

THE MIRROR

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upcoming retreats with CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU



Photo: Romain Piro

Argentina
Cordoba, Tashigar Sur
December 27–January 3
Longchenpa's Choszhi Rinchen Phrengwa
(The Necklace of the Four Precious Dharmas)
Open Webcast

2008

January 7–10
Santi Maha Sangha First Level Exam
January 11–17
Santi Maha Sangha Second Level Training

February 1–6
Zhine and Lhagthong according to Atiyoga
Closed Webcast

February 15–20
Zhitro Khordas Rangdrol, a Terma of Rigdzin
Janchub Dorje

Peru
February 29–March 5
Zer-nga

Venezuela
Margarita Island, Tashigar Norte
March 21–26
Dzogchen Teaching retreat
Open Webcast

April 4–9
Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga &
Vajra Dance Teachers Training

April 25–30
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
Open Webcast

May 9–14
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
Open Webcast

USA
New York City
May 23–25
The essential Dzogchen teaching of Sangyas
Lingpa according to the Longsal teaching

Tsegyalgar East
May 30–June 6
Jigmed Lingpa's Dzogchen teaching Yeshe
Lama

June 13–15
Santi Maha Sangha III Level Exams
June 16–22
Santi Maha Sangha IV Level Training

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Photo: Hans Hansen

nuggets of gold in barcelona

LONGCHENPA's thirty pieces of advice from the heart
(*snying gtam sum beud pa*)

liz granger

For the third year in a row Chögyal Namkhai Norbu traveled to Barcelona, Spain to give Dzogchen teachings. This year the autumn retreat was a little later than usual taking place at the end of November when the air is brisker and the sun a little lower on the horizon.

The venue, as in previous years was the massive sports complex, La Mar Bella, set along the city's beautiful coastline and divided from the Mediterranean by a wide strip of sandy beach. Once again, his Spanish students transformed the enormous space inside into a colorful hall fitting for the teachings with colored drapes and brocades as a background for Rinpoche's raised teaching seat, with plants, flowers and an altar to flank him.

The Mar Bella has become unique as a teaching hall for the Master because the space is large enough to comfortably set down seven mandalas for the Dance of the Vajra and also provides an area for a large number of people to follow Yantra Yoga

courses at the same time without disturbing each other. There is plenty of space outside as well with an endless view of blue sea and sky blending in the distance.

This year, too, the Spanish Gakyil and many of Rinpoche's Spanish students were extremely busy with the many preparations for the retreat that hosted around 500 participants from a number of different countries around the world. Barcelona is an inviting city, easy to get to, easy to move around and fun to explore which partially explains why people enjoy this venue for retreats.

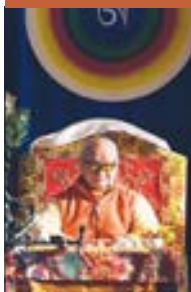
Rinpoche's five days of teachings centered on Longchenpa's *Thirty Pieces of Advice from the Heart* (*Snying gtam sum beud pa*), written by Longchenpa Drime öser (1303–1363), one of the most important Dzogchen masters of the past. Even though the text was written centuries ago Rinpoche explained that the points were important for understanding how to be present and are useful for our attitude in

daily life. His explanations were full of personal advice with stories and experiences from his early life in Tibet to illustrate many points and make this advice more concrete and personal. The Master also gave extensive clarification on the importance of Guru Yoga and the Song of the Vajra in a way that made his teachings accessible to both new and old students. On the last day of the retreat he gave detailed instructions for *yantig* practice and then went on to give the *lung* of many different practices that are used in the Dzogchen community so that students could make use of them whenever necessary.

Besides the Master's teaching, the five days were packed with activities. On the second day of the retreat, Rinpoche inaugurated the new Spanish ling on the top floor of a building in the old part of Barcelona, calling it 'Kundusling', the Ling that unifies everyone because Barcelona is a focal point for practitioners from all over the world since it is easy to get to and easy

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Teaching



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Longchenpa's Thirty Pieces of Advice from the Heart

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Barcelona



Kundusling

The Ling that unifies everyone

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Today we start this teaching, the advice of Longchenpa. I already told you that this teaching is related to our *chöpa*, our attitude, and how we integrate our attitude with the practice of the teaching.

The title of this teaching is *Snying gtam sum beud pa*. *Snying gtam* means very close words, like heart words. In general, we do not use heart words with everyone, but we give this kind of advice to someone very close. So, Longchenpa is giving this advice to himself and his students. Sometimes this explanation is related to someone very much like himself, because he is a monk and a teacher, so he gave advice more related to that. This advice is also useful for everyone. *Sum bued pa* means that there are thirty pieces of this advice.

This teaching begins with a verse that pays homage to his teacher. Longchenpa says the teacher is like space and in the space there are clouds, and from the clouds there is rain, and the rain is the teaching, and with this rain on the earth the teaching is maturing and growing up. He has met good teachers, the teaching and is on the path because of good fortune and good karma in this life. He says that even though he has this kind of good opportunity, his time is passing always with distraction. Life is just like shadows, always becoming bigger and bigger shadows until the evening arrives. That means that time is passing and we are always distracted with useless things. Longchenpa has a good idea to do practice for his life, but then it is only intention. In a practical way, when he sees this attitude of distraction, he feels sad because it does not correspond. He wrote down this advice for himself and those who are just like him for that reason.

Longchenpa is not like us. Most of his life he lived on a mountain. When he was young he studied and followed many teachers, so maybe he wrote this when he was quite young. Then he decided to go on the mountain and do practice. This is an example.

So now begins the first piece of advice. The first piece of advice is about how with many methods we try and attract many people, for example, the monastery needs to have many monks, or a teacher tries to teach and draw many students. If we live in a monastery that has all good conditions and we think what a good condition we have, in the real sense that is the basis for discussion and attachment, so it is better we try to be alone and free.

For example, I thought this very often. I have so many students asking me to come here and there. I try to make people happy, but my students do not always listen and practice. Sometimes they fight with each other and create so many problems. I have the consequence for that because I have taught them, and we have a samaya to maintain. It is not sufficient that only I keep my samaya with that student; also the students and students are not respecting each other and they create problems. We are in the same boat and traveling very far; if someone creates a problem in the boat, it becomes a problem for everyone. That is an example, so Longchenpa is giving that advice.

Now we have the second piece of advice. If you are monk or lama, everyone invites you to come and do rites or pujas. Many people like to do this, to become a 'lama of puja'. When I arrived in India for the first time, in Sikkim really, I was supposed to live there. I had no money for living and I could not work. Many people knew I was a reincarnation, an educated lama, so they wanted to invite me to do pujas in their houses. So I went to do pujas and in the evening when we finished the puja, they would offer me money and food. I was doing one or two pujas a week, and then I could live. When I went to do pujas at someone's house, it became more and more developed. Many other families wanted pujas and they would ask whom they could invite. People would tell them about me and then I would be invited. I was doing pujas three times a week and after some weeks I was going every day. Then I became Lama of Puja. I had no problem of livelihood only doing pujas.

Many monks live in that way in monasteries. For example, if there are sick children or animals, the families invite someone to do a puja. If someone has no fortune and everything goes badly, they invite someone to come and do a puja. When someone makes a mo, or divination, and discovers negative provocations, then they recommend this or that puja. Maybe the families do not know how to do it, so they invite some lama to do a puja.

For example, when we calculate astrologically for our life for the year and there is some kind of manifestation of negativity, we wonder what we can do. We should do some puja, or we ask a monastery to do this puja. Of course, you cannot ask for a puja and not offer anything, you need to offer money and everything needed for the puja. Either the monks do a puja or you invite someone to



Photo: Mike Farmer

LONGCHENPA's thirty pieces of advice from the heart (*snying gtam sum beud pa*)

the first two pieces of advice

barcelona november 2007
day II

your house and they do it. You become a lama of puja with this kind of qualification.

A puja lama can create an attachment with food, money and wealth, etc. That can become the reason that you do these pujas and your mind becomes dominated by devils because you are not going in the correct way on the path. I remember when I was in Sikkim. I was doing lama of puja for many months. Later I tried to go back to Tibet because my father and brother were in prison. The Chinese said I was in India doing activity against them. I was not doing anything, but some other Tibetans were. It was for that reason that they put my brother and father in prison. When I received this information I decided to go back to Tibet to show them I was not doing anything. I went to the border where I spent more than one week, but I was not allowed to enter.

There was a family there and they told me to stay at least one week and listen to how the situation was in Tibet. They told me to do a puja for me and for them. So I did a puja of Tara and I spent more than one week there waiting. Everyday I received worse and worse news. I also had very clear dreams showing me that I must not go back. Also the person I was staying with felt it was better I did not return. He said that instead of freeing my father and brother, I would end up in prison myself. So I did not go and went back to Sikkim. I thought I did not want to live in Sikkim as a lama of puja and so I asked the government of Sikkim for a job and they gave me one. Then I went to the office every day like an ordinary person. I worked for the Sikkim government until I went to Italy and I studied and practiced.

So Longchenpa is saying something like this: It is most important to reeducate your mind. This is very important, very often we must observe what kind of intention we have and what we are thinking. Then we discover what

kind of intention we have and if we have bad intention then we change and we cultivate good intention. That way we don't need any kind of vow, but we can control. In general we receive many vows to control our body, speech and mind, so as not to create negative karma. So you see, if we are present and we check our intention, then we do not have this kind of problem. That is the second piece of advice from Longchenpa. ❀

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz

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to stay. After the 'official' opening and prayers to send away negativities, those present enjoyed a merry evening of local entertainment and music Barcelona style. And on the penultimate day a Ganapuja was held in the afternoon during which pamos and pawos danced the Dance of the Song of the Vajra on seven mandalas at the same time!

The retreat program as usual was filled with activities from early morning to the evening with Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance courses and practice, explanations of various practices, a lottery which has by now become almost a tradition during retreats as well as an interesting presentation by ASIA of their project for Ralung monastery in Tibet.

The whole experience of the five days of teachings, explanations and practice was like a rich treasure trove from which participants could pluck a costly jewel to take away with them and integrate into their daily lives.

Heartfelt thanks to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for his ceaseless patience, compassion and dedication to the teaching and to all his Spanish students who worked so hard and so long to make this experience possible. ☉



A GREAT BIRTHDAY WISH FOR OUR BELOVED MAESTRO!

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU
DECEMBER 8 2007

We wish to you a long and healthy life on the anniversary of your birth with inexpressible gratitude for all you have given us. May the teachings flourish!

The Mirror Staff
The International Dzogchen Community

a project to promote the traditional nyingmapa doctrines among the main colleges of the nyingma monasteries located in qinghai, sichuan and tar, sangkri monastery, tongde county, qinghai province, p.r. china.

andrea dell'angelo

Project title: Promotion of the traditional Nyingmapa doctrines among the main colleges of the Nyingma Monasteries located in Qinghai, Sichuan and TAR, Sangkri Monastery, Tongde County, Qinghai Province, P.R. China. This is a project to be implemented under the approval of the department of minority and religion of Tongde County, Hainan prefecture.

Sangkri Monastery

Sangkri Monastery is located in Sangkhri village, Tongde County, south of Qinghai Province. This monastery is one of the most important centers for the teaching of Nyingma doctrine and the first one in the region.

The 3rd reincarnation of Jigme Dechen Dargye decided to set up a center in Qinghai, where no other Nyingma Monastery existed, and asked the 6th Dzogdrul Jigdral Changchub to send an abbot there every year from Dzogchen Monastery. After a long period of travel and meeting, Abbot Tsewang Regzin from Mayawa agreed to start the new center in Qinghai.

In 1951, Abbot Regzin opened the Monastery in Sangkhri. The Abbot, instead of building temples, statues and assembly halls, focused his attention on teaching the doctrines to more than one hundred and sixty new monks and started transmitting knowledge of Dharma.

The living conditions in Sangkhri Monastery were hard and difficult. The monks were not allowed to beg for food or collect donations from local people. During this time, the Abbot added a temporary hall and fifty rooms to the Monastery and the living conditions improved.

The rules and regulations of Sangkhri Monastery are very different compared with the ones of other Nyingma centers. The education of the Nyingma doctrine was the main activity of the Monastery and, between 1951 and 1958, thirty monks received degrees as abbots and eighty monks received other high degrees.

During the years of the so-called Cultural Revolution, Sangkhri Monastery was destroyed and

letter from the sengtri monastery to CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

THUBTEN JAMYANG GENDUN

With great respect of the three gates we address you, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Lord of the kingdom of the Luminous Vajra Essence (Atiyoga), crown ornament of all Vidyadharas.

We are very grateful in these days that you, the King of the Definitive Dharma, are taking care in an authentic manner to uphold, maintain and spread the precious Teaching of the Buddha like a luminous diamond with your Body, Speech and Mind.

For the benefit of the Teaching and all sentient beings, the Khenpos and Tulkus here at Sengtri monastery have requested that the faithful people of the Domed area perform the following virtuous actions for a period of ten years: 870,000,000,000,000 recitations of the Mani mantra; 1,500,000,000,000 recitations of the Siddhi mantra; 35,000,000,000 recitations of the Tara mantra; 200,000,000,000 recitations of the Vajrasattva mantra; 160,000,000,000 reci-

tations of the Amitabha mantra; 13,000,000,000 recitations of Refuge; 1,230,000,000,000 recitations of Arapacana; 300,000,000 recitations of the Bhadracarya Pranidhana; releasing 40000 sheep, buying fish for a total amount of 170,000 Yuan to be released, lighting 130,00,000,000 butter lamps and more. We sincerely hope that all these virtuous deeds will benefit You, Rinpoche, providing You with a long life for the benefit of the Teaching and all sentient beings.

Buddha said, “How can the supreme one who sees gold and dirt as the same be affected even if the riches of the four continents were given to him? Yet, if one adheres to the Dharma that is in his Mind, one’s wishes will be fulfilled.” In the same way, if this intentional offering of practice we present is good, please fulfil our wishes and aspirations.

Thanks to Your and ASIA’s support, we have almost completed

the project of printing textbooks to be used in the Nyingma monasteries. There are around 140 monasteries and 12,700 monks, in Central Tibet, Amdo and Kham, who have applied for the use of these textbooks. Once the books become available, the monks have promised to study them for 5 to 10 years, depending on their capacity. We sincerely hope that you will be able to support us again and help the dream of the Nyingma monks’ come true.

Moreover, all of our monks, Teachers and Incarnate Lamas, wish to thank you again for your the intention to visit our monastery one day in the future. We are looking forward to meeting you.

Rinpoche, we beseech you, who while abiding in the Vajra Mansion of Total Bliss, with a human strength as stable as the Vajra, light the lamp of the Luminous Dzogpa Chenpo teaching in all directions: please don’t forsake the profound aspiration to benefit the Teaching and all sentient beings!

Written by
Thubten Jamyang Gendun,
One who holds the last seat at
Ba Sengtri Monastery
On a propitious day



all the traditional history and books of the Nyingma doctrine that had been preserved in the monastery were lost. Lamas and monks took refuge in the Jepur Mountains.

In 1986, the political situation improved along with a change of attitude of the local government towards Buddhist practices, and Abbot Konchok Rechen, the successor of Abbot Rigzin, and other monks, returned to the ruins of the destroyed monastery and started to rebuild a new one. At the beginning they lived in tents. In the summer of 1987, some old students returned to the monastery and began to build sixty new rooms, two rooms for the abbot, three teaching classrooms, two storerooms, two rooms for the kitchen, and a library.

Three main classrooms were set up and the Abbot used these to teach the students.

In a short time, the Monastery turned into an important center for the teaching of Nyingma doctrine and more than forty students began to attend courses there.

From 1993, Sangkhri Monastery became one of the most important places for teaching Nyingma doctrine in all of Tibet. The

only difficulties are related to the sustainability of its activities. To cover expenses, students have to cope with their daily needs and often their families have to provide them with food. Ten of the sixty rooms have collapsed and the monastery tries to give accommodation to the students coming from far places first. Three new classrooms have been built, but considering the high attendance, each classroom is used by two different courses. This situation limits new registration of students (In 2004, more than one hundred applications had to be rejected).

At the moment, Sangkhri Monastery hosts one hundred and seventy-six students and eighteen teachers, with the exception of those involved in meditation activities.

In spite of the difficult situation, Sangkhri Monastery has opened new branches in the Provincial area:

- The center of Lhacham with more than 70 students
- The center of Degen, with more than 70 students
- The center of Khongik with more than 70 students
- The center of Naran with 30 students
- The center of Karggel with 40 students

Background of the Project

The situation of the Tibetan people is characterized by a serious decline of their culture and traditions, in a framework of scarce attention paid by local authorities and lack of economic means to cope with major problems. The difficult conditions of the Tibetan cultural and religious heritage is represented by the poverty and the lack of means of support of the main Buddhist monasteries, which, in a society like the Tibetan one, play an important role as cultural and educational institutions.

In this context, the project aims to promote the cultural identity of the Tibetan people through support for the publication of all the texts used in the traditional monastery colleges for the teachings of the Nyingmapa doctrine, one of the five major schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

As a result of a request presented to ASIA by the monks of Sangkhri Monastery of Tongde and the local population, the project intends to implement a program of identification and publication of the main traditional texts of the Nyingmapa school and to provide the main Tibetan college libraries with important teaching material for their educational activities.

The role of Sangkhri Monastery, one of the most important teaching centers of the Nyingmapa



The arrival of the books the 20th of May to the Monastery of Sangkhri. All the monks came out from the classroom to welcome the books.

School, is to coordinate and organize the editing activity and the delivery of these texts to the selected colleges.

In 2003, the monastery of Sangkhri submitted its first proposal to ASIA which after two evaluations and several meetings with the counterparts to assess the feasibility of the project, submitted the project proposal to the Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in July 2005. The proposal was approved by the Embassy in February 2006 and a contract between the Embassy and ASIA was signed in Beijing the 10th of February 2006.

