



THE MIRROR

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upcoming retreats
with
CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU



Photo: Romain Piro

2008

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

Tsedyalgar 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

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

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Rinpoche receives gifts from the children at the end of the retreat.

Photo: N. Zeitz

the mirror of total clarity

shine and lhagthong retreat with CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU
feb 1–6, 2008, tashigar south, argentina

naomi zeitz

The Mirror Of Total Clarity – An Explanation of
the General Principles About How to Practice
the Yogas of Shine and Lhagthong in the
Tradition of Dzogchen Atiyoga

ati dzogchen lugsu shi lhag gi naljor chitar
nyamsu lenpai tsul ragtsam tenpa kunsal
melong shechawa zhugso

a ti rdzogs chen lugs su zhi lhag gi rnal 'byor ji
ltar nyams su len pa'i tshul rags tsam bstan pa
kun gsal me long zhes bya na bzhugs so

"If thought arises, you observe its face."
Garab Dorje

For six days surrounded by some-
times torrential and relentless sum-
mer rains, from February 1 to 6,
a Shine and Lhagthong retreat taught by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu took place at
beautiful Tashigar South, Cordoba State,

Argentina. The teachings were based on
a 72-page text written by Chögyal Nam-
khai Norbu on Shine and Lhagthong in
Dzogchen. This retreat was a closed web
cast, so along with the approximately 200
participants hailing from around the world
in the newly painted Tashigar Gonpa, were
some 2000 practitioners, old and new, re-
ceiving the teaching in all the corners of
the globe.

As always at Tashigar, the days before
the retreat were filled with a flurry of activ-
ity and tents popped up like mushrooms in
the shady and tranquil camping area close
to the Gonpa. Previous to this for a cou-
ple of weeks, under the guidance of Rosa
Namkhai, a dedicated and diligent crew
of painters renovated both the inside and
outside of the Quincho style Gonpa with
fresh paint and embellished the columns
inside with lovely painted flowers, based
on the style of the Merigar Gonpa.

Inside the Gonpa, the web cast team
normally comprised of Fabio Andrico and

Dani Simonelli added a new member, Edu-
ardo Gromaches from Spain and his Ma-
cintosh, so the space filled by the tireless
technicians expanded and the entire seat-
ing of the retreat participants shifted over
to accommodate the area and wires need-
ed for this invaluable service to all the in-
ternational Dzogchen Community, refined
and perfected by Yeshe Namkhai and Luigi
Ottaviani.

On day one Rinpoche welcomed every-
one and said they should feel at home, as
if in a family, and asked older practitioners
to be aware of the new people and that ev-
eryone should open to each other and not
remain isolated. Then he introduced shine
and lhagthong as the practice for those of
lower capacity and not something widely
diffused in the Dzogchen system. He said
that we use shine and lhagthong for develop-
ing clarity.

On day two Rinpoche spoke about how
Dzogchen teaching is always connected
with transmission, but that shine is dif-

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Teaching



Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu
Longchenpa's Chozhi
Rinchen Phrengwa
– The Necklace of
the Four Precious
Dharmas

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Interview



Yeshe Silvano
Namkhai
"It's perfect from
the beginning"

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Tashigar Sur



The origins
of Tashigar
South,
Argentina

» Pages 12, 13



Good day everybody everywhere. Today we will start with the practice of Guruyoga. I already told you that the practice of Guruyoga is very important, and that Guruyoga is a way of integrating what we have learned.

We began the explanation of the first of the four dharmas of Gampopa yesterday. We explained how precious our human life is and also about impermanence. We learned and try to be present in that awareness. Today we have another from the first group: the condition of karma and its cause and effect and how the consequence of karma is related with transmigration. We will learn these two arguments today.

Impermanence not only means that one day we will die, but after death we can also have another birth. So birth, death and birth are suffering; that is our condition. We can have birth in any dimension of the six lokas; there is not one single place where we have only happiness. The nature of samsara is like a dimension of fire, if we make a big fire and in that dimension it is always hot, then it is not really comfortable to be there. So we try to be free in this moment and with this occasion free from suffering.

So this is an explanation of the various sufferings of samsara. The dimension of hell is hot and cold sufferings. The dimension of the preta is hunger; hunger where there is nothing to eat or drink. The dimension of animals is always very heavy as they have very heavy ignorance; they eat each other and are always suffering in that kind of condition. The suffering of human beings is related with our three emotions and all those problems. Then there are the Asuras who are always jealous and fighting. The Devas have the suffering of death and falling down at the end into the lower states. Even though in the Deva realm there is some slight happiness, it is not permanent and is always changing, and very often there is suffering. For example, if someone is in a dimension of Deva, they can enjoy and be happy. Then at one moment their life is interrupted and they fall down. Then they have the suffering of the fire of hell, because as we already said yesterday, in the Deva realm they consume all merits and there is no merit left for happiness. So we know these things and try to liberate from samsara.

Our vision of this life is just like when we wake up from sleeping, at that moment we discover what kind of dream we had and that it is all impermanent and unreal. For that reason, even if we have some happiness, at the end we will leave all these things and go away. Even if we became very famous, a very important person, with so many dependents and great wealth, when we go away we go alone. All these things are of no use. For that reason, it is very important that we try to apply and integrate the Dharma.

All our desires are like poison, similar to an army for killing or fire for burning. All these things seem to bring happiness provisionally, but then they all produce suffering. When we accumulate wealth and riches and protect it with sacrifice, and we try to multiply that wealth day after day, in the real sense we are multiplying and protecting the cause of suffering. It means that it is very important that we have that knowledge and understanding. *Kheng* means, for example, that you become rich and feel very important. *Jung* means that even though you have wealth, you still need more and more, because you are never satisfied. *Kun tang tsö che* means for all these reasons we discuss, fight, and create problems for other people, and in the end what we produce and multiply is all kinds of emotions. *Tagtu ching* means we become more and more attached and believe something is important and real. *Du dzi yeng* means that we always dedicate our time for these kinds of actions. *Lü tang sog la gol* means that sometimes because of our power and position, we lose our precious body and life. When we are dedicated to this kind of condition, we have many things to do. We never feel very free, and we always say that we are occupied with this or that, and give it too much importance. We do not even have enough time to practice, so all this is contrary to Dharma.

Phagpa nam means like a Bodhisattva, a holy person who has such knowledge, who considers these kinds of activities of little use. People who have less desire, for example, are satisfied with a small house to live in. It is called *döpa chung* when one has less desire. Contrary to that, someone who has made a small house needs a bigger one tomorrow. Then when you have a big house, you are not satisfied and you need another house somewhere else. If you have nothing and you get a bicycle you are happy, but when you have more possibility you are no longer satisfied with a bicycle, and you need a car. Then after a little while you are not satisfied with a car, but you need a big and good car. This is our real condition. All people have this kind of desire.



Photo: Fabio Andrico

LONGCHENPA'S chozhi rinchen phrengwa – the necklace of the four precious dharmas

day two

tashigar sur, december 29, 2007

It is very important that we learn what the Bodhisattvas taught. The Bodhisattvas said *döpa chung*, and that means having less desire. If you feel hungry and you have no food, of course you have the desire to get food. That is something concrete, but when you find a little food, you are satisfied. That is how Buddhist monks did in ancient times, including Buddha. Then a rule developed for monks that they could not keep food in the house, otherwise desire develops. Everyday the monks would go out to get small quantities of food. Maybe sometimes they would go to four or five families and then put all the food together and return before midday and at midday they would sit together and eat. They would not eat, only drink, until the next day. This is what they did in order to not have too much desire.

In Mahayana we do not follow the Hinayana tradition, so it is not necessary to do that, but we are always aware of the reason and we try to have less desire. *Chog she* means that when you have something you are satisfied. If you think that you have this, but maybe you need something more, when these thoughts arise you immediately recognize that you have more desire. Then you think that what you have is enough. This is called *chog she*. In Tibetan this is called *dö chung chog she*, and is famous for practitioners.

Ngang gi gewa phel means if we are *dö chung chog she*, we automatically increase virtue. For that reason, people who follow the path of the liberation try to have less desire and try to be satisfied.

If someone has no desire, that person is a kind of Bodhisattva. People who have less desire are of the Bodhisattva family, so that is good. People who have more desire multiply suffering and emotions, so to the contrary, if we have less desire, we automatically increase virtue. For that reason we follow the holy masters of ancient times and try to be satisfied and live in a very simple way. We try not to be elegant or get rich, more powerful, or get a higher position, etc. Particularly people who follow sutra should be this way.

When we are with other people we can create and develop many negativities. If we are together with a good practitioner, of course we can have benefit, but if we are

together with ordinary people and we follow them, and we don't know who they are or their condition, we can create many problems. We can also increase many distractions and useless actions; anger, fighting, and discussions develop. Then *chag dang* increases; *chag* means attachment, and *dang* means anger, and this is the main manifestation of our ego. When we have that ego, we are always saying "I like, I don't like, I accept, I don't accept". We are always going ahead in that way and suffering increases. We cannot find any essence of something positive.

People are not so satisfied in general even when we do our best. We have a saying: "Even Buddha will not be succeed to make everybody happy". This manifests very much in daily life. If we do something good, for example, like we think that we want to do something beneficial for others and do service for a group of people or a community, some people are happy, but some are not happy and they criticize. Even if they criticize, for example, if they criticize me, I know how the teaching is and I don't really care if someone criticizes me. I don't really care and I don't feel bad, but I feel a little badly for them, because that is the ignorance of the ego. Still I try to explain, to make the teaching and the manifestation of the ego understood. Day after day and year after year, if the ego still manifests, I feel sad for them. In general, people do not feel sad but angry, and they want to discuss, fight and struggle. Practitioners see things a little differently. There is never a moment when all people are satisfied.

You teach and explain in a correct way for many people, and they have understood and have benefit, maybe not total benefit, but all people can have some benefit. We explain and give the teaching in the best way we can, but everyone does not consider this something fantastic. For example, you give a Dzogchen teaching, the essence teaching like Guruyoga, how you integrate, and how you must be in instant presence. If you have understood this, it is the real essence of the teaching. Some people don't understand that, and maybe the teacher explains everyday, but they want something else. Maybe they know some book titles or a famous teaching and would like to learn that instead. So that is an example of a person who is not satisfied.

You can become a good friend and keep your relationship with someone, and manifest in a very kind way, but then at the end maybe they don't feel that way and there is a kind of separation. We have many dependents, many relations and friends we deal with, and we do our best for them, but then everything is impermanent and maybe they all become a secondary cause for negativity, and for not progressing in your practice. Instead of dealing with all these kinds of people, you can decide to go alone somewhere to practice like Longchenpa. Longchenpa went to the mountain of Kangri Thökar and in that way, like Longchenpa, you can have more benefit. Many practitioners practice that way. Many practitioners give teachings and have many followers, and that becomes negative for their realization. If there are ten students, for example, ten very perfect students is positive, and there are no negativities or problems. Milarepa or Longchenpa lived on a mountain and if someone was seriously interested in the teaching, they would have to sacrifice to follow the teaching, but there are not many students like that. For example, I remember my Uncle Khyentse Rinpoche. My uncle lived in a cave where there was snow even in the summertime, so there was no place for people to stay. Once my uncle gave Nyingthig Yazhi, the very essential Upadesha teaching, and nearly forty of his students came from different places. We had no place for them to sleep or receive the teaching. There was a small cave inside this cave, but we couldn't sit in an ordinary way. If we sat in an ordinary way twenty people filled the place, so we all sat in the position of the rishi and my uncle gave teaching to us that way. We finished the teaching and all the students went down the mountain before dark because it was in a forest, and they slept in the forest under the trees. In the morning they woke up and came back up the mountain. That means that these people really had the capacity to sacrifice and were seriously interested in the teaching. They became good students. Our condition is different. When we say 'we do a retreat', people come and if it is not comfortable they discuss and say that there is no good food, no place to sit or sleep, and they also say, "Why did we pay and there is no preparation?"

We must understand our situation in society. We are not on a mountain; we are in a city, in a country, we have electricity, houses, and we buy everything we need with money. Of course people need to pay, otherwise who pays? The teacher is giving teaching, but someone needs to pay the teacher. Sometimes the teacher travels, so you should

important words
from CHÖGYAL
NAMKHAI NORBU

If people remain in the Dzogchen Community and are not interested in my teaching, but continue to create serious problems, the Gakyil of the Community where that person is a member has the right to expel that person from the Dzogchen Community. The Gakyil should also inform the worldwide Dzogchen Community of the situation.

If someone has problems or tensions with people of the Gakyil or the Gakyil’s activities, then the Gakyil and that person should meet together and try to discover the root of the problem. In that way they can discuss with each other and find the correct way to proceed. In this way no one can be egoistical because we all are related with the Vajra samaya; then the problem can be overcome and solved.

We must try to remember who we are and what we are doing. We must try to purify the wrong things we have done and continue to do. All the followers of my teachings are seriously brothers and sisters of Vajra. This is the most important point for our practitioners and is their main practice.

If a Gakyil or single person, however, does not want to go in this direction, then I ask them not to follow my teaching and not to do anything associated or related to the Dzogchen Community. By not going in the direction I ask, there are no benefits for you or the Dzogchen Community and it creates many samaya problems. ✽

a marvelous teaching
in the argentine summer

LONGCHENPA’s chozhi rinchen phrengwa -
the necklace of the four precious dharmas

georgia mcdonald

It is summer in the southern hemisphere and many new and old students from all over the world have gathered in Tashigar Sur at Christmas time for Rinpoche’s retreat on Longchenpa’s commentary to the Four Dharmas of Gampopa. With the warm summer breeze filtering in through the Gonpa’s open windows and the sounds of birds chirping away in the surrounding woods, many fortunate students had the opportunity to receive Rinpoche’s profound teachings mixed with entertaining stories and anecdotes from his vast life experience.

