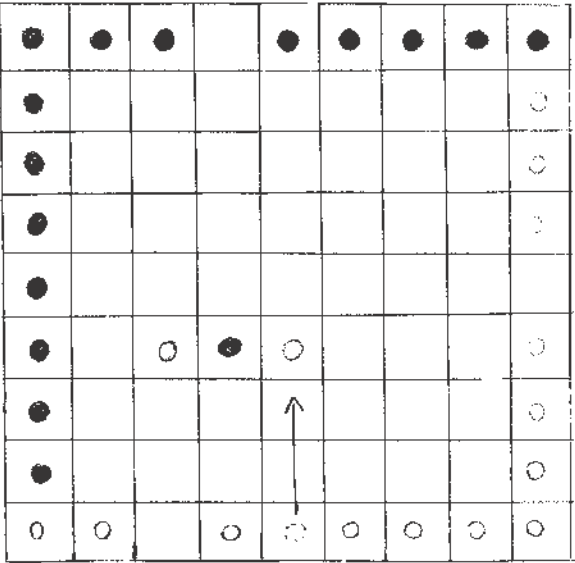


fig. 2

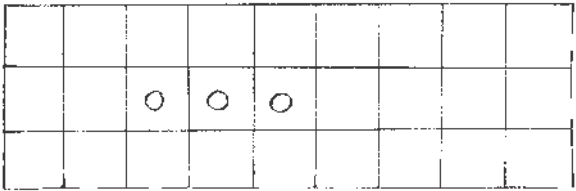


fig. 2a

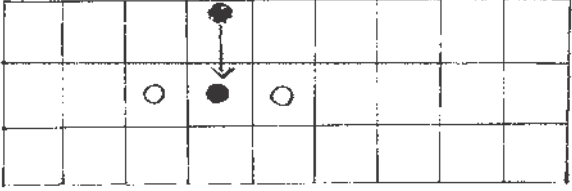


fig. 3

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how i met chögyal namkhai norbu

gabriella schneider

In 1991 I saw the name Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the word Dzogchen for the first time in a book with the title “Der Kristallweg”. This book was a milestone in my life, which was a good life with a family, children, job, holidays and so on. Then, in 1997, I discovered that there was a Dzogchen Community in Germany and I joined the Düsseldorf group. It was there that I heard for the Song of Vajra for first time and I couldn’t stop crying, while my mind thought: “That is it. You’ve arrived home”.

In March of 1998, I went to my first Dzogchen teaching with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Chiangmai. It was a short weekend retreat, and I expected a kind of wonder; the Master would do something, I would have some kind of special experience (no idea what kind of experience, but I thought that all people who follow Rinpoche would have the same experience), and then I would become someone else, another being, something special, already illuminated. Don’t laugh, please! Nothing happened, and at the end of the

three days I was still the same. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu talked about things like Tantra and Sutra and Dzogchen, but for me it was too much for the first time, even after having read his book, it wasn’t clear for me what exactly the difference was between them, and what was Dzogchen.

In September 1998, I decided to go to my second retreat with Rinpoche, in Cergy, France. On the first day I bought a picture of Rinpoche in a Yantra Yoga position and after the teaching I went to him quickly, and asked him to sign it. He did. Happily, I went back to my place where I discovered that he had drawn for me an unknown and mysterious sign. I wondered how that letter sounded. Curious to find it out, I went back to Rinpoche. A big crowd of people was waiting, to the left of the throne, to talk to him.

Here, at this point, I must tell you, I didn’t know anything about the rules of behavior toward a Master. In Chiangmai I didn’t go up to see Rinpoche and I also didn’t follow what other people were doing when went



up to see him. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was the first Master I met in this life, and I didn’t have any experience with Buddhist masters. I was an innocent, ignorant Westerner.