Since March 2006, ASIA has been working with the monks of Singkhri monastery to collect all the necessary texts.

All the original texts are xylographs and manuscripts, and many of them are very old. For

this reason, many words were not legible and it was extremely difficult for Abbot Gendun and the five monks working with him to understand them.

To interpret these old texts, the Singkhri Monastery working group has been obliged to compare several versions of the same texts to correct all the words in doubt.

A few very rare texts are in extremely bad condition and it was nearly impossible to decide the meaning of the missing words. The working group was obliged to go to visit many different monasteries in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, in Amdo and Kham to find other versions of these old texts to be able to attribute the correct meaning to the missing words.

Moreover, once the different versions of the old damaged texts



The representatives of the colleges which received the books during the prayer festival held in Tongde in July 2007.

have been found, the working group is obliged to visit many different colleges where these texts will be used to discuss the selected meanings of the words with different scholars.

Another problem was that many ancient words and symbols used in the old Tantric texts are not included in the Tibetan writing program used in the computers, so an expert able to add special fonts to the program has to be found.

During September and October 2006, the editing committee of Singkhri Monastery completed the sixth and last checking of the following volumes (4°, 5°, 6°, 8°, 9°, 10°, 11°, 16°, 17°, 18°).

On December 10, abbots from the most important monasteries and colleges from all over Tibet were invited to Xining to discuss all the problems related

to the publication of the books in detail. For fifteen days, problems like misspellings and confusion related to interpretation of words were discussed and now all the problems that arose during the checking of the texts have been solved.

The abbots who participated in this meeting were from Sichuan (3), from Golog (2) and from Tongde (4).

From November till now, four abbots from Singkhri monastery and twelve people from the Qinghai People's Nationality Publishing House have been working together to correct the rest of the books to be published.

The main scholars who participated in the meetings were: Chokyi Wangchuk Dawa Sangpo from Sangkhri Monastery, Tanpai Gyaltsen, Norbu Gyamtso from Serta Monastery in Sich-

uan, Wuspo from Norbu Golok Mingthang Monastery, the abbot of Choegar Monastery, and Jigmed Drophan, Drakpa Oser, the abbot of Sathop Monastery

In this same period, the Abbo, Gendun, the director of the project, went all over Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai and the TAR to visit one hundred and fifty different monasteries and colleges.

Actually, the project has been completed and 3,000 series of 20 volumes each making a total of 60,000 books, have been published and distributed to 3,000 monks studying at the Nyingmapa colleges spread all over China.

The project is now very well known all over the Tibetan areas of China and ASIA and has received 13,134 requests to receive the books.

Pictures and names of the monks wanting to receive the books published by the project have been collected and a new proposal to print 15,000 sets of the books, that is 300,000 volumes, is being prepared by ASIA's team. ©

You can download the entire document of this proposal, including a history of the Nyingmapa Lineage and an extensive list of the texts collected and enclosed in one set of books at www.melong.com.

The Mirror

ralung monastery

a project for the reconstruction of a buddhist college

History

Ralung is a very ancient Monastery and the original seat of the Tibetan Drukpa Kagyu school situated in West Tibet. It was founded in 1180 by Tsangpa Gyare and is set in a valley at an altitude of around 4000 meters in an area characterized by a series of auspicious natural signs.

The origins of the monastery go back to a legend which recounts the story of a shepherd from a nearby village who noticed that every day one of his goats left the flock. He became curious and when he followed it, he saw that the goat had traced out the syllables "OM AH HUNG" on a rock with its milk. Lingchen Repa, a great Karma Kagyudba master, came to know about the miracle and went into a long retreat in a nearby cave.

Lingchen Repa Pema Dorje, also known as Drubthob Naphupa, was born in the village of Langpo Na in the Nyang Tod district of the Tsang region in Central Tibet. At the age of 17, he began his spiritual education under Lupon Ling and became a monk. At the age of 41 Lingchen

Repa went to Damshod where he met Phagmo Drupa who became his main teacher. Lingchen Repa spent most of his life in solitary retreat. He had many disciples and Tsangpa Gyare Yeshe Dorje continued his tradition and founded the Drukpa lineage.

This came about in 1206 when Tsangpa Gyare saw nine dragons flying up into the sky from the land of Namdruk and named the lineage that he founded 'Drukpa' or the 'lineage of the Dragons'. During his life he discovered many *termas* and he also discovered Tsari, a famous pilgrimage site in Tibet. When he passed away in 1211, on his cremation day a rainbow canopy appeared and showers of flowers fell.

In 1616, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594–1651), the fourth reincarnation of Tsangpa Gyare and the eighteenth abbot of Ralung Monastery, was persecuted by the governor of Tsang and fled from Tibet. He united the warring regions in Bhutan and became the political and religious leader there. He founded the Kingdom of Bhutan which took the name of Druk-Yul (The



statue of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal.

Dragon Land) and where the Drukpa school has been the official religious doctrine up to today. He established a system of dual government in Bhutan in which political power was vested in an administrative leader, the Druk Desi and religious power was administered by a religious leader, the Je Khempo.

However after the death of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1651, power passed to the ministers instead of the Shabdrung successors. The *ponlops* kept the death of the Shabdrung secret for 54 years. To neutralize the power of future Shabdrung reincarnations, the Druk Desi, Je Khempo and the *ponlops* con-

spired to recognize not a single person but three reincarnations.

In 1907, the *ponlops* orchestrated the establishment of a Bhutanese monarchy with Ugyen Wangchuk, the *ponlop* of Trongtsa, as hereditary king. In 1931, when the 6th Shabdrung, Jigmed Dorje made an appeal to Mahatma Gandhi to oust the monarchy, the Shabdrung was assassinated by royalist forces.

The Monastery

The Monastery of Ralung is subdivided into two parts:

- the great chapel, the Tsuglag Khan which includes other small chapels dedicated to various divinities and almost completely destroyed during the cultural revolution.
- a new part rebuilt in the 80s thanks to contributions from the people of the village, to the work of the monks and contributions from ASIA.

Only ruins are left of the great *chorten* of Ralung about half a kilometer from the Monastery. It was constructed on the model of that of Gyantse and destroyed during the cultural revolution by the Chinese army.

When Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was three years old, the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa recognized him as the mind emanation of

Drug Shabdrung Rinpoche also known as Ngawang Namgyal, who was the first Dharmaraja of Bhutan.

Concerned about the difficult situation in which the Monastery currently finds itself and in which few monks have remained, Rinpoche asked ASIA to build a Study College with the aim of preserving the ancient knowledge of the Drukpa Kagyu school.

What has been done

Since 1997, ASIA has been trying to support the rebuilding of Ralung monastery. Many surveys have already been done in order to prepare a feasible project but unfortunately it is extremely difficult to work in this specific region because of the situation in Tibet.

In 2006, following another feasibility mission, ASIA, along with the monks and some local supporters of Ralung monastery prepared a project proposal for the construction of Ralung Study College.

Future Objectives

- The construction of the Study College complete with a basic infrastructure.
- accommodation for 30 monks;
- a house for the Khenpo;
- a kitchen;



Ralung monastery.

- bathrooms;
- all the necessary equipment.
- The total cost of the project is 300,000 EURO of which 40,000 have already been raised thanks to ASIA-FRANCE.

Long distance sponsorship for the monks
As soon as the Study College is completed, ASIA will start up the long distance sponsorship project for the monks with the aim of



Ralung monastery.

providing educational material, food, basic medical assistance, heating and everything necessary for a monk to lead a fitting life within the Monastery.

What you can do
• You can contribute with a donation for the construction of the Study College for which fund raising has started.

- You can order a statue of the Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal
- As soon as the College is completed, you can start a long distance sponsorship for one monk for three years. ©

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update on asia america activities for 2007

The Khamdogar Project

History
Khamdogar is an ancient community of practitioners founded by Ringdzin Changchub Dorje, the master of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in the early 1900s.

Ringdzin Changchub Dorje, a Dzogchen master and a famous Tertön (discoverer of treasures) lived in this place with his family working as a doctor and transmitted his Teachings in a completely informal manner without creating monasteries or religious structures. Over the years monks and lay people came together around him in order to receive his Teachings and practice, creating a lay community to which each person contributed his or her work.

Near Khamdogar, in an area called Dedrol, there is a cave in which Atha Lhamo, the daughter of Master Changchub Dorje, lived and practiced. After a long period of inactivity due to the Cultural Revolution, the nuns have managed to build a small nunnery and take up their spiritual activities again. At the moment there are 66 nuns who live in retreat for long periods without contact with the outer world.

At present, because of the difficult situation in Tibet, the entire complex of Khamdogar is in ruins and the local people live in conditions of extreme poverty.

Concerned about this situation, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asked Tsegvalgar East to help this community in order to preserve the Teachings transmitted by his Master. ASIA America is collaborating with Tsegvalgar, doing fundraising for this project.

Activities
1) Building a small study and practice college.
Estimated cost \$ 65,945 USD.

- 2) Construction of an aqueduct. Estimated cost \$ 51,290 USD.
- 3) Restoration of the old temple where the Chorten of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje is preserved. Estimated cost \$ 58,620 USD.
- 4) Restoration of the printing house and the Chortens built by Rigdzin Changchub Dorje. Estimated cost \$ 51,290 USD.

The total cost of these works is \$ 227,150 USD.

The objective is to raise these funds as soon as possible and start construction work by spring 2008.

Long Distance Sponsorship of the Nuns
The project to provide ongoing, annual support for the 66 nuns who live in retreat at Dedrol Gompa, has begun.

The objective is to contribute to maintaining support for all 66 nuns in 2008.

What you can do:
Donate
You can contribute with a donation to the construction work, for which fund-raising has already begun.

Become a sponsor and support a nun
With only \$250USD per year (\$21/month) you can provide food, basic medical assistance, educational materials and everything necessary for a nun to have a decent life and meet basic needs.

ASIA America, in collaboration with Tsegvalgar East, has received \$ 30,000 USD in donations during 2006 and 2007 from individuals in the Dzogchen Community and through grants.

We have received Khamdogar brochures from ASIA Italy, which we will send to each North American local Gakyil and practice group to share with people. Gakyils at other Gars should request brochures from ASIA Italy. We should also have an update on the project from ASIA Italy in early 2008. ASIA field officers tried to visit in September, while in Derge, but couldn't due to heavy rains. As you know, access to the region is very difficult, making this one of ASIA's most challenging projects.

Sponsorships - Adoption At A Distance Project
This is one of ASIA's most successful projects. We have raised a significant amount of support for this project, currently facilitating sponsorship of 70 individuals – most are children, the rest are monks and nuns, plus one scholarship for a youth to study beyond the primary level. We have a very generous donor who, single-handedly, sponsors 50 children. We would like to increase our sponsors in 2008 to bring the total to at least 100. **Can you help by finding one friend, family member or colleague who would be interested in becoming a sponsor or by becoming a sponsor yourself?**

So far, we have found only one sponsor for one nun in Khamdogar. We need your help to reach our goal of sponsoring all 66 nuns in 2008.

In addition, there are children in 2 new elementary schools – the new Shala School for girls who are in need of sponsorship.

Upcoming fundraising drives
• Khamdogar Project: collaborating with Tsegvalgar East to continue fundraising and to find sponsors for the nuns. There are 66 and so far we have only one sponsor. The cost is \$250 USD per year.
• Finding sponsors for the young female students of the new Shala School for Girls and the new school in Derge, both of which

are primary schools. The cost is \$360 USD per year.

Staff and volunteers of ASIA America
Since November of 2006, Margherita Pagni (based in California) has offered her skills as an organizational consultant on a pro bono basis to help us strengthen the board, streamline documentation, recruit board members, expand and organize our database of contacts, raise funds, write proposals, and plan in order to build our capacity and sustainability.

We also hired a part time administrative support person in 2007, Oni McKinstry, to clear the backlog and allow us to function more effectively. We are very pleased with her performance and dedication. Oni moved in early December and cannot continue with administrative services thereafter, however, she will consider joining the board once she gets settled.

We have identified and engaged the services of a new Certified Public Accountant, after a thorough search. We also hired a Bookkeeper for the first time. We felt that ASIA has grown to a point where these professional services are necessary, not only to ensure proper and continued financial management but also to free up the board member who has been responsible for these tasks, to go forward with fundraising projects.

Board of ASIA America
Currently we have four board members: Andrea Nasca, Jim Casilio, Nathan Janoff, a new member from New Mexico and Barbara Paparazzo, a new member from Conway, MA. Thank you and welcome Nathan and Barbara!

Carol Fields, who served on the board, stepped down given her many other duties on the Baja project. Thank you, Carol, for your service on the board.

We've done intensive outreach to recruit board members and we'd like to bring our total to seven people who can meet (by phone) once a month on a regular basis.

Please spread the word and help us recruit new board members! Besides monthly phone meetings, we are asking of board members a commitment of at least 5 hours a month to take on some volunteer activity such as fundraising, maintaining contact with sponsors and donors, organizing events, administrative and fiscal oversight, etc. Knowledge of non-profit operations is not essential. Dedication to realizing Rinpoche's goals for ASIA, common sense and ability to work collaboratively and creatively are important.

Building our capacity
We would like to increase our effectiveness in contributing to the activities of ASIA, to continue to serve those minority populations most in need and to fund projects developing infrastructure and services. There is great potential for ASIA America but it will take resources (human and financial) we currently don't possess. **We need more people willing to make a commitment!**

How you can help
Consider becoming a volunteer, a board member, increasing your donation, making a donation or taking on a sponsorship.

Please contact us if you have any questions, would like to make a donation or would like to initiate a sponsorship. *We hope you are all doing very well and have a happy new year!*

Thank you for your ongoing support, without which nothing would be possible!

ASIA America
Post Office Box 124
Conway, MA 01341-0124 USA
413.369.4153 Phone
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ASIA-usa@tsegvalgar.org

international gakyil update

karin eisenegger (red IG)

The new Gakyil of Merigar East is a unique experiment inside the International Dzogchen Community. This experiment includes the Gakyils of different countries that have sent their deputies to contribute with their time and energy in helping to build up a new Gar in Eastern Europe, Merigar East.

Since this unique Gakyil has various countries involved, the International Gakyil has taken on the coordination of the Gakyil and its first meetings. A coordinating person of the International Gakyil will supervise the Gakyil work of Merigar East until the Gonpa at Merigar East is finished and the Gakyil of nine persons has started to work regularly and well on its own.

We are starting with a expansive piece of nearly empty land close to the Black Sea, and there is supposed to be a series of retreats held by our Teacher Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche next summer in a Gonpa there. This is a daunting challenge for this first big Gakyil of Merigar East. ©

complete works of CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

progress update 2007

As the project manager of the project “Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu”, I want to update you about the progress of this project in 2007.

Adriano Clemente, the main translator responsible for this project, has been very busy throughout the whole year and continuously working on various translations:

- The Longsal Teachings book, Volume 7
- The 21 Tara and completed the texts for the retreats in Merigar in summer and autumn 2007.
- The “Book of the Tun and the Ganapuja”
- Initial work on the next issue of the Longsal Teachings, the Longsal 8, which will be published in summer 2008.
- One of the projects for 2008 is the Complete Translation of the Vajra Dance Book

Adriano also found time to work with Elio Guarisco and Jim Valby on some Dzogchen Tantras and had the possibility to work with Rinpoche to clarify several unclear points of difficult texts.

So you see, a busy year is coming to its end, but there is still so much to do, so many texts are still to be checked and translated.

The project “Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu” is entirely financed by donations. Due



merigar east gakyil meeting with yeshi namkhai

On December 8th 2007 the new Gakyil of Merigar East held its first Gakyil Meeting at Merigar East/Romania. Representatives from several other Eastern countries made long journeys to attend. Yana So-

kolova (blue), the representative of the Russian Speaking Gakyil, is missing on this photo – due to bad weather her flight was delayed and she arrived on the evening of the first day of the meeting. Tereza Starkova, representa-



tive for the Czech Republic and Slovakia could not attend, and is also not on the photo.

The photo shows the Gakyil of Merigar East and Yeshe Namkhai visiting the land of Merigar East as part of the activities of the two day Gakyil Meeting:

From left to right: Gregorz Ladra, Poland, Attila Frugyik, Romania, Gabriella Schneider, Romania (Germany), Ida Pazman, Romania, Gekoes



Joe Imre, Vasil Dabrov, Bulgaria, Yeshe Namkhai as representative of the International Gakyil, Zoly Imre, Romania, Sandor Vaszi, Hungary.

In front of the group in a pot is a little Ginkgo tree, brought from Bulgaria for Merigar East and planted in a symbolic act on the birthday of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by the Gakyil at Merigar East. ©

Photos: Karin Eisenegger (red IG)



shang shung institute austria

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

As you probably know, the Shang Shung Institute has a perfect connection to get extraordinarily beautiful, gold plated statues of deities or Dharma protectors, which we use in general for our practice. You may have seen the statues in the webcast of the retreat in November in Merigar, as 9 statues were the main prizes of the raffle of the Shang Shung Institute.

Now we are going to order new statues and I would like to inquire if you are interested in getting one of our statues, so that you can get them as soon as possible.

On our website <http://www.ssi-austria.at/shop/shope45.php> you can see the statues which are have on stock. You can get them right away and they could be a perfect Christmas present. All statues that are currently out of stock will be available soon again.

Next year there will also be available statues of:

- Rahula
- Odser Chenma
- Machig Labdron
- Garuda
- Vajrapani
- Vajrayogini
- Mahakala

The prizes of these statues depend on their size – the statues will be between 8 inch and 12 inch high.

We can guarantee that these statues will have the same quality as the statues we have offered up to now.

Up to now I have received an order for one statue of Dorje Lepga and one statue of Green Tara.

to the generous support of many people over the last years, Adriano receives a small stipend that guarantees him to live a simple life. Also a regular payment for his retirement fund is arranged, so that he will receive a small pension when he is 68 years old.