Summer in Tashigar Sur, Argentina, is a mix of warm, balmy days and sudden thunder storms in the early evening that send everyone outside to verandas to enjoy the cool, refreshing breeze they bring. From the Gonpa windows we can see the little woods across the now dry creek bed where many students camp in the shade of the trees, and the slanting football pitch where some hilarious games have been played in past years. It is a superb setting for receiving these precious teachings from the Master.

As the days grew longer, with the winding of the clocks to daylight savings time, Rinpoche explained the meaning of the first of the four Dharmas, the preciousness of our human condition and to always remember the famous words of the Buddha, that ‘life is just like a big dream’.

On New Year’s Eve everyone came together in the Gonpa once again for ‘Toasts’ with the Master and Rosa. The Tashigar Sur Gakyil organized a great program of fun

and festivities that was enjoyed by all, and included an indoor Olympics and then spontaneous songs from students from across the globe, with Rinpoche making a contribution of some songs from Tibet which he played on his flute.

Every morning as Rinpoche and students arrived at the Gonpa, billowing white smoke, offering and purifying, could be seen coming from the sangkhang. The second of the four Dharmas, Rinpoche explained, is that once we are aware of the precious opportunity that we have had in coming into contact with the Dharma, we must make sure that what we learned becomes something concrete, the path. In order for something to become concrete, we need to follow a perfect teacher in the best way we can, for both our own benefit and for the benefit of all sentient beings.

The sunny days at Tashigar Sur were filled with activities from morning till night, with Yantra Yoga, courses in the Dance of the Vajra and explanations of collective practices. It was wonderful to see the opening of the external mandala for Dance of the Vajra during this retreat. It is in the

place of the first wooden floored mandala that was built at Tashigar by Rinpoche himself along with students in 1990, but has been updated with a new, durable concrete base, and a beautiful French-style shingled roof, for dancing in the rain!

Gampopa was one of the best students of Milarepa and wrote these four Dharmas incorporating the global teachings of the Buddha Shakyamuni, including Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen teachings. Longchenpa also had knowledge of these four Dharmas and so composed a short teaching about them while he was living at his personal retreat place on ‘Snow Mountain’ in Bhutan. For the third Dharma Rinpoche taught us that even though now we are on this path, we still have dualistic vision and live in illusion, and so he gave further details about the three ways to liberate this vision with the common, particular and supreme methods.

On the second to last day of the retreat after the Ganapuja, an auction was held to raise money for the projects of the Community of Tashigar Sur. Most important to achieve was buying a new generator so that a more re-

liable electricity source could be guaranteed to transmit the webcasts of Rinpoche, and also more money was needed to go towards the cost of the new external mandala. An atmosphere of happy spending pervaded the Gonpa, with international rivalry coming to the fore as the bids went up and up, especially over the wonderful objects that Rinpoche generously donated. The Gakyil was very pleased to announce at the end of the evening that they had raised close to US\$ 8500.

To sum up the last of the four dharmas, Rinpoche described how illusory vision manifests as wisdom, and taught us to try and maintain presence and not be distracted by thoughts but to simply ‘observe the face’ of them.

This marvelous teaching was transmitted also via webcast to hundreds of students around the globe who could thus also participate in this retreat beyond the limits of distance. And so from the depths of all our hearts we offer our sincere thanks to our Master for these wonderful teachings. ©



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also pay the travel expenses. Many people don’t understand these things and they say ask why they should pay for the Dharma. If you go to a mountain like where Milarepa lived, then you don’t have to pay and if you don’t need to eat you can go there. Many people come to our retreats, and not always people who are seriously interested. Some people come out of curiosity and it is comfortable for them. Maybe they need to spend some money, but maybe they have the money to spend. Then these same people criticize and that is very difficult.

If a teacher wanted to check people one by one to see if they are serious or not, that would be difficult. The teacher should give the teaching seriously even to students who are not serious, it doesn’t matter. When the students receive the teaching seriously, they are connected with samaya. Later ignorant students do not respect each other, discuss and create problems with each other. If you are a teacher like this, you must think a little. Sometimes I feel very sad because somehow I cannot leave my students when they say they need to do a retreat. Of course, we go ahead and do a retreat. When we go ahead we have so many of these kinds of problems and we don’t know what to do. Tibetans use a saying, for example, what should you do if there is boiling iron in your hand, if you throw it is not good and if you hold it, it is also not so easy for you. This situ-

ation becomes something of that kind. For that reason, Longchenpa says it is very important that we try to do our best to be alone and do practice.

All ancient masters, teachers, say they lived in a quiet place, did personal retreat and obtained realization. For that reason Longchenpa said he remained alone at this place called Kangri Thöka, which is on a top of a mountain. Before that he lived in many places, in monasteries and also went around and gave teachings. His nickname was bsam yas pa, Samye (bsam yas) is the monastery built by Guru Padmasambhava and Longchenpa lived in that monastery. He gave teachings there so he became the ‘teacher of bsam yas’. Later when he saw how the situation was, he escaped to the mountain.

If I could escape like Longchenpa maybe I would feel very happy. The solitary place where all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are is said to be the best place. That means no one creates problems for you, like discussing, arguing, or accusing you. There may be some animals like mosquitoes. That is possible. In this place, very deep contemplation and knowledge increases. Then all that you do, day after day, is integrated with Dharma. You can have more presence and awareness of impermanence. You have no desire to buy this or that because on the mountain you don’t need anything. In a city you need a computer, a

telephone, etc. Someone in Italy, at Merigar, went to do a dark retreat, and the geköe of Merigar was doing service for that person, and when the geköe went to bring food to that person, they asked the geköe to charge their cell phone. That is interesting, huh?!

There are less distractions, so devotion and the knowledge of the condition of samsara arise and manifest that feeling in a more natural way. There is no contact with people and less activity. It is not necessary to think of other people, what you can and can’t do, and you are freer. Rang wang means we are free, jorde means we feel happy and do not lack anything. Day and night we can integrate with the practice. We put our precious human condition in a more important position and for the benefit of this human condition we do our best with our body, speech, mind, and everything. ✽

Transcribed by Georgia McDonald
Edited by Naomi Zeitz

"it's perfect from the beginning"

update from yeshi namkhai

tashigar south, argentina
feb 17, 2008

Mirror: Yeshi, it has been a while since we last met. Could you tell us what's new in your life and in the work you have been doing for the Dzogchen community?
Yeshi: As a matter of fact I have been quite busy in the two past years and I have not had the chance to share with everyone the work I have done and the results we have obtained. Right now I am focusing on "high-risk" projects in collaboration with the International Gakyil, and on the Webcast that gives us the gift of our Master's vision and precious teachings each month

Mirror: You have only referred in passing to the most obvious results of the work done over the past four years, such as economic stability, or the increased collaboration between local groups, sites and gakyils, so I guess you do not consider them important achievements?
Yeshi: Of course these are important achievements but they are after all relative ones; besides, I do not like to take center stage because it reminds me too much the business world and I have nothing to sell or to show. There are two aspects that I have been trying to emphasize all along: knowledge and its integration in everyday life, even if I have often used terms that are commonly used in the Western cultural context. After all these are the two main motivations for the people drawn to the teachings, namely, the desire to know and move beyond their limitations.

Mirror: It seems that as time goes by, your language and your work mode are getting closer and closer to the principles of the teachings. Is this just an impression or has this been true all along?
Yeshi: Actually this has always been the case. The fact of the matter is that at the beginning there were circumstances that at first required a language more oriented towards the business world, and then called for concrete action. Only now I am able to use a language that is for me more spontaneous and direct in order to give a more correct form.

Mirror: I do not understand what you mean: could you give me an example?
Yeshi: Sure. Think of how we, as well intentioned parents, try and answer a child who asks for the first time why the light goes off when we use the light switch. We adults know that electricity is what generates light and that the light-bulb is its medium, but this is not easy to explain and we end up doing so at a physical and chemical level. The child understands the relationship between light-bulb and electricity, but remains with an "abstract" idea of

what electricity is and it is not until she gets an electric shock that she truly understands electricity's potentiality. When we deal with metaphysical concepts (meaning concepts that transcend our senses) usually we behave like children and thus we spontaneously create "abstract" ideas that will later become, through our experiences, concrete. But at times it is not east to build this relationship and so we do not recognize ourselves and the idea remains abstract: and indeed "to contextualize" is difficult.

Mirror: A little like math in school, first you must understand the theorem and then you can apply it. But if the problem becomes more complex we are not always able to solve it.
Yeshi: Yes, with the difference that mathematics is a "defined" field, that is, a field with rules (for instance, the Abelian field – [Translator's note: An Abelian field or domain is a set of elements a, b, c, \dots forming Abelian groups with addition and multiplication as group operations where $a(b + c) = ab + ac$]. When we speak of knowledge and of integration of the teachings in daily life it is a little more complicated. We are Westerners, and we are used to think only of two basic aspects: mind and body, and on their basis we build our identity. For example, we Europeans from the Old Continent say that we have thousands of years of history, while North Americans, from the New Continent, are modern and love progress. So we can talk for hours without truly proving anything. When we instead do not deal with universal problems, but with daily ones, we often end up engaging in psychological introspection. It is not by chance that we are always drawn to psychology, but then when we meet the teachings we discover the energy level and we do not really know how to converse with it.

Mirror: Interesting: do you mean "to converse" because we are always, after all, using body and mind to understand everything, like it works with philosophy as well?
Yeshi: Exactly. When teachings say that you must go to the essence and not stop at the intellectual level we must not think that they are referring to "scholars" debating holy texts. They mean us and our abstract ideas, and these abstract ideas need to correspond to our experience and clarity for our knowledge of our true state to become authentic. And in order for this to happen, information and method are not enough: we need the teacher, the transmission and application. This is why I am saying that to contextualize is not easy.



Yeshi and Rinpoche at the Shitro Initiation, Tashigar South, February 2008.

Photo: E. Rubinat

Mirror: Then to be part of a gakyil can be a burdensome commitment?
Yeshi: Well, it is serious application. It means to integrate daily and to work with circumstances for the sake of the Community and of oneself. To apply a principle is always an important commitment: in my work experience this has always been what has made the difference. As you know, aside from being a husband and a father, I also have normal job and my professional life deals with consulting for medium and large companies. I have always related to the times of the information technology and of organization through the principles of the teachings. I have been successful in this, and my career has been quite fast: bit aside from this, I have also distinguished myself for having the right and balanced approach, and I have always brought my clients towards a real understanding of their problems. Obviously I was never one to shine for sale numbers, but I have consistently distinguished myself for leadership, and for my ability to coordinate and to train others, so much so that I became a manager very quickly. I have tried and use all the time available to integrate the teachings in my daily life, including the many hours spent driving and my nights spent in various hotels, but especially in the choice of projects and in my approach to them. Often I would begin by selling software to then come to wrap things up by trying to explain attitude and the importance of knowledge. To work for a company or for the Community makes no difference, what matters are your approach and commitment. Of course, to work to increase the profit of your company might be less gratifying, but obviously it is all relative.

Mirror: What advice would you give to the many people who are interested in becoming a gakyil member or who wish to collaborate with the Community?
Yeshi: I would give them first of all my best wishes. Then I would ask them to reflect on the importance

of awareness, that is, of always trying to keep in mind our limitations and that we must strive to make "conditions correspond to circumstances". In other words, we should not spend too much time looking at ourselves and at our emotions: rather we should make an effort to contextualize well our problems. Two years ago I compiled the most important advice to improve collaboration in the Community, and I would encourage everyone to read this document carefully. When we do not succeed in understanding concretely the meaning of a word it can happen that not matter how clear this word may be, it may not make sense to us: and indeed the first complaints regarding this document had to deal with the fact that it has many business terms and that it refers to complicated procedures. For sure the material we have written over the past two years have tried to develop the Master's vision in a modern and professional way, and in this sense they may come across at times as challenging. Then again, once the terms have been explained, the ideas are easy to apply. What I find very strange are observations such as "[...] this document constantly refers to writing and also to writing for others. I have neither the time nor the skill to do this: why am I forced to do it?"

Mirror: This is a common question: what is your answer?
Yeshi: When the answer is obvious, I try and make the person think, maybe by asking her another question such as: "Well, why do we then dedicate merits?" Can you believe that many people have gone so far as to ask me if the Master had truly read and understood the document?! I am always very proud to answer with this sentence: "In 2004 I went to Tashigar Norte and in less than three hours [the Master] had read and approved the document, and all I had to do was to explain an economic or technical term here and there". In any event, after all the complaints, I have outlined the essential points of this text and have sent it to all the gakyils,

in the attempt to suggest simple behaviors and procedures to better convey this document's main points.
Mirror: Could it be the case that Community members see themselves differently from the way they are described in this document?
Yeshi: Yes, this is the main reason, and as we all know, change is scary, but often we are not aware that everything changes while our idea of ourselves remains the same. For instance, my son said that he wants to learn how to skateboard. So we got him one, but I did not immediately go ahead and jump in the middle of the street, racing at neck-breaking speed. First of all, I have gotten older, and I could fall; and in any case, the things I knew how to do with a skateboard when I was younger are most likely out of fashion today, or even ridiculous. So we went and saw what kids do today with their boards and I understood that it is a sport for older kids. So my son and I are now learning slowly, slowly the essentials of skate-boarding and then, if when my son's passion will continue when he grows older, he will find his own way. Many people do not realize that the world changes as years go by: even the Community has changed, but many attitudes have not. These attitudes are usually motivated by "nostalgia" or by resistance to the "excessive modernity of computers and the web". But these complaints often come from the same people who will immediately use their cells to send text messages as soon as I look elsewhere, something that I, for one, have never even learned how to do (because I use a palm organizer).
Mirror: (laughs) Interesting! What are you working on right now?
Yeshi: As the head of the International Gakyil, I try and follow high stakes' projects, or I solve difficult issues. I take care of the webcasts and of developing the entire technological framework. When I can, I try and go to the different Community centers to help out and to train people. This

takes most of my working day, and this year I have left my job as a manager and have gone back to consulting. I have opened an office in Grosseto to be able to combine my job with helping concretely the gakyils. Right now various gakyil members from all over the world contact Merigar West for any type of query. I am hoping to soon be able to offer them a direct and preferential line of communication. I also want to continue implementing concretely a project that I have already been involved in for many years, namely training the gakyils, and improving communication between people and gakyils. I would like to offer online course to cut down the time involved in becoming active in any given gakyil. I am also checking internal communication as well as communication with the outside world, which means collaboration tools and websites. All these projects require money, time, and multiple skills: I hope that with my new office I will be able to build a bridge for collaboration and also to divide some of the tasks among gakyils and community.