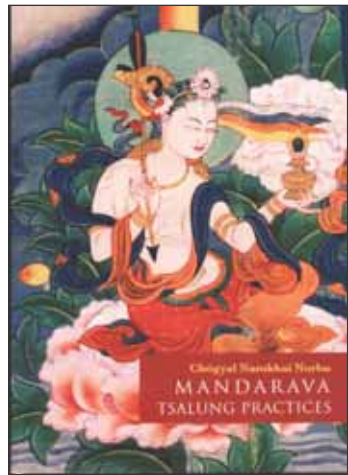
So, I went directly towards the throne. I went directly through the middle of the hall and stopped in front of Rinpoche’s throne. Rinpoche was talking with two girls, looking to the left, at them. I didn’t care. I said, stretching my hand with the picture almost under Rinpoche’s nose, “Rinpoche, Rinpoche, what is this?” Like in slow motion, very, very slowly, Rinpoche turned his face to me; like an elephant to a mosquito. His eyes looked directly in my eyes. Hedewa*! In this moment, Rinpoche

gave me the complete teaching about the ego. I saw myself in the mirror. I saw my attitude, I saw the people who were waiting, I saw the impolite manner of my action, and I understood all this in the instant when I met his gaze.

After a break, which seemed endless to me, and in a tone that seemed to disapprove fully of attitudes like mine, Rinpoche said, “It is a mantra”, and turned his face back to the girls. I felt paralyzed, realizing how narrow-minded, egotistic, and ignorant I am. I was unspeakably ashamed of myself and sad, very sad about my image in the mirror...

After a while, my fighting Aries nature was ready to act again. “Oh, yes, I know now how my attitude should be. No, I cannot leave this situation as it is. I must apologize. I have to do it all again, this time in the correct way”.

I went to the end of the line of people waiting. It was a very big line and it was late. I was terribly afraid of the thought that maybe they would close the line and I would not be able to talk again to the Master. Finally I arrived to Rinpoche, this time in the right way and at the right place. I didn’t know if Rinpoche remembered me, but I apologized for my attitude and showing him the picture with the mysterious letter, I asked him, “Please, Rinpoche, can you tell me, which mantra this is?” Rinpoche smiled kindly and said, “It is a mantra for all, like OM A HUNG”. He smiled!!! At me!!! Oh, thank you, Master, you forgive me...



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Mandarava Tsalung Practices
Transcription of oral Teachings on The profound Crucial Upadesha of the Long Life Practice “The Vajra Vital Essence”
Tashigar Norte, Isla Margarita, Venezuela, August 2004

The Tsalung practices contained in this book belong to Longsal Cycle of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

As Rinpoche explained: “The most important part of all Tantric practices is Tsalung. What does this word really mean? **Tsa** means channels; **lung** means prana energy – so altogether it means how the prana is related with the channels and how we should work with these.

We always prepare to do the Tsalung practices by doing the main practice of Mandarava. Also you remember that Mandarava manifests the three Kayas. We stay in the presence of whichever aspect is necessary for the particular practice we are doing.

Here we are explaining Tsalung practices which put a lot of emphasis on heat. If people are living in a warm place they wonder why we need even more heat. Even if the weather is warm it doesn’t mean we have developed our inner heat. What we need to develop is inner heat because it is important for discovering and developing sensation. The sensation of pleasure is one of the most important means for having knowledge and realization. If we don’t develop inner heat we don’t have that possibility.

When you do these practices in a perfect way, relaxing in the sensation of the pleasure feeling and staying in this presence, combining it with the visualization, you can obtain the following benefits: all the self-perfected, **lhundrub** qualities arise; also you automatically overcome attachment to food and you can easily integrate and stay in instant presence forever. It also becomes a very important purification of negative karma and any kinds of obstacles. Your clarity will manifest and develop and you will be able to go beyond your limitations.”

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<http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org>

The next day, during the Song of Vajra, I recognized deeply and sincerely my faults and felt the genuine wish to unify my state with the state of the Master. In this state, I had a vision. It was for me the beginning of “no doubts” about the Master and his teaching. And the beginning of my understanding of Dzogchen.

Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you, what Rinpoche wrote on my picture was the mantra of the Longsal teachings. ©

* *hedewa* - state free of mental activity, startled, shocked surprise without concepts.



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