In order to continue with this project we need your collaboration also in the future. Only through an international collaboration it will be guaranteed that all people of the Dzogchen Community will be able to follow the Teachings of our precious Master in a written form and in a language that we all can understand.

Just think about the enormous treasure that Rinpoche offers us in the Longsal Teachings or the Teachings of Santi Maha Sangha. We are all just so lucky to be able to not only listen to the Teachings, but also to read these words of wisdom in books. Can you imagine preparing for a Santi Maha Sangha test without a book? If you also think that the project “Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu” is important and valuable, please become part of it and support this activity.

For all sponsors I have a very special offer, the “Donation-box with 7 gifts”. For a donation of 430 Euro we will send you all the following marvelous gifts right away directly to your home.

- The booklet “A Dream from the Display of the Moon in the water”. This Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has been printed exclusively for this project and has been distributed only to donors. All in all, there are only 100 prints of this booklet, and each one will be signed with its own number.
- A round silver pendant with the Longsal symbol
- A cone-shaped crystal ball with an A lasered inside
- The latest “Book of the Tun and the Ganapuja”
- A very beautiful Tibetan shoulder bag with an A in a thigle
- A package of Tibetan incense
- A golden Vajra with antique gold plating, 8,6 cm long

Just go to www.completeworks.info and order this “Donation-box with 7 gifts” or donate online at our web safe site.

Please also visit our updated website – you will find a couple of new photos of Rinpoche from the retreats in 2007.

Thank you so much for all your kindness and support,
All the best to you,
Oliver F. Leick
Project manager of the Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
office@completeworks.info
www.completeworks.info

a request from the shang shung institute archives

to gakyil representatives and dzogchen community members

Dear All,
Since 1976, when Rinpoche started giving his precious teachings, the Dzogchen Community has grown larger and larger. Gars and Lings have been founded all over the world. We would like to collect and preserve the memory of this long and valuable process.

We ask your collaboration in providing us with the following information about your area:

- 1) When and where Rinpoche came for the first time to give teachings, public talks or conferences;
- 2) When and where people started to meet to practice together, whether in a private house, Gar or Ling;
- 3) When and where Rinpoche held the first Teaching Retreat. Please make a list of all retreats held in your country until 1998, if possible;
- 4) When and where Yantra Yoga and/or Vajra Dance courses were held;
- 5) When and where a Mandala for the dance was built, if any.

Because personal memories are so important and so subject to impermanence, we also ask you to interview, using a video camera, the people who participated in the birth of your local community. The Australian Community, for example, has already done quite a lot of work in this direction. It would be great if you could also gather pictures, brochures, audio and videotapes related to Rinpoche's teachings and to the life of the Community in general. Places relevant to the history of the Community should be filmed as well.

We suggest that a person be appointed by each Gakyil to be in charge. We are aware of the fact that this project will require quite a lot of time and energy but should you be interested in participating in it we will be available for further practical and technical support.

Any suggestions would be greatly appreciated.
Thanking you in advance for your collaboration we send you all our warmest regards.

Carla Caponi
Shang Shung Institute – Archives and multimedia
c.caponi@istitutoshangshung.org

shang shung institute in america update

Time continues to pass and the seasons progress here in New England with the arrival of winter and colder weather. By the time this Mirror reaches your fingertips and gaze, another semester will have come to a close for the Tibetan Medicine program's two enrolled classes, several monthly public talks will have taken place at the SSI Healing Center, Tibetan language classes continue to be offered, a new class will be embarking on their studies in Tibetan Medicine at the start of the winter semester, and an intensive course in Kunye I will be happening. The quiet ripple of activities with the powerful vision and mission of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, for the preservation of Tibetan culture, continues to span out.

Shang Shung Institute's activities in America continue to grow, with the Institute establishing itself and becoming known domestically and internationally. As many of you already know, the Institute is situated in rural Conway, Massachusetts on the East coast of America and shares space with Tsegyalgar. Many people are still becoming aware of the quiet ripple of amazing activities that are happening in their local area and the rare opportunity that Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, as Director of the Four Year Tibetan Medicine program, started some years ago. With dedication and an emphasis on Tibetan Medicine, the Institute has been offering public talks, intensive courses for those interested in studying more on Tibetan Medicine and its branches, and a committed and thorough four-year program mirrored after traditional training that Tibetan Doctors receive.

At the end of January, the winter semester will be starting and the Tibetan Medicine Program will have its third enrolling class starting their studies. The other two classes; graduating classes 2011 and 2009 will be continuing their studies. The class of 2009 that started in the Fall of 2005 continues its studies in herbal preparations, *Sman Shyor ba*. The class of 2011, which began in the winter of 2007 has completed its first full year and in December were studying *Phel Grib Nad*, increase and decrease of disease. The enthusiasm and dedication of the students is palpable, and the presence of the students has enlivened the Schoolhouse.

In December, the Institute was working to have two new Tibetan Doctors join the faculty of the Tibetan Medicine Four Year Program. Look for the formal announcement in January of these two distinguished teachers joining the School. Additionally, Tibetan language teachers have in-

creased over the year. In the past Fall semester, the Institute had three separate teachers working with students inside the Institute and outside, to those interested in learning Tibetan.

Upcoming Courses
The Institute continues to offer intensive courses in Tibetan Medicine to interested participants.

January 2008:
Tibetan Kunye Massage Level I with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

Summer Intensives 2008:
Tibetan Kunye Massage Level I with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

Tibetan Kunye Massage Level II with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

Check the SSI blog for more details and specific dates or email us: <http://www.shangshung.blogspot.com> or info@shangshung.org

Public Talk
Shang Shung's Healing Center in Northampton, Massachusetts hosts monthly talks on Tibetan Medicine, the first Friday of the month.
February 1st, 7–9 pm
Understanding & Treating Menopause in Tibetan Medicine
In the ancient texts of Tibetan Medicine menopause is included in the chapters on gynecology. There are many types of female disease, but most are connected with the menstrual cycle. In this system they are divided in two: *trag tsab* – early stage menstruation problems and *lung tsab* – that includes chronic problems. Dr. Wangmo will be discussing the view of gynecology and treatment of menopause according to Tibetan Medicine in this course.

The suggested donation for the talks is \$15. Please RSVP at 413 585 1081. Talks are offered at the Shang Shung Tibetan Healing Center 16 Center St. Suite 323 Northampton, MA.
Shang Shung Healing Center in Northampton, MA:
The Healing Center offers in addition to the monthly talk series, Tibetan Medicine Consultations, and Tibetan Kunye Massage. It will also be home to a display of Tibetan Medicine in the future. The Healing Center is beautifully decorated in Tibetan style with artisan pieces including thankas, appliqué artwork, and furniture.

Tibetan Medicine Program
Applications for the Four Year Tibetan Medicine Program can be found online or by contacting us. Applications are received on an on-going basis. Applications for the semester beginning January 30th will still be considered.

For more information go to the website
www.shangshung.org
or contact us directly at info@shangshung.org

Job Posting
Administrative Assistant, Shang Shung Institute of America, Conway, MA
The Shang Shung Institute of America is looking for an administrative assistant to support its office expansion as a non-profit operating in the area of Tibetan culture preservation. We are looking for an independent, self-motivated person committed to build a strong future for the Shang Shung Institute and the Traditional Tibetan Medicine program on the national and international level.

Qualifications:
• Administrative background as office manager with experience in general office operation, proficiency in word, excel, file maker pro [or other equivalent database];
• Ability to work with web and graphic applications welcomed;
• Ability to both work independently and interact with the Shang Shung USA Board of Directors;
• Excellent communications skills, facility in multi-tasking and communicate with a diverse population. Strong writing skills a plus.

Tasks will include, but may not be limited to:
1. Implement an annual marketing plan in a timely manner coordinating the design and production of publications (brochures, posters, flyers, on-line announcements, & newsletter); direct mailings to local, regional and national venues promoting SSI programs and mission; design and placement of ads; writing and sending press releases;

2. Participation in the recruitment of students for the 4-year Tibetan Medicine course: sending out information to prospective students answering inquiries, processing applications and maintaining the pertinent records on file; liaison between students and faculty;

3. Revision, development and consolidation of office procedures and protocols finalized to the maintenance of the Institute's records and documents, as well as the donors and SSI members database, including any related correspondence;

4. Processing and filling of the orders from the SSI online store keeping the pertinent documentation on file;

5. Attending and keeping track of all board meeting minutes and distribution of formal board communications and in general being the point person for Students, faculty, and BOD.

6. Special Projects: as requested.

To apply please email your cover letter and resume at paola@shangshung.org
Or fax it at 413-369-4473.
Position will be filled as soon as a qualified candidate is found. In you cover letter, please refer to your date of availability and your pertinent skills. Also please include the contact information of references that can attest to your professional skills and experience. Applicants must provide their own lodging and be able to work legally in the United States. ©

Shang Shung Institute in America
PO Box 278
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Conway, MA 01341
Telephone: 413-369-4928
Fax: 413-369-4473
www.shangshung.org

the shang shung institute is happy to announce:

tibetan moxa courses

1st Level course on the Moxabustion from February 15–16–17 2008 led by Elio Guarisco. The cost is 150 Euros

2nd Level course on the Moxabustion from February 29 to March 1–2 2008 led by Elio Guarisco. The cost is 150 Euros.

3rd Level course on the Moxabustion from March 15–16–17 2008 led by Elio Guarisco. The cost is 150 Euros.

Elio Guarisco
Elio was born in Italy in 1954 and grew up in Como, Italy. He received a Master of Arts degree and traveled to India to study Buddhism where he learned Tibetan language and Buddhist philosophy under one of the Dalai Lama's philosophical advisors. Elio joined the Dzogchen Community in 1986. Invited by Kalu Rinpoche, Elio spent almost twenty years in India working on the large Encyclopedia on Indo Tibetan Knowledge known as *shes bya kun khyab* authored by Kongtrul the Great, which has been published by Snow Lion Publications. During this time Elio kept up an active collaboration with the Dzogchen Community and especially with the Shang Shung Institute in Italy, of which he is one of the founding members. He worked on translations for the Shang Shung Institute in Italy, including books by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu related to Tibetan Medicine. Elio has also actively followed the Santi Maha Sangha training, and became an authorized teacher of the Base and First level. Since 2003, Elio has been engaged in the Ka-ter project of the Shang Shung Institute of Austria, as well as an instructor of the Training for Translators from Tibetan and the Dzogchen Tantra Translation Project. ©

meeting with a mahasiddha

NALUNG NYONPA,
the crazy man of nalung

transcription of a teaching by master
CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

(merigar june 9, 2006)

Some people say that Mahasiddha means “crazy,” mad, but the significance is actually a little different because mahasiddhas are beings who are beyond ordinary limitations. These beings no longer have dualistic vision; we are the ones with dualistic vision. They are not in dualism because for them everything is normal. From our viewpoint everything is different, if a person does something fantastic, we say, “Oh, he is a mahasiddha!” If we do not consider what he does fantastic, then we say that he is mad.

When I was in college in my country I heard there was a mad practitioner, but two or three years later people said that he was a mahasiddha. He had been an ordinary monk of the Sakya-pa tradition, but when he was in the monastery he didn’t do everything in a correct way; he did something wrong, and the monastery expelled him. Later he said that even though the monastery had expelled him, he wanted to be in a place where he could see the monastery, which showed a kind of attachment.

He was living there with a lady friend, and this was the original reason he had been expelled, but he was not living in an ordinary way. He was doing a personal retreat. The lady was also doing service and practices; she had some animals producing milk and yogurt, providing them with food. For many years they lived there.

He was very interested in doing a practice of Vajrayogini in the Sakyapa tradition, particularly the one called Tsarpa, which is a very nice practice of Vajrayogini. When I received this practice I also was very interested in doing it! He did this practice for many years there, and one day he became crazy. Everybody thought that he had gone crazy.

He said to this lady, “You can live here or you can go away to live your life, but I don’t want to stay here.”

In that place where he had done many years in retreat, there was also a very nice statue of Vajrayogini, and he threw it out of the window. The statue was made of clay and herbal medicines, so of course when he threw it, it broke. After that he ran away.

He had no contact anymore with this lady, and nobody knew where he was for many years.

People said this place was called Nalung, originally Nalung Tsampa, Tsampa means retreat, or people who do retreat. Later they said Nalung Nyonpa – Nyonpa means “crazy,” thus the crazy man of Nalung.

I heard this story when I was in college because there was a student there who had come from his monastery telling this story of Nalung Nyonpa, and after two or three years they said, “This is a great mahasiddha.”

One day my uncle was going to visit this mahasiddha, and he asked me if I want to go with him, so I asked my teacher at the college for permission to go, and he said yes.

I went with my uncle to see this great mahasiddha; we traveled many days by horse, it was wintertime, very cold, very difficult, and finally we arrived in that country. Many people said, “It is better you don’t go there because this Nalung mahasiddha (now he was called a mahasiddha) is living on the mountain. One year ago some hunters discovered him; before nobody knew he was living there. A few weeks ago a very important Kagyupa reincarnation went to see this mahasiddha, and when he arrived there the mahasiddha threw stones at him, and he had to run away. Also it is very dangerous and very difficult to get to the top of the mountain because there is no real road.”

Then we said, “What we should do?” We discovered that there were some relatives of this mahasiddha around, and people said we should contact them, that there was a brother who could perhaps help us to figure out how to proceed, how to get there, and so we contacted him.

My uncle was a very famous lama and many people were coming to pay their respects to him. When they met us, these people said, “You cannot understand what this mahasiddha is saying because of the dialect; it is very difficult to understand because he speaks a very difficult language.” His brother didn’t want to come with us because he was very afraid, but he agreed to take us on the road that gets one close by.

We went that way very slowly and each day we walked for many hours. My uncle was very fat; he couldn’t walk very much, so we would walk just a little, then rest, etc. After midday, when we had



Shantinopa.

almost gotten there, this man said, “Now you go up here on to the top of this place from which you can see the top of the mountain where my brother is staying,” and he went away.

Then we went, slowly, resting sometimes, and we arrived at the place he had indicated, and then on the top of this mountain we saw, not really a house, but just stones placed around, and holes covered with dry bushes. At that point we looked inside and we saw someone moving and we could hear talking; we went slowly ahead.

Also they said there were very dangerous dogs, but they didn’t attack us.

As we were approaching the mahasiddha saw us through a hole, and immediately he went to sleep and covered himself with a big blanket. We kept coming closer very slowly, and when we arrived at this hole, we waited there, and after a while he opened the blanket just a little and he got up, came out from under the blanket and sat there looking at us. I felt very afraid because he had very strange hair, red eyes, and was a very dark color because he was living in a very windy place at the top of the mountain.

So then we sat there looking, because there was nothing to do. After a little while my uncle went inside through a nearby hole that was bigger, and he offered some sweet seeds that he brought with him, and the mahasiddha took some and then he gave them back.

And then my uncle still stayed there. The mahasiddha had a vase for his urine, and he gave this vase to my uncle. So my uncle went outside with this vase, and our monks were preparing this urine that we wanted to carry away, and then my uncle said to me, “Now you enter!” I went in and I had some biscuits to offer. He took two or three biscuits. Near where he was sitting, there was a bowl where he put the biscuits, and I gradually looked into

about Mahamaya, we couldn’t understand.

After a quarter of hour of talking, he stopped and he looked with his strange eyes at my uncle, and gesturing with his finger he said: “Go there!” We understood that he had indicated that my uncle should go that direction, but we stayed put.

We didn’t know why we should go there. He repeated, and again we didn’t move, so he said, “It’s better you go!” We felt afraid! I said to my uncle, “It’s better we go!”

Slowly we went away, but we didn’t go in the same direction from which we had come, because he had directed us in a different direction with his finger, therefore we went that way, going in that direction as much as possible. After a while we had to go onto a slightly lower path, and proceeding on that lower path we arrived at a rock and a small forest of trees, and at that point we couldn’t go on in that direction anymore. We didn’t know what to do. My uncle was very tired; he decided to rest there, and I agreed that we would rest there for a while.

After that I went down with the other monks, checking the path, and there was another rock, so we kept going down slowly and then we heard someone crying. We went back to my uncle to tell him what we had heard. My uncle told the other monks to go down quickly and check what was going on. I went slowly down with my uncle and when we arrived there, there was a hunter who had fallen down between rocks and had broken his leg. He couldn’t move. We asked, “Where is your family?” and then we sent some young monks to search for his family.

My uncle and I continued slowly down, and meanwhile the other monks found the family of the hunter and they went to help him and brought him back home.

So that is the story how we visited the mahasiddha. ✱

Engl. Transcription: Michela Martello
Reprinted with permission from The Merigar Letter, Number 5 Year II, October 2006



House for Sale

Charming house for sale, 20 minutes from Merigar. Stone house, 95 sqm, facing Southwest, completely restored with traditional materials and biological products + methods. Ready to live in. More info at caroline.pirovano@tiscali.it

thog chag (thogs.lcags)

ancient amulets from tibet

giorgio dallorto
translated by liz granger

reprinted with additional material
from merigar letter, october 2005

In the summer of 1988 at Khyung Lung, not far from Mount Kailash in Eastern Tibet, Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had a dream of clarity about the remains of a Chorten from the time of Trenpa Namkha.

The following day, while they were filming the ruins of an ancient Bonpo monastery called Shang Shung, he identified the remains of the Chorten he had dreamt about in a mound of



earth. Just as in the dream, he found a hole in which he found a metallic object: an ancient metal garuda, a splendid thog.chag.

Thog.chag are small metallic ornaments which have been cast in brass, in bronze or in meteoritic metal by the traditional method of “the lost wax process”. In this method the shape of the thog.chag is modeled in wax which is then given a coating of clay all over. After dissolving the wax away by heating, molten metal is poured into the cavity and when the metal is sufficiently cooled, the clay mould is broken off in order to reveal the cast image.