Mirror: As a matter of fact it is too much to deal with all this by yourself: how come you do not have collaborators?
Yeshi: There are two main factors that make working together difficult: barriers and knowledge. By “barriers” I mean any type of geographical, technological, linguistic distance. The former has been, historically, the biggest obstacle in our Community, but it is one we can overcome with some good will and effort. The latter means knowledge as understanding of the Community’s history and motivations, but first and foremost it means understanding of the principles of the teachings. This second obstacle is also hard to explain: let me

give you an example related to the webcasts. In the beginning, Luigi and I, focusing on common sense, had examined different solutions that would work for the technological framework of Merigar West and of possibly the rest of the Community. The simplest and most advantageous solution was based on Microsoft and allowed to set up all the necessary collaboration tools as well as the Webcast according to schedule. So we created a prototype with these guidelines, and showed it to the Master, who liked it. After we began the webcasts, however, we ran into some problems due to incompatibility issues between the Mac and Linux operating systems. From there all possible interpretations and accusations came forth: first of all we were seen as ignorant and incompetent in information technology, then as wanting to support multinational companies (such as Microsoft), then we were even seen as people who always want to give orders and control everything. So we started receiving very imaginative projects that almost invariably would have in common software based on open-source technology. In short, we understood that in the end our goal was not to create problems: we knew very well that open source means instability and greater costs but in the end we decided to accommodate people. So we took the best aspects of the open-source system and of the characteristics of web TV’s professional products and we invented a HD system that today has become standardized. When we did this, people seemed happy, but we are now left with lots of manual labor because the open-source systems are not meant to deal with industrial scale work. Our webcast system could transmit in DVD quality, but since quite a few gars do not have good DSL connections, we must broadcast at very low

quality. So we began improving the webcast conditions in the local gars, but we have not always succeeded, and once in a while the transmission has not been perfect, and thus the final product would not be either. So in the end, those who seemed happy have begun to complain again and to propose alternatives: and now we are once more receiving very creative proposals based now on the original Microsoft-based platform! Thus this story shows that there are no perfect things, but that we must work with circumstances, and that we must try and be simple and practical. We need some common sense. I always joke that at Merigar West we try and do things like the Christians, because we still have not understood how Buddhists should operate...

Mirror: (laughs) Very funny! During the last webcast you sent an email dealing with the difficulties that had come up: what happened exactly?
Yeshi: For the first two years I had an Italian sponsor, but then we ran out of money and the Istituto Shang Shung is doing its best to keep the system running. During the last webcast we had serious problems, and now I would like to make everything much more stable and professional but this will require more collaboration and a higher yearly cost. In order to make everything simpler and more functional we must collaborate and employ useful technical solutions, in short, without having each person following his or her idea and without a constant flow of “expert opinion”. Yes, in the Community when we speak of collectivity there are always so many experts and scientists who have done it all, from going to the Moon to working for the President of the United States. But when the time comes to write a three-page paper ex-

plaining in detail the solution so that I can make an appropriate evaluation of the proposal, what I get are either very imaginative 100-page documents or just empty words. And I end up being the one writing the three pages and making the evaluations myself in the middle of the night. So what we need is the good sense to understand who we are and how we are organized. This in turn will allow us to understand better our limitations and to find a simple solution that will help us. If then this solution can be deployed in a context that will allow us to create the foundations for our essential services, then everything will become cheaper and more efficient.

Mirror: I see that you have a lot to say about each issue, which means that your involvement in all of them is very deep. How do you manage to balance family, career and Community?
Yeshi: First of all, I have a very efficient wife who is also very devoted to the teachings. Then I have next to me people who share my approach and give themselves to their tasks completely, and for those I am always thankful. I also have good professional sense, but first and foremost, I have a very profound devotion to the teachings and to our Master.

Mirror: It is very stimulating to hear this type of talk, especially since often people complain about doubts and insecurities. What do you think about this?
Yeshi: I cannot really say, I have never had doubts about certain things, and I do not usually give importance to other things, because often they are very relative and can manifest one way or another without much difference. The teachings, Tibetan culture, integration in society and other similar things are very important to me, and I do not waste time to

judge them or to display them in public. For sure there are things that are just wrong, killing for instance. Choosing what is good and what is bad does not make sense, but I have no doubt that for instance the webcast is a very important thing, because it allows us to come in contact with the Master almost once a month.

Mirror: Since our time is up, is there anything else you would like to add, though we hope that we will be able to continue this conversation in Italy?
Yeshi: I must say I run out of ideas, and I could talk for hours. But in the end what we need are always the same few and simple things. Every time I speak with a gakyil they always ask me: “So you have any special ideas for us?”, or something along those lines, and indeed there is a tendency to look for something external that will take care of everything. This attitude often stems from the interpretation of the principles of the teachings, we have so much to apply that little time is left in one lifetime. I have never made a separation between work and the teachings. For me they are exactly the same thing, the point is you don’t mix things in the wrong way and you follow the principles of the teachings, so things go well. Most of the problems we have are that people are mixing things in the wrong way. What I mean by mixing is that people interpret things incorrectly instead of applying them. Interpreting is different. You have to keep the principle always pure. “It’s perfect from the beginning”, you apply the method and that method should correspond to the principle and the conditions you have in that moment.

Mirror: Thank you very much Yeshi.
Yeshi: You are most welcome and I will see you in Italy. ©

>> upcoming retreats continued from page 1

Kalmykia
September 8–15
Dzogchen Teaching
Retreat
Open Webcast

Italy
Merigar West
Sept. 26–Oct. 3
Dzogchen Teaching
Retreat

October 6–9
Santi Maha Sangha
III Level Exam

October 10–17
Santi Maha Sangha
IV Level Training

Oct. 31–Nov. 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
Dec. 26–Jan. 1
Dzogchen Teaching
Retreat
Open Webcast

b o d h i

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urgent need of funds for the construction of derge tibetan school

Dear Members,
Last year we made an appeal to raise funds for the construction of an elementary school in the Tibetan region of Derge. Thanks to the generous response from ASIA's supporters, we were able to start this project. Currently the classrooms are finished, and the construction of the dormitories has already started. However, the kitchen, dining hall, bathrooms and recreation rooms have not been built yet.

We need to finish the construction of the school by next summer, so that the children can begin their school year in September of 2008.

More than ever your contribution is vital in order to finish the construction and furnishing of the school. Please spread the word. Together we can make the Derge elementary school a reality!

Thank you once again for your kind support and your precious collaboration.

Happy New Year from all the ASIA staff!
Andrea Dell'Angelo
(Director)

P.S. Riccardo, an ASIA representative, has just returned from Tibet and wants to tell us what he saw:

After an 8-hour drive across the mountain roads of Eastern Tibet, I arrive in Derge. I have come from Chamdo, one of the eastern most towns of the Tibetan Autonomous Region – TAR, where I went to get permits from the local authorities to offer health care training to local residents.

Half an hour from Derge, I run into a police roadblock that looks like a border crossing. It marks the end of the TAR and the entrance to the Sichuan region – the administrative seat of Derge. The situation should be calmer. Less pressure and fewer checks by the police, no authorization needed to move from one village to another, and no special visa for Derge.

However the situation is tense today and there are many Lamas in town. People tell me that the local authorities have demanded the presence of Lamas from different monasteries across the region. The influence of the Burmese unrest reaches here as well.

Just as I settle into our office, in front of the river crossing the town, I receive a welcome invitation to visit Khempo Sonam.



The classes in the old building.



Classrooms in construction.

Derge is a small town of about 5,000 inhabitants, sitting in a valley surrounded by high mountains. A peaceful country life fills the streets. Here the Chinese influence is felt less than in the bigger cities, and the influence of Tibetan culture seems to be stronger. All is in fact very "Tibetan", from the style of the houses, to the simplicity of the people, and the sense of spirituality.

On the way to Khempo Sonam's residence, I participate in a Kora (a walk around a sacred place) around the Print House of Derge with a lot of pilgrims. The Print House of Derge, the oldest publishing house in Tibet, contains about 70 % of all the sacred publications. I also pass the wonderful and traditional residences of the most important Lamas of the region.

Khempo Sonam receives me in a warm and welcoming room, full of colored fabrics and religious thanks. It is a welcome meeting, not at all a working meeting: times and manners here are very different compared to what we are used to in the west. Welcoming and listening to the guest are more important than everything else. Finally we discuss the Derge School, and we plan a visit to check the progress.

The Derge School is just outside the center of town on a street that passes in front of a monastery. The school is a two-story building whose traditional architectural style integrates with the surrounding mountains. Derge lies below and all around there is silence and light.

Khempo Sonam is pleased, and together we admire the exterior of the building. Inside, the classrooms are finished. There is a smell of new wood floors, and the sunlight streams through the red wooden windows. We stop to look at the trumpet wall effect, the huge glass face heats the internal gap, and warm air enters the room through big openings providing natural heat.

The students' rooms are ready to be furnished, but we need to wait until spring to build the dining hall and the bathrooms. Winters are harsh here, and it is too cold to pour cement. We also need to wait for milder temperatures to allow workers coming from elsewhere to camp on the construction sight.

It is important to take advantage of the winter to continue with the fundraising campaign for the Derge Elementary School, and begin the spring with enough money to finish construction in time for the start of the school year in September 2008.

Khempo Sonam is eager to move the students into the new building, so that they don't spend another year in the old school or the monastery's dormitories. Moreover, Khempo Sonam's new school will also admit girls, who until now could not stay in the monastery's dormitory. This also doubles the number of students at the new Derge School.

The sun is disappearing behind the mountains and the temperature is dropping. Khempo Sonam slowly closes the main door of the building and tells me to



The completed classrooms.



hurry up. Soon we are back in Derge, among the nomads still walking around the Print House and smiling and greeting as we pass by in our car.

Riccardo Ducci
International Projects

How you can contribute:
\$73 US / 50 Euro buys an educational materials kit for five children
\$218 US / 150 Euro buys furniture for the kitchen and the dining hall
\$725 US / 500 Euro helps with the construction of a bedroom
We welcome all donations

Please make your donations through the following:
· bank account n. 3893.50 at Monte dei Paschi di Siena in the name of A.S.I.A. Onlus
IBAN: IT 27 M010307216000000389350
SWIFT BIC: PASC IT M1G99
· credit card: visit our web page: www.asia-onlus.org or calling us at 00 39 06 44 34 00 34

Also, for U.S. donors:
· Mail check made out to "ASIA," to ASIA, P.O. Box 124, Conway, MA, 01341-0124 USA, please write "Derge School" and specific aspect of project (school kits, furniture or bedroom) in Memo or make a general donation by writing "Derge School – general donation.

· Pay by credit card through PayPal – please email asia-usa@tsegyalgar.org for details.

· Direct deposit: Bank of Western Massachusetts, South Deerfield, Massachusetts
Account #12 36 14 15 02
Routing# 011 80 24 88

membership update for shang shung institute

Hello everybody, and best wishes for a very happy and successful New Year!

We would like to thank everyone who became a member of the Institute in 2007, and supported us in that way. As each membership lasts only from the payment of the membership fee until the 31st of December of the same year, and is not renewed automatically, it would be wonderful and extremely helpful if you could become a member again in 2008. Maybe this year even a sustaining or meritorious member?

By joining us as a member, you will prove your interest in Tibetan culture and your commitment to preserve it for all future generations. With your concrete support, you will help us ensure that the wisdom and knowledge of such a rare and unique civilization will not be endangered.

In 2008, we again offer four different kinds of memberships and each full member will receive several „goodies“.

1. Preliminary membership:
5 Euros or US \$ 7
In order to be able to purchase some items from our shop, one must be a member of the international Shang Shung Institute. The preliminary membership is a limited membership and no commitments regarding the Shang Shung Institute are being taken with this membership. This kind of membership is just a mandatory requirement to purchase any of the products offered by the Shang Shung Institute.
- Actual members of the international Dzogchen Community do not need to get this preliminary membership. The free access to the web shop of the Shang Shung Institute is a free service to all actual members of the International Dzogchen Community.

2. Ordinary membership:
50 Euro or US \$ 70
Each ordinary member receives:
· a crystal with the logo of the Shang Shung Institute printed

- inside, or a calendar with photos from Tibet produced by the Shang Shung Institute, or one item
· a CD, or a DVD (produced by the SSI), or a book (produced by Shang Shung Edizioni) of your choice from our website:
· a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI
· free mailing of these gifts to everywhere in the world
· full access to our web shop.

3. Sustaining membership:
108 Euro or US \$ 160
Each sustaining member receives:
· a crystal with the logo of the Shang Shung Institute printed inside or a calendar with photos from Tibet produced by the Shang Shung Institute
· one item – a CD, or a DVD (produced by the SSI), or a book (produced by Shang Shung Edizioni) of your choice from our website.
· a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI
· free mailing of these gifts to everywhere in the world
· full access to our web shop.

4. Meritorious membership:
360 Euro or US \$ 500
Each meritorious member receives:
· 10% discount on all courses and seminars of the ISSI
· a crystal with the SSI-logo printed inside or a calendar with photos from Tibet produced by the Shang Shung Institute
· a crystal with the A printed inside
· two items – CDs, or DVDs (produced by the SSI), or books (produced by Shang Shung Edizioni) of your choice from our website.
· a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI
· a calculator of the SSI
· full access to the web shop
· free mailing of these gifts to everywhere in the world.

You can renew, or get your new membership, on our website or directly in our shop.