There are a great variety of models from different periods, starting with the Neolithic in the Bronze Age and going up to the Middle Ages. Once can find similarities between thog.chag and ornaments of various manufactures throughout the ancient cultures of the Central Asian Steppes.

Thog.chag are small objects whose size varies from about 1 to 10 cm. Originally almost all of them were designed as amulets even if, in the course of time, as ancient metal handmade objects were found such as spoons, small mirrors, melongs, arrow heads, pieces of antique armour, etc., they also came to be considered as thog.chag.

The old thog.chag were distinctive for their simplicity, uniqueness and great originality, fruit of the splendid culture of ancient Tibet; they were made of a porous metal that was soft to the touch while being oily at the same time.



Today thog.chag are diffused in innumerable copies since they can be produced on a large scale by means of moulds. These ‘negative’ moulds are created from hard wax moulds into which a metal object has been impressed.

Positive moulds are then formed from pressing soft wax into the negative mould: these positive moulds are then used to make a lost-wax casting. The “master” negative mould can last many years thus explaining the great number of identical copies of many thog.chag found today.

This easy method of manufacturing thog.chag gives the modern industry the possibility of supplying reproductions cast from moulds of authentic pieces and filling the market with modern duplicates.

The Tibetans have always associated the realization of their desires with these small bronze ornaments. There is a legend that tells how the divinities transmitted their magical power into thunder, which they hurled with all their might into the bowels of the Earth, where this energy was transformed into metallic objects. According to the legend, in successive eras, these objects would emerge from the earth and those who wore them would be protected from thunder and the provocations of evil spirits.

In Tibetan the term ‘thog.chag’ is made up of two syllables (‘thog’ and ‘chag’); ‘thog’ stands for ‘sky’ or ‘thunder’, while ‘chag’ means ‘metal’ or something metallic. This explains the widespread belief among the Tibetans that these objects are linked to thunder and lightning. Most probably the word ‘thog.chag’ actually means ‘original metal’, a theory which is supported by the fact that various implements from the stone age were called ‘thog.di’ or ‘thog.de’ which means ‘primordial stone’. Hence thog.chag were considered as ‘primordial’ or prehistoric metal.

Evidently the Tibetans readily accept as thog.chag certain small amulets that have been cast in copper alloys using prehistoric bronze. These should be distinguished from those in meteoritic iron called nam.chag (gnam.lcags) which literally means ‘iron fallen from the sky’. Iron fallen from the sky or nam.chag is a ferrous type of metal which has been produced in the atmosphere by the power of wind and fire and is therefore a solid substance not extracted from the earth.

In the 7th century, Padmasambhava subjugated negative powers and local spirits transforming them into protectors of the Dharma. Dorje Legpa was one of these spirits who, once he had been transformed into damchen and had become a protector of the Dharma, had a specific duty to re-forge objects of supernatural power from pure sky metal that Padmasambhava would conceal as Terma.

Most thog.chag, just like many statues of divinities forged in



Tibet, are in brass or an alloy mainly composed of copper with zinc added. To be considered real brass the proportion of zinc should be more than 7% even if the proportion of zinc usually found in thog.chag is about 20–30%. Zinc is used because it makes copper alloy harder and at the same time gives it a more golden colour.

In Tibet, thog.chag are classified in eight categories on the basis of their colour, which is the result of their metallic contents and varies according to the percentage of the different alloys. For example, the more gold there is in the alloy, the brighter the amulet will shine.

The eight categories, however, can be subdivided into three classes according to the prevalence of bronze, brass or baitong. Baitong is an alloy composed of copper, nickel and zinc which gives a silvery hue due also due to the continuous rubbing on the skin of the amulet’s owner.

The Tibetan terms which indicate copper alloys are: li-mar (composed of ‘li’ for ‘copper’ and ‘mar’ for ‘red’) and li-kar (‘li’ for ‘copper’ and ‘kar’ for ‘clear’). In li-kar, the alloy contains a good quantity of zinc for which reason it is similar to baitong.

Examining the three above-mentioned classes closely, we should consider that in order to be defined as such the bronze class must contain up to 20% tin. Tin is also used in an essential way in the fusion of bells and cymbals. Thus a great quantity of thog.chag were created with the same metal as bells whose distinctive characteristics were a white hue and a ringing sound when they are left to fall on the ground. This sound is still often considered by Tibetans as an important criterion in verifying authenticity. The metal also gives the thog.chag a therapeutic value because the skin absorbs the minerals that are necessary for the body’s requirements.

The most antique thog.chag come from the pre-Buddhist era and represent an animal-shaped form that was typical of the ancient art of the Central Asian Steppes, with a symbolism explicitly shamanic. With the first spread of Buddhism, forms and images appeared that were strongly influenced by the Indian style with figures or symbols typically Buddhist: Vajrapani, Chenresig, bodhisattvas, mantras, vajras, shells, infinite knots, etc.

The main animal-shaped icons are the eagle (khyung) and the lion, regal symbols par excellence in all traditions. Khyung is also the ancient Tibetan name for the garuda, which is called Shung in the language of Shang Shung.

At Khyung Lung or the Valley of the Garuda, near Lake Manasarovar, in the midst of a surreal lunar landscape, lies the main residence of Ligmigya, the last king of Shang Shung. It is called Khyunglung Ngulkar, the silver castle of the Khyung eagle. In both the ancient Bon and Buddhist traditions, the garuda is one of the most important divinities which, in brief, symbolizes the power of the energy represented



by the fire element.

And it was in the area of this ancient castle that Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu found the thog.chag in the form of a garuda which, however, was mysterious-



ly lost along with all his luggage during his return trip. Today all that remains of that garuda is an image in the film that was shot during those days at Khyung Lung.

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Since the time of Giuseppe Tucci and



the appearance of the first written data on thog.chag in “Transhimalaya” (Nagel Publishers 1973 Switzerland), many books and articles on thog.chag have been published. However, two of the most outstanding texts are “Antique Tibetan Thogchags and Seals” (Lin Tung-Kuang, Taiwan 2003) and “Tibetische Amulette aus Himmels-Eisen” (Gudrun John, VML 2006). The latter is the most complete work on thog.chag to have appeared internationally up to now and is lavishly illustrated and full of technical information. We very much look forward to seeing an English translation of this book in the near future. ©

b o d h i

THE VOICE OF VAJRAYANA BUDDHISM

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Adventures

10

the return of the cuckoo
or morels in tibetdaniel winkler
mushrooming.com

One early morning in Riwoche, I was awoken out of deep sleep by a very intense and insistent call: coo-cooooo, coo-cooooo, coo-cooooo. Right outside of my room, a mildewy government-guestroom for visiting officials tucked into some former storage facility, a cuckoo was perched in a poplar tree. I recognized the call of the cuckoo right away, as does every person that has heard it once in his lifetime. It transported me right away back into my childhood and my beloved Bavarian mountain forests. I was completely surprised to hear the cuckoo in Tibet, but then I remembered that there is the famous Dzogchen teaching “The Cuckoo Call of the State of Awareness”. However, it is not just the cuckoo’s call that makes this bird unique. The cuckoo has developed a very interesting reproductive strategy: outsourcing the raising of its offspring. The mother lays her eggs in the nests of other singing birds, often a fraction of this pigeon-sized bird. I would not wish any bird a cuckoo’s egg in its nest. Once hatched, the cuckoo chick kicks out all other eggs or chicks, and within weeks outgrows his adopted parental unit that must feel really confused about the look of their murderous ugly duckling. The tiny parents hardly manage to keep the little monster fed; its open beak is much bigger than their whole head.

The night before, I came across heaps of fresh morels on bamboo mats and strings of morels that were hung for drying on Riwoche’s main street. The call of the cuckoo beautifully illustrated why Tibetans call morels *gugu shamo*, ‘the cuckoo mushroom’. I had known for years the name *gugu shamo*, but I had no clue where it came from. Just two days earlier I had learned its meaning from a forester who knew his mushrooms. The morel is named after the cuckoo since both appear in spring.

The cuckoo as a messenger of spring is common knowledge in Tibet. As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu writes¹, “When the cuckoo sings everybody is happy because finally the ice and snow of winter are beginning to melt. Spring arrives and plants begin to grow. Poor thin animals like yaks and horses which had very little to eat in the snow are now certain that they will not die. Tibetans who have not heard the cuckoo will go to the mountains to look for one. It has to do with the Tibetan psychology. There is even a name for a person who has not heard the cuckoo for a long time, called *chawön* (*bya ‘ön*), given to those who are ‘deaf to the cuckoo’, who have illnesses such as low blood pressure. Such a person is actually asked to go in search

of a cuckoo to hear it. Surely it is not the voice of the cuckoo that serves the medical purpose.” As a messenger of spring the cuckoo is also regarded as a bringer of amorous yearnings, as in this famous poem by the Sixth Dalai Lama:

The cuckoo returns
From the land of Mon²
Bringing rains for the dry fields.
Having now met my beloved
I relax in bliss and tranquility.

The cuckoo is in high esteem in Tibetan songs and literature, as it was also in ancient Indian poetry, where it was known as Kokila. It is regarded as a divine and royal bird and magical powers were attributed to it. In a famous Tibetan parable, the cuckoo appears as a manifestation of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of compassion, expounding the Dharma to an assembly of all birds of Tibet.³ All this clearly demonstrates that Vairochana did probably not think of succulent morels floating in thukpa soup when he composed *Rigpa Khujug*, *The Cuckoo Call of the State of Awareness*, which is also known as the Six Vajra Verses. In Vairochana’s text the cuckoo is referred to as *kjug* (*khu byug*), while the “morel’s cuckoo” is known as “*gugu*” (from Tibetan *bya gu gu*, “*gugu bird*”), however both names are onomatopoeic, a vocal imitation of the unique call of the cuckoo, as its name is in most languages. As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu points out Vairochana, a contemporary of Padmasambhava, and who is regarded by many as the first Tibetan-born Dzogchen master, invoked the cuckoo because of its symbolic meaning. Thus, just as the cuckoo “invokes” spring, the long desired resurgence of light and life, the dawning of *Rigpa*, our innate pure awareness, invokes the enlightened state, the return to our mind’s luminosity.

For centuries Tibetans have collected and traded culinary and medicinal mushrooms. However, during the 1960s to the mid 1980s the Chinese government imposed quotas, which forced locals to collect prescribed amounts, and often paid ridiculously low prices taking away incentives to engage in the trade. In the late 1980s, the mushroom trade was fully back in the hands of rural people and the export to the Chinese lowlands increased. In the 1990s, the global market found its way up to the Tibetan Plateau offering lucrative prices for a few selected species.

Now a very vital mushroom trade thrives in Tibet. Foremost to mention is *yartsa gunbu*, the caterpillar fungus (*Cordyceps sinensis*), which is collected about



Morchella, March 2007.

Photo: Daniel Winkler

the same time in April or May or early June, just as the morel. In addition, the collection of culinary mushrooms like the golden “*sersha*” (*Floccularia luteovirens*), “*shadro*” (hawk wing, *Sarcodon imbricatus*), “*karsha*” (button mushroom, *Agaricus campestris*), and “*shi gong*” (a Caesar’s mushroom, *Amanita hemibapha*) have a long history. For export to China, the caterpillar fungus and wood ears (*Auricularia* spp.) had great traditional importance. The whole culinary fungal trade mushroomed like crazy once Japanese dealers realized that their beloved matsutake (*Tricholoma matsutake*, known in Tibet as “*beshing shamo*” or short “*besha*”, which means “oak mushroom”) was being traded for cheap on markets in East Tibet. Within a few years in the early 1990s, matsutake collection increased dramatically and an export industry was created that managed to supply fresh mushrooms from absolutely remote rugged mountain valleys to urban Japanese consumers. This trade even brought electricity to remote villages in order to produce ice for cooling the matsutake on their way to the next airport.

Morels do not need any sophisticated cooling, since they are traded dried. The morel trade just hopped the running matsutake express, using its established lines of communication. In 1997 and 1998, I saw no trace of morel trade in Riwoche. Most Tibetans were not yet aware of the value of morels, let alone delicacy of morels. In Riwoche as in most areas of Kham, I have not found a Tibetan who stated

that morels were traditionally consumed. It seems that in the past, morels and Khampas hardly mixed but by accident in the woods. When I returned eight years later for mushroom market research to Riwoche, several Chinese and Muslim run stores bought morels from local Tibetans collectors.

I was able to observe first hand how the morel trade established itself in the early years of this millennia in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan. I first came to Nyarong in 2001 to look for ways to help the forest bureau to integrate local Tibetans into reforestation work and to introduce fruit tree growing, since logging was prohibited in 1998. The logging industry was in the hands of lowland Chinese who were brought in by the thousands and lived in their “China towns” somewhere in the middle of rural Tibet. Now, many of these Chinese workers were sent back home and the forest bureaus realized that they better cooperate with locals, because the Tibetans could be hired seasonally and for much less. In addition, the Tibetans loved the new grazing grounds that clearcuts offered their livestock, which was the major threat to reforestation.

To my complete surprise, I came upon bags of dried morels at the forest department in Nyarong town, apparently some unofficial sideline business. At this point, I had already collected data on the caterpillar fungus and matsutake trade, but had not heard anything about morels in Tibet. I learned that in this remote county, back then far off from any paved road, not



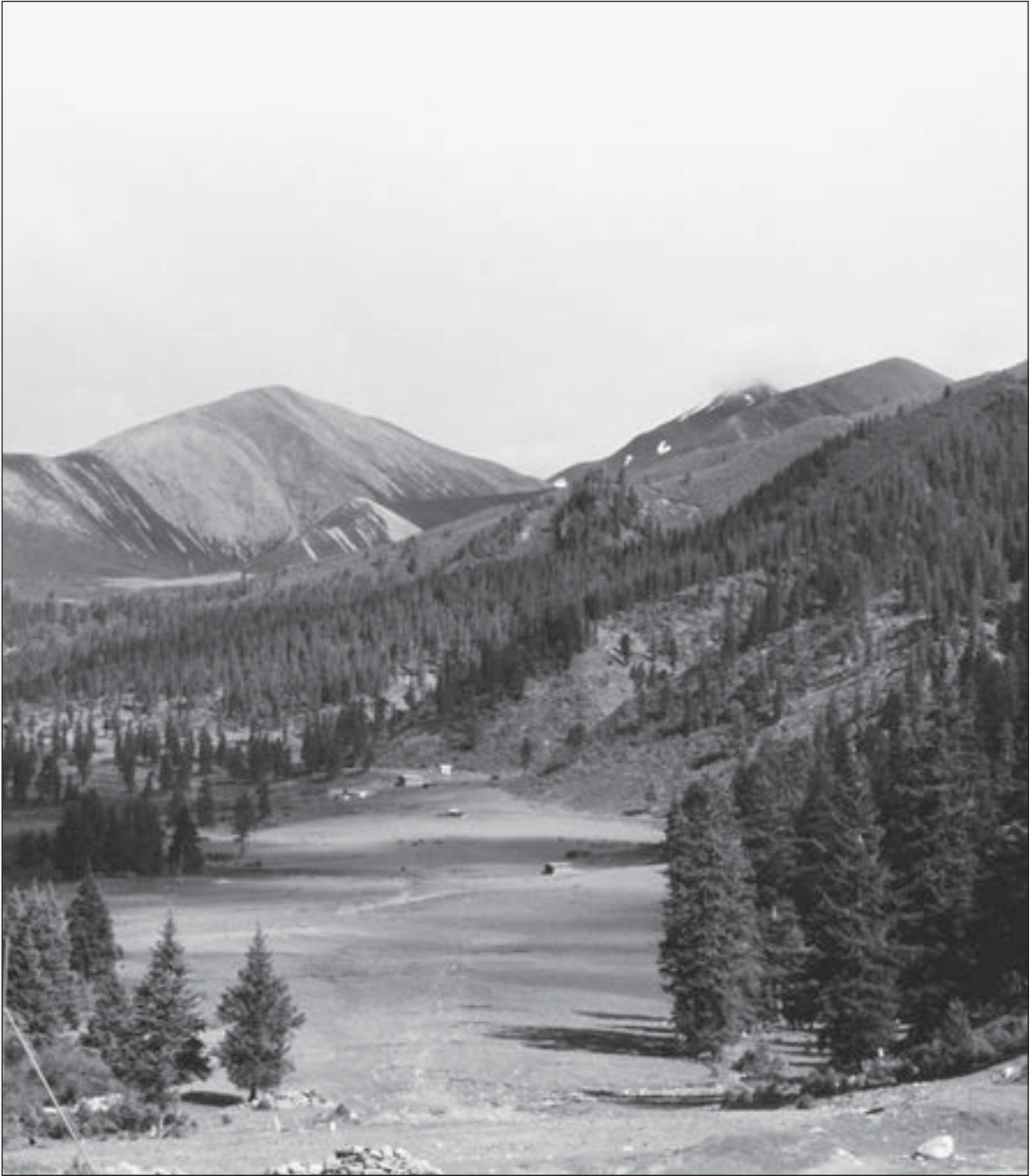
Bonpo.

Photo: Daniel Winkler

to mention railways or airports, morel buyers had shown up the first time in 1999, after morels where “discovered” in neighboring Kangding County, “only” a 10 hour dirt road drive away. The discoverers were mushroom buyers from Yunnan Province looking for new sources for morels. Once they had confirmed their assumption about morel presence, they talked to local mushroom dealers and encouraged them to spread the word that there was a precious fungus. They taught some of the dealers when and where to find morels and guaranteed them a price, so that they could offer collectors good money for their first harvest.