Thank you very much for your generosity and your collaboration,

Oliver Leick, Luigi Ottaviani
and Paola Zamperini
www.shangshunginstitute.org



santi maha sangha update

the new procedures for
the santi maha sangha
examinations

The documents containing the new procedures for the Santi Maha Sangha examinations are now available at a web page where they can be downloaded: <http://www.dzogchen.it/pages/santi-maha-sangha.php>
In the file called SMS Exams Guidelines point five was added to the Admission Request. Please read it carefully before sending your request.

Every Gakyil is requested to keep a copy of these documents in their archives and make them available to their members and practitioners. For any clarification please contact the Santi Maha Sangha coordinator of your Gar or the Santi Maha Sangha coordinating center of the Shang Shung Institute at Merigar.

Best wishes,
Shang Shung Institute
SMS Coordinating Center

Santi Maha Sangha Coordinators:
Merigar West/East: Igor Legati,
edizss@tiscali.it
Tsegylgar East/West: Jim Valby,
jimvalby@gmail.com
Tashigar South/North:
Ricardo Sued,
rickysued@gmail.com
Namgyalgar: Elise Stutchbury,
elise777@austarnet.com.au
Russian Countries: Igor Berkhin,
igor.berkhin@gmail.com

SMS Coordinating Center:
Shang Shung Institute
s.celeri@istitutoshangshung.org

shang shung institute USA update

Please join us in welcoming the new class of 2012 starting this spring semester in Conway, MA. We would also like to introduce our new administrative assistant, Miranda Simmons Shannon, a long time community member. The next Traditional Tibetan Medicine 4 year class is expected to begin in September 2008. The Shang-Shung Institute also offers a monthly talk series in Northampton, MA as well as numerous intensive courses.



Class of 2012 with Dr. Tenzin Dagpa in the center.

Photo: J. Mella

Following are the 2008 Tibetan Medicine Summer Intensives in Conway, MA:
Moxibustion
with Dr. Tanzin Dargye
June 7th – 9th, 2008
Fee: \$ 225

Tibetan Medicine Symposium
with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo and keynote address by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche
June 13th – 15th, 2008

Mental Illness
with Dr. Kunchog Gyaltsen
June 17th – 18th, 2008
Fee: \$ 150

Tibetan Kunye Massage Level 1
with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo
June 25th – 29th, 2008
Fee: \$ 380

Tibetan Kunye Massage Level 2
with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo
July 17th – 20th, 2008
Fee: \$ 380

To register for the intensives please contact Miranda at secretary@shangshung.org or call (413)369-49 28.

USA Bookstore

As of January 1, 2008 the Tsegylgar Bookstore has become the Shang-Shung Institute – USA Bookstore. We plan to offer the same great service, including a full selection of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's books, CDs, and DVDs and fast shipping. We hope to create a new larger website that will include all our products soon. For now, you can buy public materials online at www.shangshung.org/shop/.

In order to buy restricted items, please download our catalog at www.tsegylgareast.org/bookstore. Please keep in mind that our new policy states that you must have received transmission as well as be a current Dzogchen community member in order to buy restricted materials. Our mailing address has changed, but all of our other contact information remains the same:

Shang-Shung Institute – USA
Bookstore,
P.O. Box 278
Conway, MA 01341, USA
Phone/Fax: (413)369-4473
Email:
shop-us@shangshunginstitute.org

Please make checks out to: “Shang-Shung Institute.” We can no longer accept checks in the name of “Tsegylgar Bookstore” or “DCA”.

worldwide yantra yoga and vajra dance courses

Dear members of Dzogchen Community,
The new worldwide Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance Courses schedule for 2008 is now available. Below you can find the link to download the pdf files.

Worldwide Yantra Yoga Courses
Schedule: <http://www.dzogchen.it/index.php?section=15>

Worldwide Vajra Dance Courses
Schedule: <http://www.dzogchen.it/index.php?section=17>

Best wishes
Shang Shung Institute

training for translators

summer merigar 2008

Hello everyone,
I would like to inform you about the next Training for Translators from Tibetan in 2008. This specific training is an initiative of the Ka-ter Translation Project of the International Shang Shung Institute. This is the sixth year of the training and represents a unique opportunity to increase one's knowledge of, and capacity to translate from, Classical Tibetan. The Training will take

place from **July 22 2008** until **August 9 2008**, again at Merigar, in Italy.

We plan to offer two courses, which will be held at the same time.

1. Advanced
This course is intended for those people who have already attended at least one training, and have a requisite amount of knowledge and experience. Either Elio Guarisco or Fabian Sanders will lead it and this group will work on a specific text about Dzogchen. All new people who want to participate in this training, but have

never attended a previous training, will have to pass a test.

2. Less advanced
This course is intended for people who have either participated in a previous training, or have an interest to learn, but do not have as much experience. Fabian Sanders will lead it and the group will work on a smaller and less complicated text about Dzogchen. This course is open to all people.
To attend one of these courses, one must be an active member of the International Shang Shung Institute. For further questions, please contact us at the address below.

special practice calendar for the earth mouse year 2008–2009



Global Timetable

Anniversary of Padmasambhava
6th Tibetan month - 10th day
Celebration at 8 a.m. Oddiyana time

Sunday 10th August 2008

- 17:00 Hawaii
- 20:00 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver
- 21:00 Denver, Salt Lake City, Pagosa Springs, Edmonton
- 22:00 Lima, Quito, Chicago, Mexico City
- 23:00 Caracas, San Juan, Santiago, New York, Conway, Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana, Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa

Monday 11th August 2008

- 00:00 Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bermuda
- 03:00 GMT, Reykjavic,
- 04:00 London, Dublin, Lisbon
- 05:00 Johannesburg, Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brussels, Geneva, Prague, Salzburg, Stockholm, Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw
- 06:00 Kuwait City, Riyadh, Tashkent, Helsinki, Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Tallinn, Vilnius, Istanbul
- 07:00 Moscow, Murmansk, Baghdad
- 08:00 ODDIYANA, Islamabad
- 08:30 New Delhi, Bombay
- 08:45 Kathmandu
- 09:00 Dacca
- 09:30 Rangoon
- 10:00 Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon
- 11:00 Singapore, Beijing, Lhasa, Manila, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Perth
- 12:00 Tokyo, Seoul,
- 12:30 Darwin, Adelaide
- 13:00 Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney
- 14:00 Vladivostok
- 15:00 Fiji, Wellington, Auckland, Kamchatka

March

1st Month, 30th day
Fri. 7th March 2008

Dark Moon. This day is suitable for purification practice so try to do purification with the *Namcho Shitroi Naljor*, the practice of the peaceful and wrathful manifestations, either collectively or alone, as well as a collective *Ganapuja*.

2nd Month, 6th day
Thu. 13th March 2008

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *Long* or *Medium Tun* in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

2nd Month, 10th day
Sun. 16th March 2008

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, the day on which the king Sahora tried to burn him alive and when he transformed the fire into a lake, so try to perform a *Ganapuja* collectively, but if that is not possible do the Longlife practice *Universal Wisdom Union*.

Anniversary of Adzam Drugpa
9th Tibetan month - 25th day

Saturday 22nd November 2008

- 01.00 Wellington, Auckland
- 02.00 Hawaii
- 03.00 Fairbanks
- 04.00 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver
- 05.00 Denver, Salt Lake City, Pagosa Springs, Edmonton
- 06.00 Chicago, Mexico City
- 07.00 New York, Conway, Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana, Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa, Lima, Quito
- 08.00 Caracas
- 09.00 Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago
- 12.00 GMT, London, Dublin, Lisbon
- 13.00 Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brussels, Geneva, Prague, Salzburg, Stockholm, Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw
- 14.00 Helsinki, Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Vilnius, Johannesburg
- 15.00 Moscow, Murmansk, Baghdad, Kuwait City, Riyadh, Tashkent
- 16.00 Kabul
- 17.00 ODDIYANA, Islamabad
- 17.30 Delhi, Bombay
- 17.45 Kathmandu
- 18.00 Dacca
- 19.00 Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon
- 20.00 Singapore, Beijing, Lhasa, Manila, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Perth
- 21.00 Tokyo, Seoul
- 22.00 Brisbane, Vladivostok
- 22.30 Adelaide
- 23.00 Kamchatka, Melbourne, Sydney

2nd Month, 12th day
Tue. 18th March 2008
This is the anniversary of Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen (1147–1216), one of the first great Masters of the Sakyapa tradition, so try to do the *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the Guruyoga of the White A.

2nd Month, 15th day
Fri. 21st March 2008
Full Moon. This is one of the best days for doing the longlife practice of Guru Amitayus, with a *Ganapuja* if possible. Try to do it collectively or, if that is not possible, alone.

2nd Month, 20th day
Wed. 26th March 2008
This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), a disciple of the first Dodrubchen Rinpoche and a master of Nyagla Padma Dundul. It is therefore a good day to do *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the Guruyoga with the White A.

April

2nd Month, 25th day
Tue. 1st April 2008
This is a Dakini day so try to do a *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters or if that is not possible, a *Medium Tun*, either collectively or alone.

2nd Month, 30th day
Sun. 6th April 2008
Dark Moon. On this day, which is the anniversary of the great Terton Loter Wangpo, try to do the *Akar Lamai Naljor*, Guruyoga of the White A with the Master Garab Dorje either collectively or alone, with a *Ganapuja* if possible.

3rd Month, 4th day
Wed. 9th April 2008
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *Long* or *Medium Tun* in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

3rd Month, 10th day
Tue. 15th April 2008
This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Those who have received transmission should do a *Guruyoga* with *Padmasambhava* with the longlife mantra and a *Ganapuja* as we usually do, otherwise you can do the longlife practice “*Universal Wisdom Union*”. If it is possible, the best time to do the Guruyoga and longlife practice is in the morning between 7 and 8. You can do the *Ganapuja* later in the afternoon. Usually the best way to do the *Ganapuja* and the Guruyoga is collectively, with your Vajra brothers and sisters, but if this is not possible you can always do this practice alone when you have time. The important thing is to try to communicate with all practitioners linked to the same transmission so that you can develop the potentiality of the transmission that you have received and through it your understanding and capacity to integrate your daily life in the state of contemplation.

Those who have not received the transmission of the Tun practice can learn it from other practitioners and then receive the transmission when there is the opportunity. Otherwise on this day those who have not received transmission of the Tun practice can do a purification practice with breathing and Yantra Yoga exercises and movements or practices linked to controlling the prana.

3rd month, 15th day
Sun. 20th April 2008
Full Moon. This is one of the best days for longlife practices and in particular for the practice of the “*Union of Primordial Essences*”. It is best to do it early in the morning between 7 and 8 am if you can but if this isn’t possible you can do it in the afternoon or even in the evening when you are not busy. Today is also the anniversary of the Kalachakra, the day when Buddha Sakyamuni first gave the teaching of

Kalachakra so it is good to do a *Ganapuja* or *Long Tun* in the evening either collectively or alone.

3rd Month, 25th day
Wed. 30th April 2008
Today is a Dakini day. If you have the possibility, it is good to do a *Ganapuja* with an intensive practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do the *Medium Tun* with the practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart mantra as much as possible. The best time for this practice is around 8 in the evening.

May

3rd Month, 30th day
Mon. 5th May 2008
New Moon. Today is a good day to do a *Ganapuja* and the *Purification of the Six Loka*.

Double 3rd Month, 4th day
Fri. 9th May 2008
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a *long* or *medium Tun* with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If that is not possible you can do the medium Tun alone, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

Double 3rd Month, 10th day
Wed. 14th May 2008
This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Those who have received transmission should do a *Guruyoga* with *Padmasambhava* with the longlife mantra and a *Ganapuja* as we usually do, otherwise you can do the longlife practice “*Universal Wisdom Union*”.

Double 3rd month, 15th day
Mon. 19th May 2008
Full Moon. This is one of the best days for long-life practices and in particular for the practice of the “*Union of Primordial Essences*”, or a *Long Tun* or a *Ganapuja*, collectively or alone.

Double 3rd Month, 25th day
Fri. 30th May 2008
Today is a Dakini day. It is also the anniversary of the Fifth Dalai Lama, a great terton and practitioner of Dzogchen so it is a very beneficial day to reinforce the function of our energy and create a more vital contact with the energy of the universe. If you have the possibility, it is good to do a *Guruyoga* of the White A in the morning and in the evening a *Ganapuja* with an intensive practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do the Medium Tun with the practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart mantra as much as possible. The best time for this practice is around 8 in the evening.

June

Double 3rd Month, 30th day
Tue. 3rd June 2008
New Moon. Today is the anniversary of Sangyas Lingpa (1340–1396) a great terton and Dzogchen master. You can do a *Guruyoga* of the White A from the cycle of teachings Universal Clarity with a *Ganapuja*. It is also a good day to do the *Purification of the Six Loka*.

4th Month, 6th and 8th days
9th & 11th June 2008
These are important days for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a *long* or *medium Tun* with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If that is not possible you can do the medium Tun alone, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

4th month, 7th day
Tue. 10th June 2008
This is the anniversary of the birth of Buddha Shakyamuni, an important day for all Buddhists, so try to a *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

4th Month, 10th day
Fri. 13th June 2008
Today is the day of Guru Padmasambhava. In general you can do the practice of the *Guruyoga* of *Padmasambhava* on this day. If you have the possibility and enough time you can do a collective *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters otherwise you can do the longlife practice “*Union of Primordial Essences*”.

4th Month, 15th day
Wed. 18th June 2008
Full Moon. This is the anniversary of the Paraniirvana of Buddha Sakyamuni as well as an important day for the longlife practice “*Cycle of Life’s Vajra*”. Therefore if you can, do the practice of the Dakini Mandarava in the morning (the best time is between 7 and 8 am) and a collective *Ganapuja* in the afternoon or evening according to your possibilities.

4th Month, 25th day
Sat. 28th June 2008
Today is Dakini day. It is also the anniversary of Ngor Chen (a great master of the Shakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the Guruyoga of the White A, *Akar Lamai Naljor*, collectively or alone.

July

4th Month, 30th day
Thu. 3rd July 2008
New Moon. Today is the anniversary of Nyagla Padma Dundul (1816–1872), one of the Masters of Chang-chub Dorje and the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma “*Tsedrub Gongdu*” which two of his disciples, Ayu Khandro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche practised this method as much as possible and started to transmit it to his students after visiting the sacred cave at Maratika. Therefore try to do the longlife practice “*Union of Primordial Essences*” in the morning. In the afternoon or evening you can do the Guruyoga of the White A, *Akar Lamai Naljor*, collectively or alone, with a *Ganapuja* if possible.

5th Month, 1st day
Fri. 4th July 2008
This is the anniversary of Chogyur Lingpa (1829–1870) a Nyingmapa Master of Dzogchen, one of the three most important Rimed masters of the 19th century.

Special Practice Calendar

Try to do a practice of the Guruyoga of the White A, *Akar Lamai Naljor*.

5th Month, 10th day
Sat. 12th July 2008

Today is a special day of Guru Padma-sambhava. In general you can do the *Guruyoga of Padmasambhava* practice on this day. If you can, try to do a *Ganapuja* collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, otherwise you can do the longlife practice “Union of Primordial Essences”.

5th Month, 14th day Thu.
17th July 2008

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *long* or *medium Tun* collectively or alone, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 15th day
Fri. 18th July 2008
Full Moon. This is a special day for the longlife practice of Amitayus, so you can do the Longlife practice “Union of Primordial Essences”. The best moment to do it is between 7 and 8 in the morning, if possible, either collectively or alone. If you can, try to a *Ganapuja* as well. It is also the Dzamling Chisang (Lit. ‘smoke puja of the world in general’) so if you know how to do it, you can do the *Sanqod* (Sangchod) in the morning.

5th Month, 24th day
Sun. 27th July 2008
This month there is no 25th day so today is Dakini day as well as an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *Ganapuja* or a *long Tun* collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or a medium Tun alone. In either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

August
5th Month, 30th day
Fri. 1st August 2008
New Moon. This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the *Purification of the Six Lokas* either collectively or alone, preferably in the early morning. Otherwise you can do a *medium* or *short Tun* or a *Ganapuja*.

6th Month, 4th day
Tue. 5th August 2008
This is the anniversary of the Dharma-chakra (the first turning of the Wheel of the Dharma): the first time that Buddha Shakyamuni gave the teaching of the Four Noble Truths to his disciples at Sarnath, after his illumination. To honour the Lord Buddha on this special day you can do a *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

6th Month, 10th day
Mon. 11th August 2008
Today is the anniversary of the birth of Padmasambhava. On this day when it is 8 am in Oddiyana Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Padma-sambhava. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 5 am.) It is also the anniversary of Yeshe Tsogyal, the main consort and disciple of Padmasambhava so it will be beneficial to do a *Guruyoga of Padmasambhava* with

the longlife mantra and a *Ganapuja* as we usually do, otherwise you can do the longlife practice “Union of Universal Wisdom”.
See the global timetable

6th Month, 14th day
Fri. 15th August 2008
This is the anniversary of the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339), a disciple of Rigdzin Chenpo Kumaradza and a famous master of Dzogchen Upadesa. On this day it is good to do *Akar Lamai Naljor*, Guruyoga with the White A, collectively or alone.

6th Month, 15th day
Sat. 16th August 2008
Full Moon. This is the anniversary of Gampopa, the main disciple of Milarepa, founder of the Kagyupa school and author or “The Precious Ornament of Liberation”. It is, therefore, an excellent day to do *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the Guruyoga with the White A. It is also good to do the longlife practice “Union of Primordial Essences” of Guru Amitayus and, if possible, a *Ganapuja*.

6th Month, 25th day
Tue. 26th August 2008
This is a Dakini day, so it is a positive day for reinforcing the function of our energy and creating a vital contact with the energy of the universe by doing a *Ganapuja* with our Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby you can do a *medium Tun* on your own. In either case, when you transform into the Dakini Simhamuka, recite her heart mantra as many times as possible.

6th Month, 30th day
Sat. 30th August 2008
New Moon. This is a very important day to do purification practices, especially the “*Purification of the Six Lokas*”. If you have the chance, you can also do a *short* or *medium Tun* or a *Ganapuja*, collectively or alone.

September
7th Month, 9th day
Tue. 9th September 2008
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati.

7th Month, 10th day
Wed. 10th September 2008
It is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava as well as the anniversary of Jomo Menmo (1248–1283), a famous yogini, terton and reincarnation of Yeshe Tsogyal and consort of the terton Guru Chowang. Therefore it is an ideal day to do *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the Guruyoga of the White A, and a *Ganapuja*, if you have the possibility.

7th Month, 15th day
Mon. 15th September 2008
Full Moon. This is the anniversary of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso and Padma Karpo, a famous 17th century Drugpa Kargyupa Master. Therefore it is an excellent day to do the longlife practice of the Dakini Mandarava, “*Cycle of Life’s Vajra*”, with a *Ganapuja* if possible as well as *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the Guruyoga of the White A collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters or alone.

7th Month 19th day
Fri. 19th September. 2008
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *long* or *medium Tun* in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

7th Month, 25th day
Wed. 24th September 2008
This is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of Phagmo Drugpa (1110–1170), the chief disciple of Gampopa. Try to do a *Ganapuja* together with your Vajra sisters and brothers. If there are no other practitioners nearby, you can do a *medium Tun* on your own. In either case, when you transform yourself into the Dakini Simhamuka, recite her heart mantra as much as possible and then do an intensive practice of Ekajati.

7th Month, 30th day
Mon. 29th September 2008
Dark Moon. This day is ideal for purification practices. Try to do either the *Purification of the Six Lokas* or the *Namchos Shitroi Naljiyor*, the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, either collectively or on your own. Try to do a *Ganapuja* as well, if possible.

October
8th Month, 10th day
Thu. 9th October 2008
This is a special day of Guru Padma-sambhava, therefore you can do the *Guruyoga of Padmasambhava*. If you have time and the possibility you can do a *Ganapuja* with the Guruyoga and the long-life practice of Guru Padmasambhava together with your Vajra brothers and sisters. Otherwise you can do the long-life practice “*Universal Wisdom Union*”.

8th Month, 15th day
Tue. 14th October 2008
Full Moon. This is an important day to do the long-life practice of Amitayus, “*Union of Primordial Essences*”. It is best to do it early in the morning and a *Ganapuja* in the evening.

8th Month, 19th day
Sat. 18th October 2008
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *long Tun* with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or if that is not possible, you can do a *medium Tun* alone reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th Month, 25th day
Thu. 23rd October 2008
This is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of two great Dzogchen masters, Rigzin Kumaraja, who transmitted the Dzogchen teachings to Longchenpa and to the third Karmapa, and of Rigzin Tsewang Norbu (1698–1755), a great Dzogchen master of the Nyingmapa school. It is therefore an excellent day to do *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the Guruyoga with the White A. If you can do it in the morning, that is best. Then, if you have the time, you can do a *medium* or *long Tun* later in the day, with an intense practice of Simhamuka, or a *Ganapuja*, if you have the possibility.

8th Month, 27th day
Sat. 25th October 2008
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *long Tun* with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or if that is not possible, you can do a *medium Tun* alone reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

8th Month, 30th day
Tue. 28th October 2008
Dark Moon. This day is excellent for practising the “*Purification of the Six Lokas*” if you know how to do it. Otherwise you can do the *medium* or *long Tun* or a *Ganapuja*.

November
9th Month, 3rd day
Sat. 1st November 2008
This is the anniversary of Rigdzin Jigmed Lingpa (1729–1798), a great Dzogchen master who was the author of many books, among which is the Longchen Nyingthig, which he wrote after having contact with Longchenpa through visions. Therefore, on this important day, you should try to do *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the Guruyoga with the White A.

9th Month, 10th day
Sat. 8th November 2008
This is a special day of Guru Padma-sambhava. It is also the anniversary of Tertön Sogyal, a previous reincarnation of Sogyal Rinpoche and discoverer of many terma. It is therefore a good day to do the long-life practice of Guru Padmasambhava “*Universal Wisdom Union*”, which is included in the *medium* or *long Tun*. You can do this in the usual way or, if you have the possibility, you can do it with a *Ganapuja*.

9th Month, 15th day
Thu. 13th November 2008
Full Moon. This is a day of the Buddha and a good day to do the long-life practice of Amitayus, “*Union of Primordial Essences*”, either collectively or individually according to your possibilities, in the morning and in the evening a *Ganapuja*.

9th Month, 22nd day
Wed. 19th November 2008
This day is the important celebration of Buddha Shakyamuni’s descent to earth from the realm of the Divinities. It is called “Lhabab Tuchen”, the Great Time of the Descent of the Divinities. It is an ideal day to do a *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If there are none nearby, you can do a *short* or *medium Tun* on your own.

9th Month, 25th day
Sat. 22nd November 2008
The 25th is a Dakini day and also the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Adzam Drugpa (1842–1924), a previous reincarnation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. He was a disciple of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and a master of great masters such as Changchub Dorje and Ayu Khandro. Therefore, when it is 7 pm in East Tibet on this day, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Adzam Drugpa. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. This practice should be done at the appointed time together with your Vajra brothers and sisters or, if that is not possible, alone. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 1 pm.)
See the global timetable

9th Month, 30th day
Thu. 27th November 2008
Dark Moon. This is a good day to do *Namcho Shitroi Naljor*, the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *long* or *medium Tun*, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

December
10th Month, 10th day
Sun. 7th December 2008
Today is a special day of Guru Padma-sambhava, the day on which he arrived in central Tibet. It is considered that on this day, at the end of the 8th century, King Songtsen Gampo, the ancient king of Dharma, vanished dissolving into a statue of Avalokiteshvara. Therefore it is good to do the *Guruyoga of Padma-sambhava* with the long-life mantra and a *Ganapuja*. Otherwise you can do the long-life practice “*Universal Wisdom Union*”. If it is possible, the best moment to do the Guruyoga is early in the morning between 7 and 8. You can do the *Ganapuja* later in the afternoon.

10th Month, 11th day
Mon. 8th December 2008
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati.
(Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s birthday)

10th Month, 15th day
Fri. 12th December 2008
Full Moon. This day is considered to be the day to honour the Lord Buddha in general, and it is one of the best days to do the *long-life Practice with the Dakini Mandarava* in particular. Generally the best moment to do this kind of practice is between 7 and 8 in the morning but if you don’t have this possibility, then do it in the afternoon or later in the evening when you are free. It is also a good day to do a *Ganapuja*.

10th Month, 25th day
Sun. 21st December 2008
Today is a Dakini day and the anniversary of Tsongkhapa (1357–1491), who made a synthesis of the previous schools and founded the Gelugpa school. It is a very beneficial day for reinforcing the energy of the universe so try to perform a *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If there are no other practitioners nearby you can do the *medium Tun* on your own, transforming into the Dakini Simhamuka and reciting the heart mantra as many times as possible.



10th Month, 30th day
Sat. 27th December 2008
Dark Moon. This is an excellent day to do purification practice so try to do the *Purification of the Six Lokas* and a *Ganapuja* in the evening.

January
11th Month, 8th day
Sun. 4th January 2009
This is a special day for doing the practice of Ekajati so try to do a *long Tun*, collectively or alone, reciting the heart mantra as many times as possible.

11th Month, 10th day
Tue. 6th January 2009
This is a special day of Guru Padma-sambhava called Padma Gyalpo: it is the day on which he arrived in the capital of Oddiyana and became prince to King Idrabhodi. Therefore it is an excellent day to do the *Guruyoga of Padmasambhava* with a *Ganapuja*.

11th Month, 15th day
Sun. 11th January 2009
Full Moon. Today it is important to try to do the long-life practice of Guru Amitayus, *Union of Primordial Essences*, in the usual way, and, if possible, a *Ganapuja*.

merigarwest



Merigar West

Arcidosso 58031
GR Italy

phone: 39 0564 966837
fax: 39 0564 968110

merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
www.dzogchen.it

calendar
of events
2008

March

Ma h 2

World Dance Days

Prima Mai, Rita Renzi, Maurizio Mingotti

Thun times: 10 · 13 · 15 · 18

March 8-9

Yantra Yoga Course 2nd series
with Tiziana Gottardi

60€ discounts for members

Starts the 8th at 10

Finishes the 9th at 13

March 15-17

Course of Moxabustion 3rd level
with Elio Guarisco

150€ no discounts

Starts the 15th at 10

Finishes the 17th at 17:30

March 21-26

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Open Webcast Audio & Video:
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Tashigar Nord, Venezuela

March 21-26 Easter

Explanation & practice: “The 3 second-
ary practices for the Samten” & “The 2
absences of self-nature”.