Everything seemed going great until some cunning or upset collectors figured out how to insert stones into the hollow morels and thus increase their weight substantially – in other words, low moral values made high morel value. This did not fly well with the buyers – the market take-off came to abrupt crash late in the 2000 season and nasty scenes followed. The Nyarongpas had lost many buyers and the result was much lower prices. When I returned in 2002, the events of 2000 were still in everybody’s mind, but the 2001 season went well enough that Nyarongpas kept collecting and were hoping for more dealers to come by to drive prices back up. Collectors received ¥35 per metric pound (¥7.5=US\$1, ¥10=€1, no € equivalents are given for Yuan since the rate of 1:10 is easy) of fresh black morels (*Morchella elata* group and *M. conica*), but I was told that premium whitish morels (*Morchella esculenta* and relatives) would fetch ¥60–70 (US\$ 6.50–8) per pound.

Morel export industries have developed in the western Himalayas (Pakistan & India) since the 1950s, Nepal and Bhutan followed suite much later and finally morel export mushroomed in the 1990, now accessing also fungal resources in China and Tibet. Morels grow in temperate forests that overall do not look much different from conifer-dominated mountain forests in North America or temperate Eurasia. In Tibet and the Himalayas these forests are dominated by spruce, fir and juniper species; but broad-leaved trees such as



Riwoche Forest Pasture.

Photo: Daniel Winkler

aspen or poplars, willow, birch and evergreen oaks also occur.

Having been told by Khampa Tibetans that morels were traditionally not known to be edible, I was quite surprised when Bonpo, a father of nine children in Kadak village, Pome County in Kongpo (currently Nyingchi Prefecture, Tibet AR), told me that already his great grandparents knew of the delicacy of cooked morels and collected them way before the Chinese take over in the 1950s. Looking back, I realize I should not have been that surprised to find out that traditional mushroom knowledge has a distinct local character. Since Kongpo has some of the warmest and lowest-laying valleys in Tibet locals collect gugu shamo in March and April. Bonpo collects his morels in grassy sites around a range of different trees. During a normal day he finds about a pound a day, but some days up to five or six pounds of fresh gugu shamo. All in all Bonpo might find with the help of one or two of his kids 50–200 pounds per season, which shrivel down to 5 to 20 pounds when dried out, netting his household ¥1750–¥7000 a year. The cash made from morel hunting in addition to money made from matsutake hunting enabled Bonpo to buy a truck, he now uses for all kinds of transport jobs, when he is not collecting mushrooms.

Another time I ran into morels was in Nulang, Nyingchi County, a tiny roadside stop that had mushroomed due to its restaurants specialized in serving

locally grown and collected delicacies. I was just facing such a delight in form of black-skinned chicken feet floating atop the chicken-orchid root soup. I had heard about the orchid root for a week now. Luorong, a Tibetan co-researcher, was fascinated by the restaurant business that developed around the “palm-mushroom” as it was called by the newly settled Sichuan Chinese. I was quite disappointed to find out that in reality it was a bogus fungus, since this starchy root belonged to an orchid. Although these well-clawed, black-skinned feet did not trigger my appetite, I knew I had morel and king bolete dishes coming my way, so I was able to indulge in my culturally acquired food limitations. Mr. He, the Sichuanese innkeeper, had seen the glow in my eyes and the afterglow of the camera flash when he had brought the big strand of morels from storage to the kitchen. Once I had worn him out with my insatiable fungal curiosity he introduced me to Dorje, a Tibetan from impoverished rural Shigatse, who spends most of his year here in Kongpo, making a slim but free living by hunting mushrooms and medicinals while avoiding close encounters with competing Himalayan black bears. He had tried his luck as a rickshaw driver for some years, but said the meager earnings from cycling around Chinese, Tibetans and tourists through the exhaust in Lhasa left him literally hungry and sick.

Out here in the densely forested countryside, Dorje’s year is structured by the collection seasons. In May and June Dorje and his wife collect mostly mushrooms, “gugu shamo” (morels) and “yartsa gunbu” (caterpillar fungus), which provide most of their income. In July, “besha” (matsutake) and boletes follow and at the same time “wangla” (*Gymnadenia*) collection commences. Wangla is the hand-shaped root of an orchid common in wet alpine meadows. It is used as a medicinal in Tibet, but Dorje collects it as a special ingredient to the famous local chicken soup. He also digs “dungpo”, the tubers of another much more precious medicinal orchid (*Gastrodia elata*) for the Chinese market, where it is known as tianma, “heavenly hemp”. At the end of summer, “kanla metok”, the snow lotus (*Saussurea medusa*), a compositae displaying a fractal-like structured downy inflorescence, is collected high up in the alpine zone. In late fall, Dorje works at a lumber yard where he makes ¥12 (US\$1.50) per day loading timber trucks, the same amount he fetches for one excellent specimen of yartsa gunbu he collects in May [which adds up to a kilogram price of ¥30,000–¥80,000 (US\$ 3,750–10,000)].

Morels do not fetch money anywhere near the elusive caterpillar fungus: about ¥600–¥800 (US\$80–112) per kilogram for dried whole specimens in the Tibetan hinterland. Down in Yunnan Province, where so far

most of the Tibetan morels have been exported to, a kilogram can fetch ¥1200–1500 (US\$160–200). At the vegetable market in Kunming, Yunnan’s capital, small amounts were sold for a kilogram equivalent of ¥2500 (US\$330) in July 2007. Overall, the price for morels seems to be relative stable in Tibet through the years. Although the prize is dictated by a global market, morels are appreciated by Chinese consumers as well. In China, morels are not only regarded as food, but also as a myco-medicinal. Recent western research indicates that morels have immuno-modulating compounds. One buyer told me that the annual export from Yunnan to Europe is about 30t, but so far I could not verify that. Figures and estimates I collected from several counties in Kongpo report local production of 500–2000 kg per season, which would indicate a Tibetan Plateau harvest anywhere from 25 t–100 t but these are very rough guesstimates.

Most of the morels are destined for Germany and France, where for centuries morels have been collected and enjoyed as a delicacy. In Germany and France, so far no one has heard about the Tibetan name for the morel “gugu shamo”, but everyone has heard about the cuckoo. In Germany, little kids call “coo-cooock” when hiding to attract the searcher, just as American kids play peek-a-boo. How helpful it would be if the “cuckoo mushroom” would issue a similar call alerting the pothunter to its hiding place! In French as in English “coucou” is commonly used to denote a person as crazy. Hobby linguists with severe myco-vision, a condition fungo-fanatics are too often susceptible to, would suggest that the term “coucou” surely originates from the coincidental return of the cuckoo from its African winter quarters and the return of the


morel initiating the new year’s morel hunting craze. ©

Daniel Winkler works as researcher and NGO consultant on environmental issues of the Tibetan Plateau and Himalayas for nearly 20 years. He has published on forest ecology, traditional land-use practices, medicinal plants and in recent years mostly on mushrooms, especially *Cordyceps sinensis*. Daniel’s articles and photo essays are also published on his webpages. Daniel is also leading mushroom trips to Tibet (www.MushRoaming.com) including a hunt for caterpillar fungus and morels in late May 2008.

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the ling that unifies everyone

kundusling, barcelona

liz granger

During the November 2007 retreat given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Barcelona, he visited and inaugurated the new Spanish Ling in the city. In the past Rinpoche spoke about the Spanish Community finding a place and last year he donated a thanka to the group. After viewing and considering at length different places and possibilities for the Ling, the Community finally decided on renting a bright spacious area at the top of a building in the old Gothic center of the city.

Getting to the Ling meant a long slow climb up several flights of stairs (with pauses at each landing and a welcoming chair) and on his way up Rinpoche was entertained by a classical guitarist who played pieces specially written for the occasion. On reaching the top floor, the Ling is a very enjoyable surprise opening into a large wood-floored room – wide enough for a Vajra Dance Mandala – surrounded by enormous high windows giving a wide view over the Barcelona skyline and a wonderful opportunity to enjoy sky and sun without interruption.

The main room was flanked by two other smaller rooms, which will serve as an office space and a kitchen area for preparing Ganapuja.

Rinpoche's Barcelona students had decked out the hall beautifully for the occasion with strings of colored prayer flags, thankas and a small altar and a large number of participants from the Barcelona retreat, both Spanish and from abroad, filled it to capacity to welcome Rinpoche there.

The Master opened the inauguration by reciting prayers to send away negativities and then did a short tun together with those gathered. Then he presented two handwritten cards to the Barcelona Gakyil, one of them with the name for the new

Ling – Kundusling. The Master explained that *kun* means everything or everyone and *dus* means unified. He went on to say that from the time of the first big retreat in Barcelona in 2005, people had participated from all over the world because they found it easy to come there so it was easy to unify people here. He added that for this reason there would continue to be retreats here in the future and that he had already included Barcelona in his program for 2008.

The second card that he gave the Gakyil had the date of the 'birth' of Kundusling on it – 3924, the year of the *mewa*. He said that it was important to remember the date of the inauguration for the future, if; for example, they want to celebrate the anniversary of the Ling or make a *namkha* for it.

During the event Lama Wangchen from Tibet House arrived to greet Rinpoche and speak to those present saying how fortunate they were to have Rinpoche present and how important it was to practice.

After the 'official' moments were concluded, the evening went ahead merrily with snacks, drinks and plenty of music provided by the Barcelona students.



Photo: Romain Piro

looking for the ling in spain

barcelona, tuesday november 27th, 2007

Peter Guest and Adela Moragas from the Spanish Gakyil talk to The Mirror about the story of locating Kundusling, the new Spanish Ling in Barcelona

The Mirror: Where did the idea come from to have a Ling in Spain?

Peter & Adela: The original idea came from Rinpoche. For some time we had been practicing at different people's houses and also at people's work places. Then after the first big retreat was held in Spain in 2005, membership went up from 40 people in all of Spain to about 170 so the need to have a space to meet became apparent immediately.

Last summer we went to see Rinpoche during a retreat at Merigar West and told him that we had a lot more members now and that we were thinking of getting a place to meet and practice and have webcasts because it would better for everyone. Also, at the Barcelona retreats a lot of new people would ask where we were located. Rinpoche suggested that if we could find a place in town it would be easier for people

to get to and to organize properly. Even so, he said, it would be difficult at the beginning.

So when we came back to Barcelona we sent out e-mails asking people to start looking for a place that could serve as a Ling. At our Gakyil meetings we decided to look for a place in Barcelona because about 80% of Spanish practitioners live in Barcelona or nearby.

About half a dozen people trailed around town looking at places after the Gakyil discussed what kind of place we should have, what the ideal place was, how much we thought we would be able to pay and what the con-

ditions of the place should be – whether it should be on the ground floor or not, whether we could have the worldwide transmission at 4 o'clock in the morning without being thrown out of the building. And we put all that information on the Community collaboration website. Then we decided which people would check out which area and after a bit of a search we found a couple of places that looked interesting. We had look at them but finally decided that they weren't entirely suitable.

And then it turned out that a practitioner had a place that had been empty for some time, awaiting renovation. The only problem was that we couldn't fit the mandala in it although we might have been able to make some modifications. So, because we hadn't found a more suitable place, we



House for Sale

Glen Eddy's former residence in Argentina is for sale to a qualified member of any of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's Communities. The home is in the Tashigar South Dzogchen Community. It sits in a spacious landscape within the Community and is surrounded by beautiful views.

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Dancing in the hall at la Mar Bella.

decided to take this one and rent a gym or somewhere like that to put down the mandala 2 or 3 times a week. But in the end, the contract fell through and we couldn't take it. And so we started to look for places again. We found another space, which we thought to take but the mandala didn't fit there, either. We looked at all kinds of places – some had a lot of light, others little, some didn't have any light at all, some places were in basements, others in industrial buildings, some in residential buildings, but none of them were really suitable. Then the same practitioner who, by the way, loves doing the Vajra Dance, also had another space which we had used to do a Vajra Dance Course and practice, and this, we think, was the turning point because just when we had decided to take yet an-

other not entirely suitable commercial property in the centre of town, she said, "Oh, I've been thinking, we can have the place where we did the Vajra Dance". So we cancelled the provisional arrangement we had to rent the commercial property and set about organizing the rental of what is now Kundusling. At that time it was still in the process of being renovated. There were no windows and it was either very hot or really windy. Sometimes it was really cold. There was a lot of discussing among us about the stairs before we actually decided to take the place because it's on the roof and there are several flights of stairs to get up there. All the discussion about whether to take the place or not was centered on the stairs because people were afraid that the place would be inacces-

sible to those who have physical problems. Finally the Gakyil spoke to Rinpoche and showed him some photos and he said "Va bene" and, in fact, when he visited the Ling for the inauguration walked all the way up very easily. More easily than a good many of us!

The Mirror: The place is quite big and bright for the old city center of Barcelona.

Peter and Adela: The thing about Barcelona is that if you look well at the buildings, you will see that the houses, shops and what-not are long and narrow and to find a place like ours which is very wide is very unusual. It's on the roof and has been added to the original building. To get a place this big with no walls and columns is very unusual. So although the rent per square meter is an ordi-

nary rent, it doesn't really correspond to the space because it is so unique. There are no columns, no dividing walls. You can find places of this size in square meters on the ground floor but they are only 4 or 5 meters wide, which means we would never be able to put a mandala down or do Yantra Yoga. The kind of places we were looking at were more industrial places, old factories, warehouses, workshops, that kind of thing. In fact, Kundusling was actually a painter's studio.

The Mirror: The Ling looks great and the inauguration went off very well with plenty of participation from people at the retreat.

Peter and Adela: The contracting, decoration and inauguration of the Ling coincided with the retreat so organizing it dur-

ing the retreat days was a new blip on the radar for us. Because this was our third big retreat a lot of things were reasonably – I wouldn't say totally – under control or at least they were familiar. But opening the Ling was a new element. So despite the mini-logistic complication, it has come exactly at the right time because it is in the middle of another retreat and lots of people are here from all over Spain and the rest of the world and they can be here for this really special moment. We'd like to say the Spanish Community is really great. Whenever there's something like this to do, they throw themselves at the job with enthusiasm and energy. If the retreat seems well organized and the inauguration too, it's all due their magnificent dedication and devotion to Rinpoche.


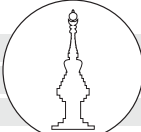
The new Ling is another really important stage in the development of the Community because now we are 40–50 people regularly when there are the webcasts and it would be very difficult to do that in a person's house. It's significant of the growth of the Spanish Community that it has happened when it has happened and in the way that it has happened as well and so it is the ideal place for us.

We have a Kumbakha and two Yantra Yoga courses organized for the days following the retreat and we've just added an Advanced Vajra Dance Course for the long weekend of 6–9 December. We are arranging another course with Nina Robinson at Easter as well as another Santi Maha Sangha course. We are preparing a new program of Santi Maha Sangha practices, Dance and Yoga sessions and our usual practice sessions. We would like to invite all the members of the Dzogchen Community to attend the courses here in Barcelona and enjoy the wonderful Ling that we are so grateful to Rinpoche for and to enjoy our beautiful city. ©

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merigarwest



Merigar West

Arcidosso 58031
GR Italy

phone: 39 0564 966837
fax: 39 0564 968110

merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
www.dzogchen.it

calendar of events 2007

January

January 3-6
Yantra Yoga course with Laura Evangelisti, 1st Series

January 12-13
Course of the Dance of 3 Vajras, with Prima Mai (advanced focussing on time)

January 26-27
Dorje Kotrab Explanation and Practice with Elio Guarisco

February

February 1-6
Webcast with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Yantra Yoga course with Tiziana Gottardi (3rd series) and Giovanna Conti (4th Series) supervised by Laura Evangelisti.

February 7 Losar
Six Lokas practice

February 8
Long Life practice of Mandarava

February 8/10
Course of the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra with Prima Mai (advanced focussing on time)

February 16-17
Moxa Course with Elio Guarisco

February 21
World Transmission of Garab Dorje

February 23-24
Practice of Garab Dorje

February 29-March 1
Course of the Dance of the Song of Vajra with Prima Mai (advanced focussing on time)

March

March 1-2
World Dance day, practice with Prima Mai, Rita Renzi, Maurizio Mingotti

March 7-8
Yantra Yoga course with Laura Evangelisti, 2nd Series

March 15-16
Moxa Course with Elio Guarisco

March 21-26 Easter
Webcast with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Explanation and practise of the 5th and 6th Paramitas with Costantino Albini

Upcoming

Beginners Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra Second part led by Maurizio Mingotti with the supervision of Adriana Dal Borgo
December 27 to January 3, 2008

Who can attend? This course is for those who have already received the transmission of Dzogchen and the Lung of the Song of the Vajra from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.
The course is limited to 20 participants; minimum enrollment is 9.
The course will start on Thursday December 27 at 16.00.
The cost is 200 euro with discounts for members.

Important! For organizational purposes, we ask that you please register before the course starts, by e-mail or phone. It will also be possible to register on the first day of the course with the secretary of Merigar.

phone:+39 0564-96 68 37
merigaroffice@tiscali.it

*

Upcoming

Yantra Yoga course on Deepening the Practice of the Eight Movements and the First Series of Yantras and Pranayamas
Led by Laura Evangelisti
January 3-6, 2008

Who can attend? This course is for those who already have knowledge of the Eight Movements of Yantra Yoga.
The course starts on Thursday January 3rd at 10.00
The cost is 160 Euros with discounts for members.

Important: for organizational purposes we ask you to please register before the course starts, by e-mail or phone.

Phone: +39 0564-96 68 37
merigaroffice@tiscali.it
www.dzogchen.it

*

Upcoming

Advanced course of the regular and irregular form of the Dance of the Three Vajras
Led by Prima Mai
January 12-13, 2008

Who can attend? This course is for those who have already received the transmission of Dzogchen from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Each course is limited

to a maximum of 20 participants; minimum enrollment is 9.

Schedule: The course starts on Saturday 12th January at 4 p.m

The cost is 80 euros with discounts for members

Important! for organizational purposes we ask you to please register before the course starts, by e-mail or phone.