SMS Base

with Costantino Albini

180€ discounts for members

Starts the 1st at 16

22nd–30th: 10–13

March 29-30

Weekend of Yantra Yoga Practice

Starts 29th at 10

Finishes the 30th at 13

retreat cabins at merigar

There are three retreat cabins available
(two for dark retreat) in the small forest
of Merigar. If you want to book a cabin
please send an email to the Gekös Tom
and Filip: gekomerigar@yahoo.it

April

April 4-6

Explanation and practice of the 7th Lo-
jong (SMS Base) with Oliver Leick

80€ discounts for members

Starts the 4th at 10

Finishes the 6th at 13

April 19-20

Explanation and practice of “The Four
Immeasurables” & “Inner Khorde
Rushen”(SMS Base) with Fabio Risolo

60€ discounts for members

Starts the 19th at 10

Finishes the 20th at 13

April 25-29

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Open Webcast Audio & Video:
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Tashigar Nord, Venezuela

April 25-27

Yantra Yoga course for Beginners

Open to everyone

Tiziana Gottardi

90€ discounts for members

Starts the 25th at 16

May

May 1-4

Explanation and Long life Practice of
Mandarava with Nina Robinson

120€ discounts for members

Starts the 1st at 10

Finishes the 4th at 13

May 9-14

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Open Webcast Audio & Video:
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Tashigar Nord, Venezuela

May 9-14

Mandarava Long life practice

Starts the 9th at 10

May 17-18

Explanation & practice of “Secret
Khorde Rushen”&”The 7 Semdzins”
(SMS Base) with Fabio Risolo

60€ discounts for members

Starts the 17 at 10

Finishes 18 at 13

May 23-25

Yantra Yoga 3rd series
with Laura Evangelisti

120€ discounts for members

Starts the 23rd at 17

Finishes 25th at 13

May 30-June 4

Vajra Dance – Advanced Course

Supervised by Prima Mai

Rita Renzi

240€ discounts for members

Starts the 30th at 17

Finishes the 4th at 13

June

June 7-8

SMS Base Collective practice,
7th Lojong

Starts the 7th at 10

June 14-15

SMS Base Collective practice – Rushen

Starts the 14th at 10

June 21-26

Dance of the Vajra for Beginners,
1st part

Supervision by a main teacher

Local teacher

240€ discounts for members

Starts the 21sat 17

Finishes the 26th at 13

June 28-29

SMS Base Collective practice – Semdzin

Starts the 28th at 10

July

July 4-8

Explanation of the Tsalung of
Mandarava with Elio Guarisco

150€ – discounts for members

Starts the 4h at 16

July 14-20

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Open Webcast Audio & Video:
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Merigar East, Romania

August

August 1-3

Dance Course of the 6 Spaces of
Samantabhadra with Maurizio Mingotti

90€ discounts for members

Starts the 1st at 17

Finishes 3rd at 13

August 5-9

Advanced Vajra Dance course combined
with the practice of Gomadevi

with Adriana Dal Borgo

200€ discounts for members

Starts the 5th at 17

Finishes the 9th at 13

August 11-18

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
(Open webcast)

Starts the 11th, at 16

Cost: 350€ – discounts for members

August 20-29

Yantra Yoga 4th and 5th Series and
Variations with Laura Evangelisti and
Fabio Andrico

400€ – discounts for members

Starts the 20th at 17

Finishes the 29th at 13

September

September 1-7

Teachers Training 1st level of the Dance
of the Vajra with Adriana Dal Borgo and
Prima Mai

280€ – no discounts

Starts 1st at 17

Finishes the 7th at 13

September 8-15

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Kalmykia

September 19-21

Yantra Yoga Beginner’s Course

Open to everyone

with Laura Evangelisti

120€ – discounts for members

Starts the 19 at 17

Finishes 21st at 13

26 Sep.-3 Oct.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Starts 26th September, at 16.00

Cost: 400€ discounts for members

October

October 4-8

Explanation and practice of the 1st SMS
level with Jim Valby

150€ – discounts for members

4th–5th: 9–12 & 16–19

6th–8th: am to be defined & 16–19

October 6-9

3rd Level SMS Exam

October 10-17

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Training of the 4th SMS level

400€ no discounts

October 19-26

Vajra Dance Teacher’s Training.

Reserved to authorized instructors only
with Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo

320€ discounts for members

Starts the 19th at 17

Finishes the 26th at 13

31 Oct.-3 Nov.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Teaching and Practice dedicated
to the dead people

Starts the 31st, at 16.00

Cost: 200€ – discounts for members

November

November 4-9

Vajra Dance Course, 2nd part

Supervised by a main teacher

Local teacher

240€ discounts for members

Starts 4th at 17

Finishes 9th at 13

November 14-20

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Barcelona, Spain

December

December 6-8

Long life retreat practice of Mandarava

Starts the 6th at 17

Finishes the 8th at 13

26 Dec.-1 Jan. '09

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Open Webcast Audio & Video:
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Tashigar Sud – Argentina

filming the new vajra dance dvd

liz granger with the collaboration of rita renzi

The second week in January was a period of intense activity at the Merigar West Gonpa as filming took place for the new DVD of the Vajra Dances. The weeklong session was organized by Maurizio Mingotti of the Shang Shung Institute who had invited Marc Beneria, a professional filmmaker from Barcelona, and Gianni Baggi, whose professional skills as a photographer and equipment were vital for shooting in the best way possible inside the Gonpa for the occasion. Marc was also assisted in the filming by Carla Caponi from the Institute and Gloria Pera.

It was a week of concentrated work for the film crew, who were assisted by Lella Guidotti, Maurizio Piazza for the lighting

and Salima Celeri as makeup artist, as well as for the teachers of the Vajra Dances, particularly for Prima Mai who painstakingly went over and over the various movements of the Dances for the cameras.

In different shots Prima Mai demonstrated both the male and female parts for all three Dances – the Dance of the Vajra, the Dance of the Six Liberations and the Om A Hum Dance. At times Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo were both on the mandala in order to focus on the parts of the Dances during which the Pamo and Pawo pass by each other, and at other times Rita Renzi joined them on the Mandala in order to have an overall view of the combined movements.

The shooting was done from 3 different angles of the Gonpa, some of the shots were taken from above while others from below with the roof of the Gonpa which has the syllables of the song of the Vajra painted on it in the background.

Although the weather was cold and the sky grey it turned out to be favorable for filming since bright sunlight makes photography in the Gonpa quite difficult due to the reflections on the glass.

The week was a period of hard work and long hours but the general feeling was that it was a harmonious and positive experience. The new DVD will be a high quality production created by professionals using professional equipment and is intended as a comprehensive aid in perfecting and refining different aspects of movement and positions for those who have already studied and practiced the Dances rather than to teach the Dances to beginners. Now that

the initial work of filming has been completed, the task of editing and creating a final version will begin.

It is interesting to note that the filming of the Dances took place on a Solar Mandala which is a medium size mandala representing our solar system. It is larger than the one which is usually used and which represents our planet earth. The Solar Mandala just managed to fit into the area of the Merigar West Gonpa. The other Solar Mandala in existence at the moment is at Tashigar Norte in Venezuela. The largest of the mandalas is the Universal Mandala and there is only one of its kind at the moment on the land at Khandroling in Massachusetts, USA. The Solar Mandala used for the filming was brand new and used for the first time during the shooting of the video.

When Chögyal Namkhai Norbu first started teaching the Vajra Dance, he used the

text he had written in Tibetan in which he recounted his dreams about the Vajra Dances and described the movements and mudras of the three Dances, giving a very broad overview. In order that his students in Italy could study the Dances in more detail, he recorded his Italian translation of the text on audio cassettes, which were in turn transcribed by different people and published at the time under the title of ‘La Luce Preziosa’ [The Precious Light]. The transcripts, however, were never edited or translated into English.

Last summer during a Karma Yoga session at Merigar West, the Master said that he had had several dreams about the Vajra Dance performed on the larger Solar Mandala and that he had written a text on

it. He asked the Community’s translator, Adriano Clemente, to start translating the books on the Dance and since then Adriano has started to study the Dances and will shortly start on translation of the Master’s first precious work.

For those who already practice the Vajra Dance or wish to learn it, this year of the Earth Mouse is particularly auspicious with the new Vajra Dance DVD to be released soon and translation of Rinpoche’s text to begin.



Prima Mai dancing on the Solar Mandala in the Gonpa at Merigar West.

upcoming
Yantra Yoga, Second Series
Led by Tiziana Gottardi
March 8–9, 2008

Who can attend?
This course is for those who already know the preliminaries of the Yantra Yoga.

The course starts on Saturday 8th at 10.00

The cost is 60 Euros – with discounts for the members

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

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merigaroffice@tiscali.it
www.dzogchen.it

Rome
New Gakyil of Zhenphenling

Blue
Sergio Quaranta (President):
csquaranta@libero.it
Massimo Pelliccioni:
massimopelliccioni@tiscalinet.it

Yellow
Alessandra Burali:
alessandra.burali@apat.it
Mirella D’Angelo:
mirella.dangelo@fastwebnet.it

Red
Gabriella Dalesio:
gdalesio@tiscali.it
Monica Formichetti:
monicaformichetti@hotmail.com

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	23 August 907005	phone: 0040 746 26 08 61
Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen	Constanta	office@dzogchen.ro
	Romania	www.dzogchen.ro

important international gakyil news merigar east update

Dear members of the Dzogchen Community, Our Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, decided some time ago to establish a place of the Dzogchen Community for Eastern Europe and Russian speaking Communities. The name of the place is Merigar East and is situated at the Black Sea in Romania, near the village of the 23rd of August. In summer 2007, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche held the first retreat there in a huge tent. As you know, there are plans to build a Gonpa at Merigar East soon.

From 2008 on, Merigar East needs support through membership in an organized way; therefore Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche decided in the summer of 2007 that some of the eastern countries that now belong to Merigar West should support the Merigar East!

Some of these countries have already sent delegates to the new Merigar East Gakyil of nine persons, which began its work in December of 2007. These countries are Bulgaria, Czech Republic (together with Slovakia), Poland, Hungary and the Russian Speaking Communities Gakyil.

All Community members in Eastern Europe, even if there is no Gakyil in their area at the moment, i.e. Serbia, should refer to Merigar East as their Gar of membership. Cyprus and Israel might want to join as well. The membership policy will be the same as Merigar West, following the idea of “One Dzogchen Community Worldwide”.

For further information please contact the Yellow Gakyil of Merigar East: tereza@dzogchen.ro or the International Gakyil: garuda@bluewin.ch

May all our activities bear good fruit!

Many greetings from the International Gakyil
Yeshe Silvano Namkhai
Fabio Andrico
Karin Eisenegger

The positions of a Geköe and Secretary for Merigar East in Romania are vacant.

1) The Geköe of Merigar East has to speak Romanian and English, needs a driving licence and basic computer skills. A good worker, open to many different people and languages, enduring hardships like: no geköe apartment, very simple life circumstances, small Community, a lot of work, and an extreme climate. Job lasts until at least August 2008.

2) The Secretary of Merigar East needs to speak and write Romanian and English well, have basic computer skills, driving licence and needs to be very open and collaborative! Until May 2008, this task can be followed up from anywhere by internet, from May onwards to August the secretary has to live in 23 August, Merigar East.

For both jobs the Merigar East Gakyil offers free simple lodging and food, a Community car to use and a small salary, similar to those in other Gars of the Dzogchen Community.

Applications with photo please send to the coordinating unit of Merigar East: Karin Eisenegger-Koppensteiner, red IG, garuda@bluewin.ch

If there are any questions regarding these job offers, please do not hesitate to write for clarification to the above mentioned email address.

The International Gakyil
The Gakyil of Merigar East, Romania

Russia Kunphenling Retreat Center

Dear Vajra family,

Most of you know already that ex-Kunsangar (Moscow) now is called Kunphenling and is now a big retreat center of Dzogchen Community, also actively co-operating with other Dharma centers.

Today we are glad to inform you that English version of Kunphenling’s website is already available: <http://www.kunphenling.com/> – welcome and have a nice stay!

Please be aware that some pages are still in process of translating and editing. We’re working on it and promise to complete it as soon as possible!

With many Tashi Delegs,
Retreat Center Kunphenling

upcoming
St. Petersburg
Yantra Yoga Courses
March 4–9, 2008
1st level of Yantra Yoga for beginners supervised by Laura Evangelisti and led by Lena Kuzminskaya, a candidate for a local instructor from St Petersburg.

March 10–14, 2008
2nd level of Yantra Yoga supervised by Laura Evangelisti and led by intermediate 1st level instructor Zhenya Rud.

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

For additional information and to register please contact:
Kirill Mironov at kirill.mironov@gmail.com
Practitioners from other Communities are welcome. We will provide them support with accommodation.



passages

Born: Dechen Dorjievna Dugarova was born on November 19, 2007 in Ulan-Ude, Republic of Buryatia to Dorjo Dugarov Batodalaevich and Natalia Tsyrendashieva. This day was Guru Rinpoche’s Day and also the day of Buddha Shakyamuny according to the Orthodox Christian tradition (Day of Saint Prince Losafat).



Yeshi riding into Tashigar South.

Photo: N. Zeitz



Ellen and Lucia with the eight auspicious symbols made by them.

Photo: N. Zeitz



New Mandala and Roof.

arrival of yeshi namkhai

tashigar south, argentina
february 13, 2008

The morning of Yeshi Namkhai's arrival dawned with a sunny and clear blue sky on February 13th, Tashigar South, Argentina. There was excited anticipation in the air days before as welcome preparations were made. Prayer flags were hung the 3rd day of Losar along the road where Yeshi would make his entrance onto the Gar, the eight auspicious symbols were drawn in chalk on the same road by Ellen Halbert and Lucia Gru; painting, cleaning and gardening were all done with the wish to offer Yeshi a heartfelt South American welcome. Yeshi arrived from the airport with Rosa Namkhai and was greeted by gauchos, horses, music and joyful members of

Community. He graciously rode a white horse from the entrance of the Gar, with everyone merrily making their way to the commodore for tea while serenaded by the music of the gauchos. We toasted Yeshi's arrival with tea and sweets. Ricky Sued, the Gakyil Director, presented Yeshi with a vajra, the symbol of Tashigar South. It may be redundant to say, but the truth of the matter is that out of the clear blue sky, an enormous double rainbow manifested around the sun toward evening and again the next day. We wish to welcome Yeshi Namkhai to the warmhearted Southern Hemisphere!

The Mirror



Yeshi speaks to the Community in the Gonpa.

Photo: N. Zeitz



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adriana battisti designer

the origins of tashigar south, argentina

1989-2008

interview with ricky sued and marisa alonso
with the mirror

"The time to come and enjoy this place is now!"

The Mirror: Hello. We would like to interview you both about the origin and development of Tashigar South, since you both were instrumental in its beginnings and are very important here.

Marisa: Yes we were like the pioneers. We were the first ones, in the Gar, with the membership cards, and everything.

Ricky: So you were very important!

MA: Yes! (laughing)

M: So Marisa can you tell us a little about how you met Rinpoche and what you were doing, etc.?