Phone:+39 0564-96 68 37
merigaroffice@tiscali.it
www.dzogchen.it

*

Advanced Course of the Dance of the Vajra
with Prima Mai
September 7-11, 2007

Sept 7th to 11th, 2007 at Merigar, witnessed an advanced course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra led by Prima Mai in which 12 pamos and 11 pawos participated, including 5 of the newly elected 9 person Gakyil. Meanwhile Emy Namkhai Ottaviani was born... on the first day of the retreat. They were wonderful days made of simple instructions and sincere advances.

▼

Prima highlighted some of our conditioned reflections and managed to help us harmonize our steps to cadence, and our movements to make dancing musicality swoosh by in the iridescent practice of presence in movement. We thank the Master.
The whole of Merigar is now dancing with more appropriate good heartedness rich in joy and sacred presence

Mario and Marie

*





passages

Born: Emy Namkhai Ottaviani, born on 7/11/2007 and weighing in at 3.450 kg and 50 cm long. Emy was born in Italy near Merigar West. She is Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Rosa Namkhai's 4th grandchild, Yuchen Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani's 2nd child and Maya's 1st sister.

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.

merigareast



Merigar East

Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen

23 August 907005
Constanta
Romania

phone: 0040 746 26 08 61
office@dzogchen.ro
www.dzogchen.ro

merigar east asks for help

Merigar East is looking **urgently** for an architect in our Dzogchen Community. The task is to make the project/plans for the construction of the Gonpa and offices at Merigar East (Romania), according Rinpoche's drawings and advice. The buildings have to be ready

by next summer. Experience with construction of wood would be useful.

If you are interested please send **urgently** a CV to office@dzogchen.ro.

We kindly ask all Gars and Lings to translate this message in the country language and make it **urgently** accessible to **all** practitioners belonging to this Gars and Lings.

With best wishes
Romanian Gakyil for Merigar East

merigareast

the manufacture of lungta in russia

In Moscow, we have organized the manufacture of Lungta with tagdrol images in the tradition of our Dzogchen Teaching. We have already printed a Lungta with the image of the tagdrol of Avalokiteshvara Corva Tongtrug, and are preparing to manufacture Lungta with a tagdrol image of the Song of the Vajra. The manufacture of these Lungta was authorized our precious Teacher Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's

intention is to make the Lungta accessible to purchase by all the members of the Dzogchen Community. The Lungta are printed with the authorization of the Shang Shung Institute, and approved by the Gakyil of the Russian speaking countries. The cost of the Lungta will be determined together with the Shang Shung Institute and we will inform everyone. To order them contact: ssinst@tiscali.it or PreciousShipDzogchen@gmail.com or mukmenovrafael@yahoo.com

According to tradition, by having Lungta and activating them, you help to create the good cause for liberation and success. The sale of these Lungta also promotes the development of the Tibetan culture; all the profit from these sales goes to Shang Shung Institute to use for the preservation and development Tibetan culture through Shang Shung Institute (Italy) and the realization of projects of the international fund "A.S.I.A.".

Yours Vajra brothers and sisters in Russia

tibetan ocr program

Dear Friends,
Our group few years has developed an OpenSource program for computer optical recognition of Tibetan text, with the blessing of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

Now we have a stable beta version for WinXP. This program also contains the Tibetan dictionary (130.000 entry), converter for old text and speech training.

<http://www.buddism.ru/yagpo/YagpoOCRProgram.zip> resume of project <http://www.buddism.ru/yagpo/>

We can distribute this program and will be happy about any ideas people may have. In Russia we prepared a 5000 page Tibetan-English dictionary with this program, so it could be of benefit for the Dzogchen Teaching.

With best regards,
YagpoOCR team
Alex Stroganov

Europe

Czech Republic

Santi Maha Sangha Base Practice and Explanation Retreat
with Igor Berkhin
Prague, Oct 13–21

by Jan Vávra

The Czech Community invited Igor Berkhin for a Santi Maha Sangha Base explanation and practice retreat in Prague. Our first idea was to do a longer retreat for 10 days outside of the city, but due to the circumstances and the fact that the retreat was originally scheduled before Chögyal Namkhai Norbu announced his program for 2007, we did another version of the retreat in our Prague Gönpa. The average number of participants was 20 during the sessions.

We spent two weekends with explanation and practice and we added three evenings on working days. We also did a Ganapuja together with Igor. The program was mostly theory and practice of rushens and semdzins, explanations of the view based on 5th chapter of Precious Vase, Chöd principle and other topics from the SMS base. We found this retreat to be very useful, especially when we heard that there will be an exam of SMS in the summer in Merigar East.



Photo: Michal Janda

November Retreat of the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samtabhadra
with Margit Martinu
Brno, November 16–18, 2007
by Petr Lis

Margit Martinu often visits the Czech Republic to teach us the Vajra Dance. In November she came to lead a basic course of the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra. The retreat for more than thirty practitioners was located for the first time in Brno, South Moravia. Most of the

We also organized a public talk attended by 50 people. The talk took place at Vysehrad castle, which is a very interesting historical part of Prague. This part of the Prague with its old cathedral is sometimes considered to be one of the most spiritual place in the Czech Republic.

Thanks once again to Igor Berkhin for coming and studying with us. And many thanks to our precious Master for possibility to study these profound teachings.

*



France

Dance of Song of Vajra Course, 1st part
with Stoffelina Verdonk
February 23–28, 2008 in Paris

The participants are required to be members of Dzogchen Community and have transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Place in Paris:
Forum 104, 104 rue de Vaugirard,
75006 Paris, France
(near Montparnasse area)
Metro station (underground, subway)
Saint Placide on line 4,
Hours: 10 am–18 pm

Cost: 280 Euros (usual reductions),
Ordinary membership: 224 Euros,
Sustaining membership: 56 Euros
Reduced membership: 140 Euros

Registration: Early registration is welcome. For additional information and registration please contact:

Béatrix Leoz
52 av. Jean Jaures
75019 Paris
bea.leoz@free.fr

The French Gakyil
Dzogchen Community of Paris

Web site of French Dzogchen Community:
<http://association.dzogchen.free.fr>

*

>> France continued on next page

Europe (continued)

Ku Nye in France

The first course organized by the Shang Shung Institute and Rimay Institute was recently held at Karma Ling in France. 13 participants took part in the first course and passed the exam and received a diploma. ►



Great Britain

Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners

Sat. January 12 + Sun. January 13, 2008
London NW6

This is a supervision course lead by Emmanuel Jouan under the supervision of Laura Evangelisti. The course will be divided in two sessions each day and will focus on the First Level of Yantra Yoga.

Anyone having received the transmission (and ideally some previous exposure to Yantra even basic) is welcome.

It will be divided in four sessions of approximately two hours each (two

morning sessions and two afternoon sessions).

Venue: Chevening Road, Kilburn area (London NW6).

You will have to bring your mat or a comfortable non-slippery blanket; it is wooden floor throughout.

This is a fantastic opportunity to come together in a very nice setting (a Montessori school) in Central London for a focused weekend in which we will cover the basis of Yantra Yoga.

The full price for this 2-day course is 60 £ with the usual discounts for the members of the Dzogchen Community ie:
20 % discount f. ordinary members = 48 £
50 % discount f. reduced members = 30 £
80 % discount f. sustaining members = 12 £
Meritorious members don't pay.

Everyone is welcome, so please let me know if you are interested:
Emmanuel Jouan
Cell phone: 00 44 7942 024 021 (cell)
e_jouan@yahoo.co.uk

Poland

Dark Retreat Cabin in Paldenling

We are preparing to build a Dark Retreat Cabin in Paldenling next spring. The Cabin will be serving the whole Dzogchen Community of the region, also as part of the whole membership system meritorious and sustaining members can do retreats for free and others get appropriate reductions.

Our plan is to build the cabin in as good a fashion as possible, but also quickly. The success depends on your help. We would like to ask you to translate this information in your local language so that people know about this possibility. If someone has financial means, please support the project. If someone can do Karma Yoga (in April 2008), please contact the project team at darkcabin@dzogczen.pl for information about how you can help. If you can contribute in any way, please do. You can find all information on the website: <http://dzogczen.pl/darkretreat/>

We hope many of you will visit us in Paldenling and have a fantastic time practicing here!

With Best Wishes,
Polish Gakyil and the Project Team
*



Paldenling: The Center.

Vajra Dance Mandala

Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters!

We are collecting money to finish the place for the Mandala of The Dance of the Vajra in the Polish Dzogchen Center, Paldenling, located in a beautiful place on the top of a mountain.

www.dzogczen.pl

Until now we have done the base – the foundation for the Mandala made of concrete (gm/gm).

We have also already painted the Mandala on Tyvek material, but it is too delicate to put it on the raw concrete, therefore we need to cover this foundation made of concrete with some gum-like material (as is done for tennis courts), which can resist all the seasons for many years. We think this is the best solution with the circumstances we have in Paldenling.

The estimated cost of this work project is about 4000 EUR.



Paldenling: The Longde Cabin.



Paldenling: The place for the Mandala.

Another thing to accomplish for the project for the place of Mandala is to make a roof over that platform. So the quickest and easiest solution for the time being is to buy a big tent. It will enable us to dance during all seasons (except extreme winter). The estimated cost is about 5500 EUR.

Of these two projects, the most important in the moment is the first one: covering the foundation of the Mandala with the gum-like material, which cost about 4000 EUR.

We are kindly asking everybody of the International Dzogchen Community for contributions to these projects. We also invite everybody from the Dzogchen Community to come to Paldenling in Poland. As a special occasion in this time, every person who will contribute for one of these projects with minimum 250 EUR can do one-week retreat for free in the Center.

People interested to contribute can send money to Polish Dzogchen Community account (with note “for the Mandala in Paldenling”):

Community address:
Wspolnota Dzogczen w Polsce
ul J. Bruna 2 m 86
02-594 Warszawa, Poland

Bank name and address:
Bank Slaski o/Warszawa
ul. Nowowiejska 5/7
00-643 Warszawa, Poland
IBAN: PL60 1050 1038 1000 0012 0001 5855
SWIFT: INGBPLPW
EUR account:
37 1050 1038 1000 0023 1298 9128
USD account:
64 1050 1038 1000 0022 4638 5047

STILL PHOTOS NEEDED FOR DOCUMENTARY ABOUT CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU RINPOCHE

by Filmmaker Jennifer Fox

Dharma sister and documentary filmmaker, Jennifer Fox, is asking for kind assistance on her long-term biographical film about Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for the Buddhist Television Channel of the Netherlands (BOS).

Tentatively entitled, **Learning to Swim: Travels with a Dzogchen Master**, the film will be a portrait, filmed over many years, of our Teacher's life as he travels around the world. Primarily shot, the film has been in post-production in New York with the help of

another Vajra-sister – Soledad Suarez – who spent many months managing a small team to log and digitize the footage.

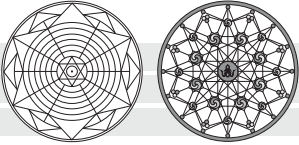
Editing of **Learning to Swim** began this month with an esteemed documentary editor, Mary Lampston (Harlan County USA, Lion In the House, Rain in a Dry Land to name just a few).

As the editing progresses, Jennifer is looking to fill in some important gaps in the footage. Particularly, she is searching for still photographs or film or video footage of our Master

during his earlier years – before 1988. All photos will be given proper credit and those who contribute will also be given credit in the final film.

For more information about the film and submissions please contact us at:
shelly@zohefilms.com

tsegyalgar east



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

new membership for 2008!

Dear Sangha,
We are very happy to announce our brand new membership types, rates and benefits. This year we are offering a nearly 50 % cheaper basic membership, much greater benefits for sustaining and meritorious members and increased accessibility for low-income members.
We hope you will begin your 2008 membership by January 1st so that you can take advantage of the many benefits of being a member throughout the year.

New Membership Types, Rates, & Benefits:
All members receive access to restricted webcast retreats, a basic membership with Shang Shung Institute, and our online newsletter.

Ordinary membership costs \$ 180 per year, gives a 20 % off of retreats and courses* at Tsegyalgar East, 20 % off personal retreat cabins at Khandroling, our online newsletter and a free online subscription to the Mirror (upgrade to include paper subscription for \$ 25).
Sustaining membership costs \$ 684, gives 80 % off discount on retreats and courses* at Tsegyalgar East, a free online and paper subscription to the Mirror, free use of the personal retreat cabins at Khadnroling for up to one week, our online newsletter as well as a 50 % discount on the Video Journal and a special gift from the Tsegyalgar East Gakyil.
Meritorious membership costs \$ 2040 free courses and retreats* at Tsegyalgar East, a free online and paper subscription to the Mirror, free use of retreat

cabins on Khandroling, 100 % discount on any new publications from Edizioni Shang Shung for the current year, plus a free subscription to the Video Journal. It will also include a special gift from the Tsegyalgar East Gakyil.
Reduced membership costs of \$ 70 for community members who can show an income which is lower than \$ 1000 per month or in their first year of membership and gives a 50 % discount on courses and retreats* at Tsegyalgar East and retreats, a free online subscription to the mirror, our online newsletter and 50 % off use of the personal retreat cabins at Khandroling.
* Except courses organised by the Shang Shung Institute, SMS exams and SMS, YY and VD teachers’ training.
This year, we are also suggesting that people develop a relationship with their “local” gar. If you live in Mexico, or in

the Mountain or Pacific timezones of the US or Canada, we suggest you sign up for your membership with Tsegyalgar West. If you live in the Central or Eastern timezones then we suggest you sign up with Tsegyalgar East.
If you would like to donate above and beyond membership we ask you this year to join our “1 % Campaign”. In the 1 % Campaign, we suggest that you donate 1 % of your gross income to Tsegyalgar East in the form of a recurring monthly withdrawal from your checking account or credit card. This is just a suggested amount; you are free, of course, to donate more or less. But we suggest it as a guideline because it means that every Sangha member can donate according to their financial capacity.
For instance, if you earn \$ 3,000 per month before taxes, you would donate \$ 30 monthly to Tsegyalgar East. Your

donation, as always, will be tax-deductible. You don’t need to tell us how much you earn; just tell us what monthly withdrawal you would like. This system of support will allow us to manage our annual budget better than one-off, miscellaneous donations. It will help build the fabric of our vajra community. As an expression of support, our Gakyil has voted to kick-start this campaign with their own donations.
For other payment options including monthly credit card, check or money order payments please call our new secretary Asruh Warner at (413) 369-41 53 or to sign up or renew online go to www.tsegyalgareast.org
We look forward to the coming year of the Earth Rat and sharing it with you in the practice.
With much love and respect,
Tsegyalgar Gakyil and Staff

email list for khandroling, buckland mass

The sacred land in Buckland, Massachusetts, known as Khandroling (meaning “the land of Dakinis”), was purchased by the Dzogchen Community in 1989. Through the clarity of his dreams, our master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche received many teachings there, including the Dance of the Vajra. According to Rinpoche, in six days of practice on this powerful land it is possible to realize what would take six months elsewhere.
The development of Khandroling is ongoing. Comprised of 220 acres of hills, streams, a pond, meadows, fields and forest, Khandroling offers members several personal retreat

cabins, a Stupa, and a bathhouse for retreatants and campers. The land also hosts the world’s first Universal Mandala for Vajra Dance. A small farmhouse is home to the Khandroling land Gekös.
We have started an email list for those interested in keeping current with the Development of Khandroling. We would like to invite the members of our Community interested in the development process to join this list. You can join the list by sending an email to Matt at martialsigning@yahoo.com with your name and email address you would like emails sent.
*

Incense at Tsegyalgar East Bookstore!
The long awaited and much loved “Peaceful” Yellow Kang Dru Incense just got back to the Tsegyalgar Bookstore fresh from Tibet!
For more than seven centuries, Kang Dru Tibetan Incense has been known as the highest quality incense, presented to holy temples and noble families in Tibet, Kang Dru Incense is made of more than 30 kinds of precious herbs and minerals and prepared with skills and techniques that others have lost or forgotten. The magical scent of Kang Dru Incense relaxes the mind and body, induces a sense of peace and well – being and disperses negative emotions. It also protects against the cold. The main ingredients include white and purple sandalwood and bla rtsi (musk).
Each box has 80 sticks that burn for about 1.5 hours. Price: \$ 18.00

Related items also available:
“Wrathful” Red Kang Dru
80 sticks – \$ 18.00
Kang Dru Small Sticks
40 Sticks – \$ 6.00
Tara Healing Incense
Approx 20 sticks – \$ 3.00
5 boxes – \$ 14.00
Juniper Herbal Mix
\$ 7.00 per bag
Riwo Sang Cho Mix
\$ 12.00 per bag
Gugul
\$ 7.00 per bag
Charcoal
\$ 3.00 for 10
To place orders call us at (413) 369 – 4473 or send an email to bookstore@tsegyalgar.org with your shipping and billing information and the items you would like or you can visit our online store at: www.tsegyalgareast.org/bookstore

Please remember that at this time only unrestricted items are available in the online store. To buy restricted items you must place the order directly with the bookstore via phone or email.
Best wishes,
Matthew Schmookler
Tsegyalgar Bookstore
413-369-4473 (Ph/Fax)
P.O. Box 479, Conway, MA 01341
*
upcoming
Jun 8–12, 2008
Fabio Andrico will teach breathing & Jim Valby will teach refuge & the four applications of mindfulness.
Contact: secretary@tsegyalgar.org

Canada

New Toronto Gakyil
In the summer of 2006, Deepak Ramachandran who was informally heading up our small Toronto Dzogchen group, suggested we form a “proto-Gakyil” and organize ourselves informally around the Activities of Red, yellow and blue. At that time our “proto-chief” became de facto Yulia Jitkova who arrived in Toronto four years ago having been a member of Kunsangar in Russia. We began to organize activities and invited Jim Valby (Santi Maha Sangha), Michael Katz (Dream Yoga) and just recently Oni McKinstry (Yantra Yoga). Mysteriously these activities seemed to generate more energy and brought in new members.
We decided it was time to form a true Gakyil and during Oni’s Yantra Yoga retreat, on Friday November 9th (New Moon), we held an election and subsequently asked Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to approve and to give us his blessing. We heard back from him almost immediately and he gave us a resounding yes with his congratulations. Naturally we are thrilled and excited about continuing to grow and develop as a group

and in our individual and collective practice.
Our Toronto Gakyil will be under the umbrella, protection and guidance of Tsegyalgar East, who have welcomed us most enthusiastically, joyously and affectionately into the fold. We feel really warmed and nourished by this welcome and look forward to increasing our activities and our membership with their excellent help.
The new Gakyil is comprised of Yulia Jitkova (yellow), Vitaly Gritsenko (red) and Jacquie Hanley (blue) with the generous support and help of Andy Wai and Margherita.
So, with gratitude for the great blessings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and for the gift of his vast and profound teachings, we consider ourselves, at last, launched!
E ma ho!
Warm wishes,
Jacquie Hanley
www.dzogchentoronto.org

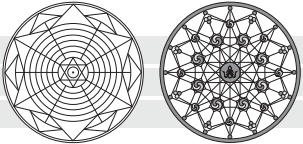
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu visits Toronto Canada in 2008!
Revised schedule of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 2008
May 23–25
New York weekend teaching:
The essential Dzogchen teaching of Sangyas Lingpa according to the Longsal teaching
May 30–June 6
Tsegyalgar East Retreat:
Jigmed Lingpa’s Dzogchen teaching “Yeshe Lama”

June 13–15 SMS III Examinations
June 16–22 SMS IV Training
July 4–6
Toronto weekend Dzogchen Teaching Retreat:
July 4, 4–6pm; July 5, 10–12 am + 4–6 pm, Teaching and Ganapuja;
July 6, 10–12 am
July 14–20
We have Merigar East Teaching Retreat Open Webcast
*

Beginner’s Yantra Yoga in Toronto
with Oni McKinstry
November 9–11, 2007



tsegyalgarwest



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Dzogchen Community West Coast	Berkeley, CA 94708	carolfields@aol.com
www.bahasangha.org		

upcoming
Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat
with Jim Valby and Bodhi Krause
February 19–24, 2008
Baja California, Mexico

Tsegyalgar West is pleased to announce that Jim Valby will be joining us in Baja California Sur, Mexico, to lead a Base Level Santi Maha Sangha Retreat and to give public talks in towns/cities near the Gar.