MA: I met Rinpoche at a retreat in Venezuela in 1989. A friend of ours gave us money for traveling because we had no possibility at all to go. So we went there and met Rinpoche and after the retreats we invited him to Argentina and he said ok. Also Alicia Caballeros was there. We came back and organized a retreat and it was very successful. It was in a convent in Alta Gracia. Then we were talking to Rinpoche and said how nice it would be to have a place here, some land, to do retreat, and Rinpoche said ok, search for land. We had a friend who worked in real estate and we called him and around three days later we went and looked at a couple places and we came here with Rinpoche and there were a lot of big birds flying and Rinpoche said, "This is the place."

M: All this all happened in the same year, 1989?

MA: Yes, he came here 2 months after we left Venezuela.

M: So you and Ricky were a couple at this time, correct?

MA: Yes.

M: So Ricky, how did you enter the dharma?

RS: There was a group here in Cordoba that was involved in psychology, psychotherapy and Osho. Jorge Stolkner and Gerardo Aboud brought the first Lamas that came to Argentina, so there I began my relationship with the dharma. We were involved in a Karma Kagyu group and when we came back from Kagyuling in France, in that moment, Jennifer Fox told us there was a fantastic and incredible Lama that we had to meet.

MA: The funny thing was, when we were in France, for example, the dollar was one to one, and when we came back we already had huge debts for all our traveling, the dollar suddenly went to seven. So it was our ruin. Also when we came back our house was robbed.

RS: Really, I forgot. What happened?

MA: You forgot! (laughing) It was as if we had to pay to purify everything. We had a lot of debts in dollars. Suddenly we had nothing.

M: You had a business together then?

MA: Yes we were making clothes.

RS: When Jennifer said to us "Please you come to meet Rinpoche", I said, "No, I don't want to meet anymore Masters, it's ok." Then she paid for us to go and so I said ok and then after the first day, that was it.

M: So in 1989 you came here with Rinpoche and he said this was the place. And then?

MA: We were very upset because we liked another place, a place very beautiful and more rugged; it was a place like in a fantasy, a place for yogis, very hard to get to, with high ledges, etc. It was in La Falda; not far from here. So we thought that this was the place where we can be yogis. But Rinpoche was absolutely clearer



Marisa Alonso, Ricky Sued.

than us, of course, and said no, no, this [now Tashigar South] is the place. So we agreed.

M: So how did you purchase this place? How did you pay?

RS: I don't know. (laughing) But someone paid.

MA: Have you seen the Dorje Legpa on the wall? That was the first thing we did; we painted that and did a lot of Ganapujas. But of course most of the money came from Merigar. The first retreat we did here we were crazy about the money because we needed a lot, so we charged a lot for everything. The poor people who came here may still remember, we charged so much for everything. At Tashibar, Rinpoche painted the first Tashibar where we now have the tool shed near the entrance of the Gar, we charged \$5 for a tea. Everybody was so upset but we were upset also; we said, "But you don't understand, this is not for us, it is to pay for Tashigar!" But this was not the way to do it.

M: When and what was the first retreat?

RS: It was in 1990. It was The Song of the Vajra Retreat. They made the book from this transcription by Gina Tuell. There were about 200-250 people there.

MA: We had nothing. We were under one tree one day, another tree another day. We were moving around everywhere. People were staying in tents. We rented a house for Rinpoche near by. The structures we had were the central house, but it was in bad shape, down below was nothing, where the commodore is now was nothing, and the geko's



Photo: L. Hume



New Year's party.

Photo: N. Zeitz

house needed repair. But it was a really nice retreat.
M: When did you build the Gonpa?
RS: We made it for the second retreat, around 1992.
M: So how did the idea of the Tashigar Mandala come to be? This is the first Gar where people built houses to live on the Gar.
MA: Yes well, we said to Rinpoche once, "Oh it would be so nice, this land is so big, if each one of us had a little place to come and do practice in a more private way. And Rinpoche said, "No, no, not just to do practice but for living." So we went for it. Everything we asked him, he said, "Yes, go for it."
M: Who built the first house here?
MA: Ricky did.
RS: In this time we were in the business of producing rock concerts. One night after a concert

with a very famous group from Cordoba – we did a great show and made so much money – we got together with the group in my house to count the money to pay everyone and there was a knock on the door. We opened the door and there were thieves with guns. They took everything. But it was great because I didn't want to live in Cordoba anymore and I was a little paranoid when I arrived in the night to my house. I needed another place to live, so I built my house in Tashigar South.
M: Today was the arrival of Yeshe Namkhai. What are your hopes for how Yeshe's visit can benefit Tashigar South and the whole Dzogchen Community?
MA: I think he has very clear ideas and he inspires a very particular vision for the future of the Community that is absolutely in service to our Master and may

also be inspired by him. The fact that he is here now is very relaxing for us because we are always guessing at what he is trying to do, what he wants to say, and where he is going. Now that he is here we can ask him and share. It is very good.
RS: I am open. I don't know what to say about Yeshe and the future. I only want to remain open and we will see.
M: What are the main projects for Tashigar?
RS: There are many projects. One project is that we have to change the quincho Gonpa because it is outdated, and we have to change the orientation of the whole structure. There are many projects. Another one is to build a place for the children because there are many children here and there is a lot of beautiful land and it would be very nice to have a

place that embraces the children. They are the future practitioners from this place, because we elders don't have much time left. We need to build a place for the children to stay during retreats because sometimes it rains a lot, etc. etc. Many people stay in tents, and we have to rebuild the camping and make a better a kitchen and a quincho for people to hang out in. Another project more is to build dormitories for people to sleep. Rinpoche indicated an area for retreat cabins and the project was never realized. Another project has to do with the roads because Tashigar Mandala is a big and very nice project; now there are 20 houses the potential is for 45 houses, and if we are all joined by roads it is a symbol that we are unified. That way we can go and move around and it becomes like a small town. There

are many projects for Tashigar Mandala, and it seems to me like a fascinating, fantastic and beautiful project, but it is very difficult because it touches the center of the ego, which is the property. And with this so many problems arose, but as part of the path it is wonderful. To have a Community of practitioners is marvelous.
M: How many lots are still available?
MA: Yes there are still spaces available and Rinpoche told us once if we need more places, we buy more land. It is not a problem. There is one place adjacent to my house where he said we cannot build because it is already inhabited by other beings that we cannot see, but they are there, so he said this is a place for special practice cabins.
M: How big is Tashigar?
MA: 50 hectares including Tashigar Mandala.
M: Can you tell us a little about the first Mandala built in Tashigar? When was it first constructed, etc.?
MA: Rinpoche made that Mandala with his own hands in 1990. We were younger and very enthusiastic and we worked together all day and Rinpoche sat there singing Tibetan songs and we all sang together while we sanded and polished, etc. It was very nice. So now we know there are other and bigger Mandalas and I hope some day we construct some here, the Solar and Universal Mandalas as well.
M: So this new Mandala that has been made in the spot of the original one, is it finished? We know you made a new roof.
MA: Yes but now we need some kind of enclosure, glass or something, so we can use it in all seasons.
M: How and why did you build the first Mandala? Did Rinpoche have some dreams?
MA: Yes Rinpoche had some dreams and when people see the place they ask why was it built here, so near the house? This was all part of the dream that Rinpoche had of this place very

>> continued on next page

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>> *Interview continued from last page*
near the pine trees and in his dream he was dancing there, so the Mandala was made there.
M: How was it, did Rinpoche himself teach the dance at that time?
MA: Yes it was very beautiful; we danced and practiced and he would correct us and it was really beautiful. It was the Song of the Vajra Dance. I remember it was so strong, when he was in the place where you had to do the yab/yum position with him; your heart would be pounding until the moment it happened. It was very strong. We danced many hours a day and he was very enthusiastic. It was very nice!

I want to say that another important project here is the publishing house. This publishing house is for all Spanish publications and is centered here. Now it is under the auspices of the Shang Shung Institute. It is very important.

M: Do you also have some branch of SSI here?
MA: No and this is also a kind of dream, to have some courses, etc. But we also need more people to work on these kinds of projects.
M: In general do you need more people involved here?
MA: Yes that would be nice. But I think there will be in the future because people can live here and that is not the same as other Gars. I have been in other Gars and it is not easy for people to work and to stay is almost impossible. We are really very fortunate. To live in a Gar is not the same.
M: How many people live here all your around?
RS: Not so many, maybe 10 to 15.
M: So what is your wish for the future of Tashigar?
RS: I believe that among all the projects the most important is that the relationship among the practitioners and that it improves, because that means that the practice is working. And if the practice

is improving that means that the place, the Gar, will develop. We don't have to think about outer things, like construction, because that is a result. For me the most difficult and important situation in the Community is the relationship among the practitioners.
M: Any wishes in a concrete sense?
MA: We have said most, but only that people can come and enjoy. It is such a beautiful place.
RS: And to discover that now we have the unique opportunity. People who had the opportunity to live here and didn't, some of these people are dying or have died and no longer have this opportunity.
MA: The time to come and enjoy this place is now! Many people say, people also from Argentina, that they will come in the future, build their house in the future, and some of these people are already dead.



Practitioners await the arrival of Yeshe Namkhai. Photo: N. Zeitz

RS: There is not much time to enjoy this beauty and of the Master and the practice.
M: Thank you both for your time and all your dedicated work for the Community! ©

Ricky Sued lives in Tashigar South with his wife Noe and 2 children, Zoe and Uma. He is the current director of the Tashigar South Gakyil and is the Santi Maha Sangha contact person for South America.
Marisa Alonso lives in Tashigar South and is an authorized 2nd level Yantra Yoga instructor.

Europe

Austria

upcoming
Vajra Dance of the 6 Spaces – Beginners Course
with Maurizio Mingotti
March 21–23, 2008
Vienna, Austria

Schedule: Friday 21 18:00–21:00, Saturday and Sunday 10:00–13:00 and 16:00–19:00. On Sunday afternoon we may start and finish a bit earlier.

Please note: On Monday March 24 you have the possibility to participate in a practice day of the learned Dance from 10:00–21:00, costs for this day are 15 Euros.

Place: Shambhala Tai Chi Zentrum
Bennogasse 8, 1080
Cost: 130 Euro with the usual discounts
Information and registration for this course contact:
Elisha Koppensteiner
Mobile: +43 (0)699 11 96 47 06
Email: dzogchen.wien@gmx.at
*

passages

Died: Guenter Faschinger
Dear Vajra family,
I am very sad that I have to inform you, that one of our Vajra brothers from Austria died on the January 28th, 2008. Guenter Faschinger, 51 years old and a disciple of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



since the early eighties, died in an avalanche in the Austrian mountains.
Guenter and I practiced Yantra Yoga together and we did several practice retreats together. He also was the trans-

lator for the German speaking Sangha for some years at various retreats in Merigar. Guenter was married and had lived and worked in Portugal in the last years.
Please include Guenter in your Shitro practice.
Thank you and very best wishes,
Oliver Leick
Gakyil-member and old friend of Guenter

Czech Republic

New Gakyil
Blue: Pavel Spanily, Katerina Osancova, Daniel Kopriva
Red: Martin Zmydloch, Jakub Augustinsky, Cyril Lojda
Yellow: Petr Lisy, Michal Kunes, Martin Erhardt

Denmark

Vajra Dance Course for Beginners
with Karin Heinemann
Copenhagen, 14–16 March 2008
Schedule: Friday: 6–9 p.m.
Saturday: 9–12 and 16–19 p.m.
Sunday 9–12
Price: 100 euros for the 3 days with usual discounts for Members:
Ordinary 20%; Reduced 50%; Sustaining 80% and Meritorious 100%.
Place: Sofiegade 1. 1418 Copenhagen K.
Information or registration:
Christen Norre Bundgaard
Tel. +45 60633460
Email: chrismat@m2.stud.ku.dk
www.dzogchencommunity.dk



Poland

Virtual Bricks for Paldenling Dark Retreat Cabin available

Dear Vajra Family,
We have prepared a set of Virtual Bricks for the construction of Dark retreat Cabin in Paldenling Poland. For 100 euro you not only present a generous donation, but also gain the possibility to do a two-week retreat there anytime you want!

Virtual Bricks can also be bought as gifts – the owner is entitled to make use of 14 days of free retreat in Paldenling whenever he or she feels. Individual practitioners, groups and Communities in different countries – please participate! You can learn more and make a donation here:
<http://dzogczen.pl/darkretreat/vb.php>

We would also like to thank all of you for your generous donations and support!
Best Wishes,
The Cabin Project Team
darkcabin@dzogczen.pl
*

Mandarava with Nina Robinson in Paldenling 2007
by Marek Macko

From November 14–18, 2007 Paldenling (a famous place in Poland) had a great opportunity. Nina Robinson came to give us some more detailed explanations about the practice of Mandarava. Mandarava is not only a long-life practice, but a complete path to realization belonging to Anuyoga and Atiyoga. Moreover it is the terma of our Master belonging to Longsal Cycle.

Every few years Rinpoche is trying to transmit us the new aspects of Mandarava practice and still more details, which he is discovering in his dreams.
As everybody knows the practice of Mandarava can be done with elaborate preparations, with less preparations and without preparations (going more strictly to the essence) according to the circumstances we are in or what kind of things are available for us at the moment. Because we had to our disposal especially precious place that is Palden-



ling, a precious instructor and some days of precious time, we tried to do the practice with some more preparations.
First of all, Nina prepared dough from which we made long-life pills (these are not the chulen pills and have another function), which were resting on the altar until the end of our retreat and taking the power from the practice. Also we had got the chulen pills and we were using them while keeping a special diet. Also we were making dadars from bamboo sticks, ribbons of five colors and from different precious gems. Also we received some explanations about three kinds of chulen: Nirmanakaya-chulen (diet and pills), Sambhogakaya-chulen (pills), and Dharmakaya-chulen (breathing).
Although we were trying to learn as much as possible, it was little difficult

because Mandarava has many aspects not easily learned in a few days, therefore the ideal would be if an instructor like Nina could come every year to Paldenling.
The time of this retreat at Paldenling took on the white clothes of thick snow. We had to do ganapuja not the last day of retreat but the day before on Saturday, since Nina's flight was on Monday morning from Warsaw. ©

passages

Died: On the first Saturday of this year, January 5th, 2008, our Vajra brother and friend Michal Bajbakow (born in 1966) died around 9 a.m. in the hospital in Warsaw, Poland. He was a Polish artist who had been living and working in Cologne, Germany for many years.