The approximate dates for the Base-level retreat are February 19–24. (In the middle of this, February 20, will be the Anniversary of Garab Dorje Worldwide Transmission of Guruyoga.)

Also joining us will be Vajra Dance instructor Bodhi Krause, who will be teaching the Dance of the Three Vajras.

We will be sending out more specifics soon ... just wanted to let anyone know, who might be interested, to save these dates (Feb. 19–24 2008).

Feel free to contact me.
Julia Deisler (Blue Gakyil, Tsegyalgar West)
jmdeis@yahoo.com
or **jmdeisler@aol.com**

*

upcoming
SMS Base
with Jim Valby
Mar 21–31, 2008
Dondrub Ling, Berkeley, California

Contact:
aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org

*

Portland Oregon Community Update

http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=22od3zhdhqcnpqc4lfqm4v6qg%4...
If that link is too long you can get to it from the front page of **http://portlanddzogchencommunity.com**

We've set up a weekly group again, now that we have more practitioners with

Transmission. We'll be spending some months learning about, practicing and collaborating on the following topics: The General Introduction to Dzogchen: Open to anyone who is curious about the teachings. We'll show it once now and once again prior to the next Worldwide Transmission. Worldwide Transmissions of Guru Yoga The WWTs will always be preceded by the corresponding Guru Yoga Transmission DVD viewings. Experienced practitioners are encouraged to show support for these, answer questions, etc. Only those who are serious about the Transmission and who have viewed the General Introduction will be able to attend the WWT preparation session. Only those who have attended both the Introduction DVD and the WWT preparation session will be able to attend the Worldwide Transmissions. In addition to regular Ganapuja, we will also be hosting the Worldwide Collective 24 Hour Chains of Guru Dragpur and Sinhamuka, beginning in January.

More details on this will be forthcoming. In short, we'll be on the schedule as individuals and groups to do one hour of the corresponding mantras for specific days. This is an offering to remove obstacles for the International Dzogchen Community and the Master. It will also of course benefit individuals who participate and probably counts as Karma Yoga for those interested in SMS.

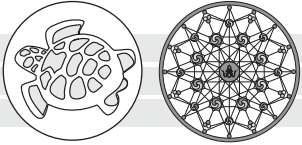
Regular practices:
Short Tun, Medium Tun, Long Tun at some point.
Ganapuja – both the older video and the new finer point video, with practices of the Short and then the Medium Ganapuja. We'll also be doing Ganapuja four times per month on all of the correct days. We'll alternate Medium and Short Ganapujas, depending on the auspiciousness of the days.

Collective Secondary Practices: Those with the lung or serious intention to re-

ceive lung at the next retreat or webcast are welcome to attend these sessions: Green Tara – DVD w/ explanation and practice
Shitro – DVD w/ explanation and practice
Chod – DVD w/ explanation and practice
Mandarava – DVD w/ explanation and practice
Practice for the Dead – DVD w/explanation and practice

We can add to the calendar any other practices that people are interested in. As the Community develops and grows we will add some retreat days to the schedule as well. If anyone has any questions or comments, please feel free to contribute. We set this up so we can all have a good foundation in the main and secondary practices, as well as collaborate with each other and ourselves. Additionally it's important to make sure that new people have access to warm and friendly practitioners.

tashigar norte

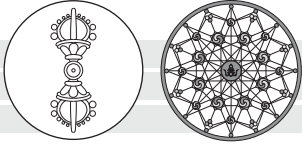


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	Isla de Margarita	www.dzogchenvenezuela.org

Birthday Celebration for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Tashigar North, Margarita Island
December 8, 2007



tashigarsur



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Registration for
Tashigar South Retreats in Argentina
with our Master is Open.

Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Tashigar Sur – Summer 2008

Retreat of Teaching on Longchenpa's Choszhi Rinchen Phrengwa
Dec. 27–Jan. 3, 2008
Open Webcast
Cost: 180 USD

Santi Maha Sangha I Level Exam
January 07–10, 2008
Santi Maha Sangha II Level Training
January 11–17, 2008
Cost: 100 USD – 50 USD if you repeat it.

Retreat of Zhine and Lhagthong according to Atiyoga
February 1–6, 2008
Closed Webcast
Cost: 160 USD

Retreat of Zhitro Khordas Rangdrol, a terma of Rigdzin Janchub Dorje
February 15–20, 2008
Cost: 160 USD

With the usual discount for members:
Meritorius 100 %, Supporter 50 %
Ordinary 20 %, Reduced 20 %

Registration and information:
info.tashisur@gmail.com
www.tashigar-sur.com.ar

*

Upcoming Vajra Dance courses
Dance of the Song of the Vajra course
First Part
With Nelida Saporiti
January 22–26, 2008

Cost: 70 dollars

Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra & Three Vajras
Advanced course
With Adriana Dal Borgo
January 27–31, 2008

Cost: 120 dollars

Dance of the Song of the Vajra
Second Level – Advanced course
With Adriana Dal Borgo
February 10–14, 2008

Cost: 120 dollars

Registration & Info
cursos.tashisur@gmail.com

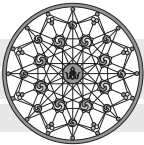
*

Upcoming
Authorization Training for the breathing courses
with Fabio Andrico
January 23–26, 2008
Open to five people only
YY instructors will have priority.

Cost: 200 dollars – No discounts

Info and inscription:
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namgyalgar and pacific rim



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new namgyalgar website!!!

The Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar has a beautiful new dynamic website with lots of information including events in the Australia and Asia-Pacific region with registration details, which can be downloaded.

Please visit the website at:
www.dzogchen.org.au

Graeme Horner
Namgyalgar Blue Gakyil

*

dark retreat cabin

Living just 5 km from Namgyalgar I am very fortunate to be able to use the Dance Mandala and practice in the Gonpa when the mood takes me. Namgyalgar also has a secluded, well-crafted straw bale dark retreat cabin with a lighted room and verandah looking out to the sea.

I have never used the dark cabin. I had thought I wouldn't be able to use the cabin for sometime because of not having any semblance of continual instant presence, a requirement to be able to do Yantig and not having had the transmission and teaching of that practice.

However I was pleased to be reminded by Rinpoche on the final day of his webcast from Barcelona, that there are different types of dark retreat. There is the Yantig practice, a very high level of Dzogchen practice, and then there is a 24-hour dark retreat that is very helpful to stabilize one's practice of the night. The practice of the night is very important to connect our presence of Guruyoga of the night and presence of Guruyoga in the morning. Anyone that has transmission of Guruyoga can do the 24 hour dark retreat practice. So I can do it too, and plan to – soon.

Several practitioners have found the dark retreat cabin at Namgyalgar to be an excellent facility and have benefited greatly by their retreat experience. We encourage everyone to come and participate!

So come to use our dark retreat cabin. If you have a busy schedule it's only an hour flight from Melbourne or less from Sydney to the nearest airport. Our Gekö happily provides the 50-minute ride to the Gar from the airport.

If you have more time and less cash there are daily buses from both capital cities.

Namgyalgar Dark Retreat Package

The design of the Namgyalgar cabin has given particular attention to circulation of air. It is well appointed with built in anteroom for services, carpeted dark room with comfortable mattress and a light retreat room and verandah looking out to the sea that can be used for preparation before entering into the dark retreat. We have estimated the price for a 24 hour Dark Retreat package that includes return flights or coach tickets, return airport or bus stop transfers (ie \$ 15 donation for fuel to Gekö), one night's use of the dark retreat cabin, and a lovingly prepared organic vegetarian or meaty meal.



with Airfare:

Sydney to Moruya Airport	\$ 348*
Melbourne to Merimbula	\$ 388

with Coach:

Sydney Central to Central Tilba	\$ 150
Southern Cross to Central Tilba	\$ 146

Extra nights \$ 30 per night.

(* Australian dollars)

Please contact Jean Mackintosh

jeanimack@southerphone.com.au to reserve your retreat dates.

Book flights online with Regional Express, www.rex.com.au or coach with Premier Motor Service, www.premierms.com.au

Prices may vary according to the season.

See you in Namgyalgar!

Best wishes

Joanna Tyshing

Namgyalgar 07–08 Summer Retreat Program

27 December–4 January

Webcast Retreat from Argentina and Santi Maha Sangha practice retreat led by Angie Gilbert

Angie Gilbert is a senior student of Chögyal Namkai Norbu and teacher of the Santi Maha Sangha Base level. The retreat will also include instruction on the 'Dance of the 3 Vajras' by Jean Mackintosh and Yantra Yoga taught by Emily Coleing.

5 January–12 January

Vajra Dance Practice Retreat

led by Lynne Geary

This retreat is suitable only for those who have already been instructed in any or all of the 3 Vajra Dances.

13 January–20 January

Yantra Yoga Practice Retreat

led by Emily Coleing

Emily will revise all the warm-ups, breathing and movement practices including up to group 2 yantras.

Further Information and Registration Form available at: <http://dzogchen.org.au/new/registration.php>

Trivia Night Fun(d) raiser for Namgyalgar

On a balmy evening at the end of October, a trivia night was organized by the fundraising committee of Namgyalgar. It was held at the community room in the center of the gardens in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Almost a hundred people came, many of whom are not practitioners, and who really enjoyed the opportunity to connect with the spirit of our community: fun, generous, open-hearted. By the end of the evening not a pamphlet about Namgyalgar and the Community was left to distribute!

Quinn, our quiz master, is new to the Community, and he generously gave his time and professional skills to rustle up a great bunch of questions that kept everyone guessing and feeling intermittently stupid and genius. Much laughter and debate hummed around the tables as we filled in our quiz sheets.

The members of the Community provided delicious food, and a bar was run for the evening, generating dollars and drinks.

Members of the Dzogchen Community also generously donated prizes for the silent auction.

We raised over \$ 4,000 on the night, had a wonderful time and generated out-reach for the Community. A very successful event. Thanks to all who participated and special thanks to those who made it happen.

Madeleine Fogarty

Fund raising committee,
Namgyalgar



Subscribe to The Mirror

The New Year is upon us and if you have made a New Years resolution to stay in closer contact with the Dzogchen Community, what better way than with a subscription to The Mirror. In many Gars and Lings and even some smaller Communities, The Mirror is included in membership in some form. Membership is the best overall way to maintain contact with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the Vajra Family, and often you will receive access to the Mirror in that way.

If you would like to subscribe to The Mirror:

\$ 35 US or **35 Euro** in Europe for **paper only**.
\$ 25 US or **25 Euro** in Europe for **on line only**.
\$ 50 US or **50 Euro** in Europe for **both paper and on line subscriptions**.

You can subscribe through your local Community or by contacting us directly at:

USA

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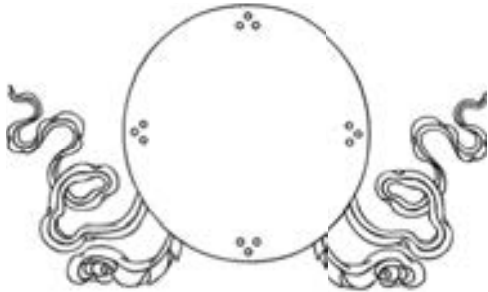
Tsegyalgar office and bookstore:
413 369 41 53, 413 369 44 73

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Liz Granger: lizmirror@tiscalinet.it

You can purchase subscriptions on line at www.melong.com

For South America and Mexico we have reduced rates, so please contact mirror@tsegyalgar.org for more information.



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Happy Holidays!
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worldwide
transmission days

about the worldwide
transmission

Newcomers who want to partici-
pate in the worldwide transmis-
sion must be truly interested in
the Teachings transmitted by
our Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu Rinpoche, and practiced
in our world wide Dzogchen
Community. Participants in this
Transmission should try to re-
ceive Teachings from Rinpoche
in the future. After having re-
ceived the Transmission, they
should also try to train and col-
laborate with the Sangha of the
International Dzogchen Com-
munity of Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu Rinpoche. Originally,
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had
the idea of a ‘Transmission at a
Distance’ because he wanted to
help people in different situa-
tions, who could not travel at that
time to meet the Teacher. The
Transmission will enable them
to practice the Dzogchen Teach-
ings transmitted by Rinpoche
without needing direct contact
with the Teacher at that time.

**Here is a summary of how the
Live-Video-Empowerment works:**
To receive the World Wide Trans-
mission, new students need to
participate with an experienced
student who will host both the
preliminary explanation as well
as the actual practice well in ad-
vance of the event.

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

For new and interested per-
sons, it is important to have
seen the explanation by Chögyal
Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche that
is also on the videotape, in ad-
vance. They should also have the
possibility to clarify any doubts
about the practice on the video-
tape with some serious, dedi-
cated older students of Chögyal
Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche be-
fore the Empowerment.

Exactly at the given time (see
timetable) at your place, you

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start the Transmission Video at
the starting point of the part of
the Anniversary of Garab Dorje.
At that moment – worldwide –
students and newcomers start to
practice this session of the Thun
together, which ends with the
dedication of merits.
*We wish you all a successful practice.
Please contact your local Community
for details.*

Global Timetable
Anniversary of Garab Dorje

Wednesday February 20, 2008
17:00 (-10) Hawaii
18:00 (-9) Fairbanks
19:00 (-8) San Francisco, Los Angeles,
Vancouver
20:00 (-7) Denver, Salt Lake City,
Pagosa Springs, Edmonton
21:00 (-6) Chicago, Mexico City
22:00 (-5) New York, Conway,
Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana,
Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa,
Lima, Quito,
23:00 (-4) Caracas, San Juan,
Bermuda
00:00 (-3) Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo,
Rio de Janeiro, Santiago

Thursday February 21 2008
03:00 (0) GMT, London, Dublin, Lisbon
04:00 (+1) Rome, Berlin, Oslo,
Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, Copen-
hagen, Brussels, Geneva, Prague,
Salzburg, Stockholm, Budapest,
Vienna, Warsaw
05:00 (+2) Helsinki, Athens,
Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Vilnius,
Johannesburg
06:00 (+3) Moscow, Murmansk,
Baghdad, Kuwait City, Riyadh,
Tashkent
08:00 (+5) **Oddiyana**, Islamabad
08:30 (+5.5) Delhi, Bombay
08:45 (+5.45) Kathmandu
09:00 (+6) Dhaka
09:30 (+6.5) Rangoon
10:00 (+7) Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon
11:00 (+8) Singapore, Beijing, Lhasa,
Manila, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur,
Taipei, Perth
12:00 (+9) Tokyo, Seoul
13:00 (+10) Brisbane, Vladivostok
13:30 (+10.5) Adelaide
14:00 (+11) Kamchatka, Melbourne,
Sydney
15:00 (+12) Fiji
16:00 (+13) Wellington, Auckland

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International
Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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Review

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book review
the compassionate work of
TANGTONG GYALPO

carol cooper

King of the Empty Plain: The Tibetan Iron-Bridge Builder Tangtong Gyalpo
Translated & edited by Cyrus Stearns for the Tsadra Foundation Series, Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, N.Y. 700 pages. Fall 2007. \$ 49.95 clothbound.

We may not automatically equate engineers and architects with dharma practice, but the very nature of architecture and engineering might logically require a contemplative turn of mind. It only makes sense to sit and think awhile about constructing useful things that don't easily fall apart – be it a tall building, a waterwheel, or a binding social contract for the greater good of all sentient beings.

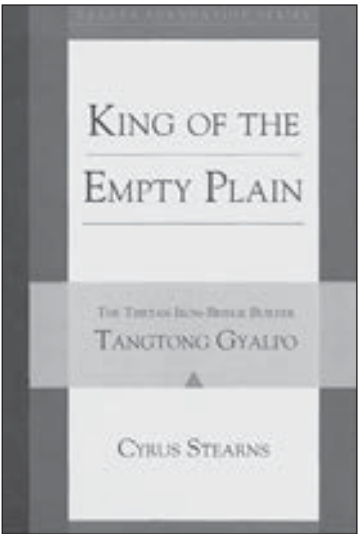
History tells us that Jesus was a carpenter. America's founding fathers were reputedly initiated Masons (much like the master craftsmen who erected European cathedrals) and presumably applied metaphysical principals of cosmic geometry to the task of designing a new republic. In the West as well as the East, humans have long aspired to elevate their spirits through elevating the physical and social infrastructure of their communities. Thus the symbolic beauty of the Empire State building and the harmonious symmetry of the Brooklyn Bridge were always meant to inspire New York residents to live better lives whether

glimpsed while going to work or play.

Similarly, the religious (and career!) biography of the Tibetan tantric saint Tangtong Gyalpo (1385–1464) exists as an inspirational reminder that work, social service, and dharma practice never have to be mutually exclusive. Newly translated into English by scholar/practitioner Cyrus Stearns, this book details the life of a meditation master who not only performed miracles and taught the dharma, but also designed and built many monasteries, stupas, and iron-link suspension bridges throughout Tibet and neighboring lands.

Legend has it that Tangtong Gyalpo's dedication to public works projects began as a practical consideration when a ferryboat operator – blinded by dualistic perception – refused to carry the scruffy-looking yogi across a flooded river. He began building bridges the better to walk (for free!!) to wherever he traveled and taught; thereby improving the transportation and communication infrastructure of his corner of the world. Labor and money (including his own) had to be donated for these projects, and it is both a tribute to his personal charisma and the faith of regional monks, lay chieftains, his own children (and legions of invisible dharma protectors), that so many were completed.

I saw a couple of these artifacts while in Bhutan, and was



truly impressed. Although necessarily repaired periodically through the centuries, many of the original chain-link bridges still exist, spanning steep mountain ravines and fast-flowing rivers. Modern construction methods can barely improve upon his templates, due to the inaccessibility of many construction sites. Described as a dark-skinned bearded yogi with long white hair whose rustic appearance and unorthodox behavior often provoked fear or derision among the laypeople he tried to help, the adept's unflappable compassion in the face of ridicule or even outright hostility can be seen as an even more remarkable achievement than his bridges.

The current book is divided into multiple sections including the translator's introduction, to give full consideration to the diverse sources and aspects of the collected material. The first half examines and compares biographical data, including the issue of Gyalpo's extended lifespan. There are anecdotal chapters detailing his encounters with important teachers, dakinis, and yidams, descriptions

of pivotal retreats and visions, transcriptions of specific prayers and songs of realization, as well as auspicious connections and amusing mishaps when teaching his students.

As in the best namthars* this liberated saint is presented to us in all his human glory, with a life full of situational ups and downs just as in the life stories of Milarepa or Jamgon Kongtrul. But because Tangtong Gyalpo is considered a "crazy wisdom" adapt, his tale is a bit less sober than those of his less antic peers. Here readers quickly discover that what is truly great and heroic about any "great" or "heroic" person, is that they always strive towards perfection even while in imperfect circumstances. Experiential knowledge of primordial truths won't make the rest of the dualistic world go away...it just makes our attitude towards the dualistic world (and those still deluded by it) more workable and more compassionate.

Stearns provides locations and assessments of Tangtong Gyalpo's design portfolio as if he were Frank Lloyd Wright or Richard Neutra. But on top of this material assessment, he also includes associated bits of myth, poetry, theological parables, liturgical instructions, and the complete text of a formal religious bio written in 1609 by the master's descendant Lochen Gyurmé. And yet Stearns admits that his book comprises only a portion of what has been written by and about Tangtong Gyalpo. Another volume could and should be done collecting the saint's "edicts" or official notes and declarations.

Originally written by the saint as memos to various monks, kings, patrons, ministers and

gods, he would sometimes send disciples out to formally deliver these edicts with iron links and blessed relics as gifts while soliciting donations towards new construction jobs. Imagine a civil servant and itinerant priest cum philanthropist who sent philosophical and sociological tracts like business proposals to solicit funding and good will from the trust-fund set!!

Maverick promotional techniques aside, contemporary advocates of right livelihood could learn a lot from contemplating the example of Tangtong Gyalpo. Most famously associated with his devotional practices towards Avalokiteshvara, he prospered by dedicating everything he did to the welfare of others. Early in his career he recorded the Yidam's response to an aspiration prayer he'd offered to the Lord of Compassion:

"Firmly build ferries and precious iron bridges on the great rivers of the Land of Snows, and construct representations of the enlightened body, speech, and mind of the Conquerer, increasing the merit of sentient beings of the degenerate age.

"Fill all the vast country with the sound of the royal six-syllable mantra of pure awareness, the mere seeing, hearing, memory, and touch of which shuts the doors to lower realms and shows the path to higher realms."

* A namthar is a life story of someone who has attained enlightenment.

Salvation

The rock at the place where the rivers meet
is bigger than a big house,
the colour of the earth and plants grow on it
And prayer flags cascade from its crown.

It begin as a pimple on a mud bank
and then it was a momo,
then a child's head grew older
and bigger as the rivers sank:
a gong, a sitting yak, a nomad tent,
a house, a temple.

Time is full now and it's waiting,
an egg gathered round its germ.
suddenly it will crack and burst,
wings will unfold from inside it,
shimmering in the astonished air,
and a prince of light will soar
raining jewels on the valleys.

Rowena Hill

This poem is from a series of poems Rowena Hill wrote on a trip to Tibet in 2006. She is a poet and retired Professor of Literature at the University in Merida and lives between Merida and Margarita Island, Venezuela.

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at the
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How Happy**

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it all started in 1976
in subiago

aldo oneto
translated by l. granger

“Christine. Tomorrow we’re off to Rome!”
“Why Rome? We only opened the restaurant two days ago! What’s happening there?”
“Costantino called me today. Namkhai Norbu’s decided to give Dzogchen teachings and Laura’s rented a villa in Subiaco on the outskirts of Rome for the occasion!”
“I see. But have you thought about what we’re going to do with the restaurant?”
“We could ask one of our friends who does alternative cooking to take over. Someone with a bit of experience. After all, it’s only for a few days.”
“So what shall we do?”
“Listen, I think it’s really worth making the effort. It’s important to go to Subiaco – I have the feeling that Namkhai Norbu is an essential Master, someone for us, who goes straight to the heart of problems.”
“Alright. I’ll see if I can find someone to take over the restaurant.”
“Great! If we take a train this evening, as soon as we arrive tomorrow morning we’ll call someone in Rome and get a lift to Subiaco. I know, I’ll call Mario Cumbat, right away. Come on. Let’s get our bags packed!”
“But what did Costantino tell you?”

“Look, he talked to me about words like *tregchod*, *rigpa*, etc., and I didn’t understand a thing but I’m sure that Namkhai Norbu’s going to transmit something special to us. Look, we’ve been having teachings and initiations from different lamas from various schools but I really think that for the little I know of it that Dzogchen is a direct path, it means ‘Great Perfection’. There are some Buddhist practitioners who’ve been in India and Nepal and found out that he is considered to be a great Master. They’ve asked him several times to give teachings here in Italy.”
“Yes, I think it is going to be something important, too.”
“Of course it is. I had the good luck to see him in Rome about six months ago at a meeting between H.H. the 16th Karmapa and Pope Paul 6th when he was their interpreter. After that we made a trip to Fiumicino airport in Rome together with Laura Albini, Costantino and another person that I don’t remember. I was so excited and had a strong feeling that sooner or later we we’d meet again!”
“OK. Let’s get organized.”
“You know, we really shouldn’t miss this. Thanks Christina!”
And so the day after, in the late morning, freshly arrived at the villa, we were met by the dy-



namic Laura, smiling and welcoming us like a mother. We got settled and looked around. I think that in total there were 20–25 people from different places but mostly Milan, Rome and Naples. Around one o’clock we saw a car arrive and a lanky athletic man got out wearing jeans and a casual shirt. He came towards us gazing at us with magnetic eyes and said hello. It was he! Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche! Then his wife Rosa got out of the car and their two children, a little boy with a mischievous air and

a lovely little girl who was a bit more timid.
After we’d all had lunch together and chatted a bit, we tried to arrange a small throne with cushions for him, like those for Tibetan lamas.
For this first meeting most of the people came from different Buddhist traditions such as Karma-Kagyu, Drugpa-Kagyu, Gelugpa, Vipassana Hinayana etc., and were very formal and conditioned by rituals. But when Namkhai Norbu came into the small room, he moved the small

throne, picked a single cushion and sat down! He started to teach the nine breathings, the importance of Guru Yoga, the interdependence between *prana* and the mind, the nature of the mind etc., and while he was talking a thought arose from my heart, perhaps it was an intuition – we have found an authentic Guide, a Root Master! And so for all of us the greatest adventure, the only adventure worth experiencing began. It was 24th June 1976 ...
OM A HUM. ©

Share your old photos and memories of the early days with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.
Please send photos and stories to mirrornk@gmail.com or lizmirror@tiscalinet.it
Thank you,
The Mirror Staff

‘yakra’ or
‘the yak’s horn’

adriana dal borgo

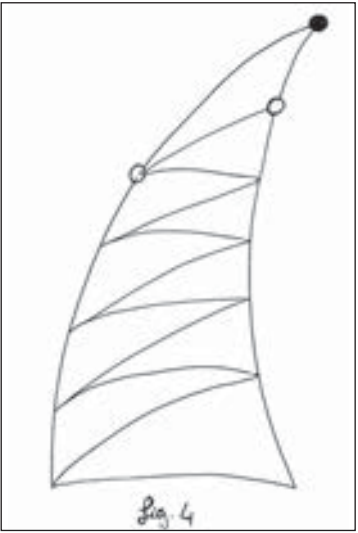
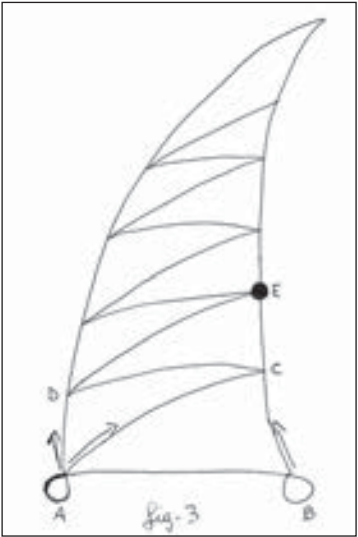
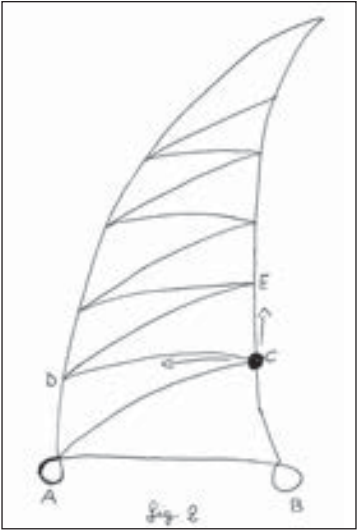
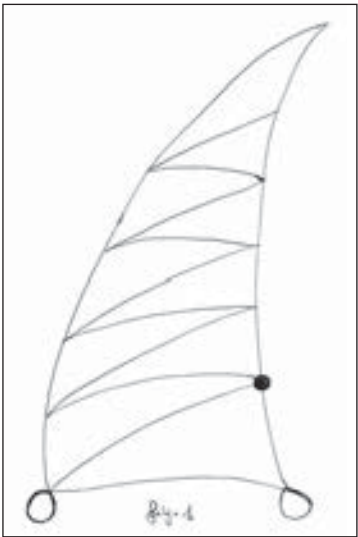
Here is another entertaining game that Rinpoche taught us that we can enjoy and, at the same time, test our flexibility and ability to modify our game strategies according to the circumstances.
You need: the outline of a horn drawn on a piece of paper, as in fig. 1. Two similar counters and another of a different color or form (you can use coins, different colored counters, etc.).
At the beginning of the game the two players choose who will be the hunter and who will be the

hare. The person who is the hunter uses the two counters that are the same and places them at the corners of the base of the horn (fig. 1, white counters). The hare puts his/her counter as in fig. 1 (black counter).
In turn, the hare and the hunter move a counter one segment at a time, in any direction, backwards and forwards, along the inner and outer parts of the horn.
The hare makes the first move of the game and has to ‘run away’ from the hunters. The hare has two possibilities: he can move from his initial position (C) up to point D or E (fig. 2). At this

his two counters to move, always and only in one section at a time. For example, he can move a counter from A to point C or D, if the hare does not take the place. Or he can move from position B up to C (fig. 3). The hunter can

The aim of the game: the hunter wins when he manages to catch the hare on the point of the horn, blocking any other move by the hare (fig. 4). The hare

wins if he manages to take one of the hunter’s two starting positions (A or B) (fig. 5).



only move one counter at a time.
Then it is the hare’s turn to run away, moving one section at a time. And they take turns like this.

point it is the hunter’s turn. First of all he has to choose which of

The rhythm of the game should be fast and non-stop. At the end of each game the players can change roles and play again, trying out different strategies.
Try not to think too much about each move and to learn from the experience; if you have been the hunter or hare and have lost the game, try some different moves and perhaps things will change ...

how i met CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

gino vitiello

In 1974 and I was 24 years old and studying medicine with Pino, Adriano Clemente's older brother. We had known each other for seven years because we'd lived near the same police station in Naples.

Adriano was sixteen and went to high school. He was interested in Eastern philosophy, I was interested in Western, and every so often we would compare the different points of view.

Even if people say that those are the best years of one's life, for me they were the worst. Besides the loss of those close to me, I was searching for a path to follow but didn't find one. I wasn't cheerful or happy.

One day Adriano told me that he had met a Tibetan lama who taught at the Oriental Institute in Naples and who lived in Pozzuoli. An interesting person, he said, and he wanted me to meet him.

I knew very little about Tibet. In my imagination it was a mysterious land that aroused my curiosity and attracted me. We knew practically nothing of the culture of Tibet and the tragedy of its people.

Pozzuoli is about 15 km from Naples and we needed a car to get there. I had a Fiat 500, it was a small car but a car anyway.

We went to meet the lama one afternoon – I don't remember the month but perhaps it was in the springtime or at the beginning of the summer. His house was close to Solfatara and there was the smell

of sulphur. Near the entrance there was a small statue of St. Gennaro in a niche in the wall.

When we went inside I was amazed: it was the most simple house I had ever seen, almost poor. An oriental-looking man of an undefined age – perhaps very young, perhaps not – was explaining something I didn't understand to some young people. Later on I recognized it as the practice of Vajrasattva.

When he finished his explanation he gently turned towards me – who was there without really knowing why – and he said something to me that I don't remember. However, I do remember that I started to talk to him about the truth, quoting St. Augustine, while he listened patiently to me. When I had finished my lesson, he said simply, "The truth is that now we are going to have a cup of tea" and he got up and went to the kitchen to make it.

I remember that moment perfectly, it was a bit of a shock: I was there reciting what I had learned from books and he was bringing me back to the here and now, to the unique concrete reality of the moment. While I was waiting for the tea I thought, "This is a really interesting person and it's worth getting to know him better".

And it all started like this. For a couple of years I went to see him from time to time. Sometimes I stayed for dinner with him, Rosa and their two children who were just old enough to go to school. Almost stupefied for so much spontaneous



kindness, this was how I came to sample tsampa and momos.

I would go back home with a strange feeling of lightness or of agitation. Everything seemed to be so simple when I was near him. The rest of my life, however, was not. Something attracted me strongly but I tried to resist. Why should I follow a teaching so distant from everything that I knew; couldn't philosophy, Christianity, psychology give me the answers I was looking for?

In 1977 I finished university and finally had more free time. I started to practice Yantra Yoga and Rinpoche started to give his first teachings at the center where we met. The first time I heard him speak in public about Dzogchen he said that it is not a religion, nor a philosophy but rather knowledge of one's real nature; it is not necessary to accept or reject anything in order to follow it and when we understand the essence of it, we also understand the meaning of all the other teachings. And once again I had another little shock but this time all the pieces of the puzzle were magically in their places – I had found what I was looking for.

That summer there was also the first official retreat in Prata, about 60 km from Naples. Once again I had to face all my resistances. I waited for the last days of the retreat before deciding to go. I arrived in the afternoon but didn't see anyone. In the distance there was a beautiful song accompanied by a harmonium – it was the Song of the Vajra and up to that moment I had never heard it. I felt a sort of twinge of sadness for having lost something so important.

The days that followed were extremely intense. I started to enter another dimension of reality, which I had not known up to that time. It was difficult but for the first time it was really mine.

Today I do not know how my life would have been without that meeting and I'm not even interested in knowing. Continually facing the limits of my ego, of my distraction and mental obscuration I am trying to realize something and to collaborate as best I can. I have faith in the compassion of the Master because this meeting has no end.

©

upcoming retreats with CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

>> continued from page 1

Canada

Toronto

July 4–6

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Romania

Merigar East

July 14–20

Teaching Retreat

Open Webcast

July 21–24

Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Exam

July 25–31

Santi Maha Sangha Level I Training

Italy

Merigar West

August 11–18

Teaching Retreat

Open Webcast

Kalmykia

September 8–15

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Open Webcast

Italy

Merigar West

September 26–October 3

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

October 6–9

Santi Maha Sangha III Level Exam

October 10–17

Santi Maha Sangha IV Level Training

October 31–November 3

Practice and Teaching dedicated to those who have died

Spain

November 14–20

Barcelona Retreat

Brazil

November 26–30

Brazil Retreat

Argentina

December 5–8

Buenos Aires Weekend Retreat

Tashigar Sur

December 26–January 1

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

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We thank you and wish you all a wonderful holiday season.