Michal met Rinpoche in 1992 in Lodz, Poland and later on he spent some time at Merigar helping to paint the Murals in the Gonpa. He was very devoted to Rinpoche and the teachings and he followed many retreats with him all around the world. Unfortunately he didn't have much connection with sitting meditation or control of the three doors of existence. In the end this is what killed him, not the heavy illness he had, but the too big attachment to completely living the independent life he lived.
Many of you will remember his unusual character: warm-hearted, sensitive and intelligent on one hand, rough-and-ready on the other: a real down-to-earth character ...
Please don't forget him in your practice.
Devoted friends



Slovakia

7th Lojong ▲
with Oliver Leick
The start of the New Year was really blissful for our small Slovak Sangha. On the second day of the New Year we started a weekend retreat with Oliver Leick of the “The 7th Lojong” in our capital city, Bratislava. We had an international retreat with 24 people. We met Vajra sisters and brothers from Czech Republic, Hungary and even from Poland. And of course from Slovakia and Austria (Oliver).

We have all enjoyed the time that we spent with Oliver, who was actually one of the first teachers who came to our country from the beginning of our activity. It was very inspiring for all of us to listen to an experienced long-term student of our Master. Oliver gave us plenty of examples from his own practice. His humble and direct approach to the teaching helped us so much. Thank you.

*



Santi Maha Sangha Base Level ▲
with Jakob Winkler
We had a weekend break after the retreat with Oliver and then we had another retreat with Jakob Winkler in beautiful Valley near a little spa town Trencianske Teplice. Jakob visited this place couple times before, and we had very nice family atmosphere in that exquisite shiny weekend. More than twenty people took part in that retreat. We went through the “famous” fifth chapter of the book Santi Maha Sangha, Precious Vase, Base Level. It was very

helpful for all of us, but especially for those folks, whose want to pass the examination this year. We had a very good occasion for clarifying our doubts and Jakob showed his good teacher’s ability, when he patiently answer our question by trying to enter into dimension of student.
Thank you.

Spain

New Gakyils of Spain
Kundusling (Barcelona)
Yellow:
Montse Gombau: mgsague@gmail.com
Olaya Martínez: olaya@moviments.net

Red:
Carles Jañez: carlesjaez@gmail.com
Pablo Flores-Guerra: fg.pablo@gmail.com

Blue:
Sachiko Fullita: sachikofullita@gmail.com
Peter Guest: peter_azul@dzogchen.es

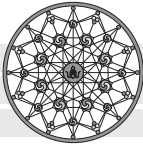
Also, there is now a Gakyil in Madrid, chosen by the members there. The first time in the history of the Spanish Community we have two Gakyils!
Madrid
Blue: María Arévalo: – maria-arevalo@telefonica.net

Red: Debora Murillo
– debomu@hotmail.com

Yellow: Sonia Chica – soniachica@telefonica.net

Best wishes from the Spanish Community for the New Year!

tsegyalgar east



DCA Tsegyalgar East

P0 Box 479	Phone: 413 369 4153	secretary@tsegyalgar.org
Conway, MA 01341 USA	Fax & Bookstore: 413 369 4473	www.tsegyalgar.org

schedule conway 2008

April
(specific weekend dates TBA)
Song of Vajra Dance Course
Instructor: Anastasia McGhee
\$ 140 full price or \$ 30/session

May
May 16-18
Yantra Yoga: 3rd and 4th series
Pranayamas and Yantras
Instructed by Lynn Sutherland,
Supervised by Fabio Andrico
\$ 140 full price or \$ 30/session

May 23-25
New York City
Dzogchen Retreat with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
The Essence Dzogchen Teaching of
Sangyas Lingpa according to the
Longsal Teaching
\$ 200 full price or \$ 70/day

May 25, 27, 28, 29
New York City
Introductory Breathing Course
Instructor: Fabio Andrico
To register, please contact the
NYC Dzogchen Community
www.nydzogchen.com
Fee: TBA

May 27-30
Advanced Song of the Vajra Dance
Course
Instructor: Adriana Del Borgo
Full price: \$ 250 or \$ 65/day

May 30-June 6
Tsegyalgar East Dzogchen Retreat with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Jigmed Lingpa’s Dzogchen Teaching
“Yeshe Lama”
\$ 500 full price or \$ 70/day

June
June 13-15
Santi Maha Sangha III Level Exams
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
June 16-22
Santi Maha Sangha IV Level Training
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
\$ 350 full price

July
July 4-6
Toronto Dzogchen Retreat
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche
\$ 180 full price or \$ 70/session

July 21-28
Jnanadakkini Practice Retreat
on Khandroling
with Intermediate Yantra Yoga
Led by Naomi Zeitz
Full price \$ 160 or \$ 10/session

August
August 8-26
Santi Maha Sangha Retreat
on Khandroling
Four sessions:
August 8-11
SMS Base, Emphasis on Semdzin
August 13-16
SMS Base, Emphasis on Rushen
August 18-21
SMS Base, Emphasis on 7th Mind Training with Kumbhaka

August 23-26
SMS Level 1
Instructors:
Santi Maha Sangha with Jim Valby
Yantra Yoga with Paula Barry & Naomi Zeitz
Vajra Dance with Bodhi Krause
\$ 1000 full price for entire retreat
\$ 275 for each 4-day session or \$ 25 for each individual session

October
October 20-24
Long Life Practice of the Dakini
Mandarava with Tsalung
Instructor: Elio Guarisco
Full Price: \$ 300 or \$ 25/session

fundraising for khandroling big projects in the works!

Dear All,
Warm greetings from Tsegyalgar East!

As some of you may know, the Khandroling project, under the direction of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, involves building a Vajra Hall to cover the Universal Mandala. The Vajra Hall is a one of a kind sacred monument, architecturally challenging and enormous. (The Merigar Gonpa would fit inside.) The project also includes building Rinpoche’s house and remodeling the farmhouse so that our operations and activities will be centralized at Khandroling. This is biggest and most ambitious undertaking ever at the Tsegyalgar East. Our Sangha is united and we are all excited; yet substantial funding is needed for the project.

If every one of us helps, in small or big ways, the project will manifest. Your involvement is absolutely essential.

The official fundraising campaign will be starting soon but we are accepting any donations for the project. Please send a check to the address below.

Another way to help is to look around you: Are there any items to donate for the auction at the Tsegyalgar East retreat with Rinpoche in June? The items can also be something to sell in the Khandroling shop that will be setup during the retreat.

Offerings for the project connect you to the sacred land of our lineage, the seat of Goma Devi, Khandroling, Everything will be tax deductible.

Khandroling welcomes you!
Kyu, Tsegyalgar Yellow Gakyil at Khandroling

*

Tsegyalgar East is happy to host a
Santi Maha Sangha Level III Examination
June 13-15, 2008

Santi Maha Sangha Level IV Training
June 16-22, 2008
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Vajra Dance Course with Anastasia McGhee from February 16-18, 2008, Tsegyalgar East, Conway.

Photo: J. Mella

For those qualified and interested candidates, in order to register please be aware of the following responsibilities:
· E-mail the Secretary of Tsegyalgar East at secretary@tsegyalgar.org stating your intention to present for this examination by March 12, 2008
· Karma Yoga forms need to be submitted to your local Gakyil by March 12, 2008
· Applying to the examiner (Jim Valby) and SMS coordinating office (in Merigar), and once approved,

· Ask local Gakyil to send a letter to Tsegyalgar East on your behavior
· Submit a completed application to Tsegyalgar East by May 12, 2008

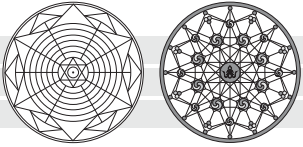
As soon as a candidate contacts our secretary, he/she will be sent by email the current Santi Maha Sangha guidelines PDF document published by the Shang Shung Institute. Complete description of the process is in this document and each candidate is fully responsible for

knowing this process and following the guidelines provided.

To all local Gakyils, Gars, and interested candidates, please let us know if we can assist you in this process by contacting our Secretary at secretary@tsegyalgar.org.

Thank you for your collaboration.
Tsegyalgar East Gakyil

tsegyalgarwest



Tsegyalgar West/Baja Mexico
Dzogchen Community West Coast

755 Euclid Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94708

cabass@prodigy.net.mx
carolfields@aol.com
www.bahasangha.org

tsegyalgar west
news

New developments and fundraiser:

This has been an eventful year so far for Tsegyalgar West. We have restructured our membership system to be more in synch with Tsegyalgar East's. We now have a new Gakyil secretary, Elisa Gonzalez, and a Gar land supervisor, Bertha Saenz. Soon, we will have additional staff. And we have made many new improvements to the land, including concrete work that protects our road from washouts in rainy season and a concrete pad for a Teaching and Vajra Dance space. Two composting-toilet "lavatories" are in progress as is work on three more casitas.

The new staff and these improvements have allowed us to organize our recent Santi Maha Sangha Base-level retreat with Jim Valby and an upcoming Dream Yoga and Rushen retreat with Michael



Katz. One improvement we are most proud of is a roof support system that allows us to practice under a beautiful shaded area using a sturdy tent covering a rectangular teaching space and circular Mandala area. Eventually, we will install a palapa-style roof.

This wonderful addition to the land makes it immediately more usable for the community. However, because of a

miscommunication, our locally based, very reliable contractor began building it before we had raised the funds to pay for it. We know the community has many financial needs, but if you would like to contribute money to a concrete project that has immediate benefit for practitioners, we would be very grateful for any contributions. We need a total of \$17,000 to completely pay for the roof system. If you are able to



contribute, please send your donations via check or money order (information given below), or, to wire funds, please contact Elisa Gonzalez, TW Secretary, for details of how to do so. To make a PayPal donation, please see our web site (jardindelosenaranjos.org) under the Membership tab for the link. Which-ever form of payment, please label your donations Roof Support System.

Checks or money orders should be payable to DCWC Winter Gar Fund and sent to:

Elisa Gonzalez, Secretary,
Tsegyalgar West
1533 Austin Hwy, Ste 102, #402
San Antonio, TX 78218
Elisa's e-mail address:
ejgon@hotmail.com

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upcoming

Dream Yoga and Rushen Retreat
with Michael Katz
April 20–24, 2008

\$80/day of retreat – with membership discounts
(20% ordinary, 80% sustaining and meritorious, 50% reduced)
or *Special Price* for coming for the whole time, beginning the night before the retreat begins.

Arrive April 19 and stay until the morning of April 25 for US\$150 or 1500 pesos.
(This includes light dinner the night of April 19 and breakfast the morning of April 25.)
Cost includes retreat, camping sites (BYO camping gear), potable water, three great meals a day, and a ride to and from Los Cabos airport (SJD).

E-mail Elisa Gonzalez (Tsegyalgar West Secretary) for more information:
ejgon@hotmail.com

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SMS Base-Level Retreat

with Jim Valby
19–24 February 2008

"At beautiful Tsegyalgar West in Mexico, earth, water, fire, air and space manifest a perfect place for our study & practice."

Jim Valby, February 2008

We began each day with coffee or tea, fresh-squeezed orange juice, perhaps a bowl of fresh tropical fruit with made-from-scratch granola, before we settled in for our first session of the day with Jim Valby. We practiced and laughed, delighted in the many ways Jim could restate the essential points so that we could begin to remember them. We occasionally helped our generous volunteer translators (who probably didn't really need our help) when they paused over choosing a word. After a midmorning break, we gathered again for a second session with Jim for more.

And then lunch – organic greens and something healthy, tasty, like fish tacos with fresh-made blue-corn tortillas – and a longish break, and then a session of learning the Vajra Dance with Bodhi Krause, who patiently and gently helped everyone to relax on the

Mandala and enter into, first, the dance of the A before beginning instruction in the Dance of the Three Vajras in our new Mandala space, with its expansive view of the mountains of Baja California Sur under a deepening-blue late-afternoon sky. And then dinner (again delicious), another session with Jim, a little time spent under (this time) the desert-clear night sky.

For some of us who had been there before, we also appreciated the way the Gar is developing into a more and more comfortable place to be. For example, the first day we practiced in the fig grove, which most people who have been to Tsegyalgar West will remember well – a protected place with its ancient trees sheltering us from the sun, the trees' thick roots visible in the giant rocks that characterize the Gar's land. This is a really a wonderful place to be. The second day, however, we set ourselves up in our new teaching space, just uphill from our new Mandala space, bringing up a nice comfortable chair for Jim, a little table for an altar, a chair for the translator. Each day we improved it a little more. By the end of the retreat we had thoroughly moved in.

Most of the retreatants were local, from La Paz and the nearby Cabo San

Lucas and San Jose area. A few of us came over from mainland Mexico and the United States. While some had met Rinpoche before at retreats with him at Tsegyalgar West and elsewhere, for several it was the first time to encounter his precious teachings. And so it was perfect that one of the three times per year that Rinpoche offers us worldwide transmission of Guru Yoga occurred in the early part of the retreat.

That there was a full-moon eclipse simultaneous with the Anniversary of Garab Dorje seemed especially auspicious, as Rinpoche noted in his webcast explanation beforehand. For us in Tsegyalgar West, the earth's purple shadow, first covering and then uncovering the moon's brightness, was startlingly visible before and after we received direct transmission from Rinpoche at 8:00 p.m. Baja Sur time.

During the retreat, Jim Valby commented, "At beautiful Tsegyalgar West in Mexico, earth, water, fire, air and space manifest a perfect place for our study & practice." We relaxed, we studied, we practiced, we learned, we enjoyed. I think that most of us departed feeling more free than we did when we arrived: a perfect conclusion.

*



passages

Born: Adam was born to Martina Kacurova and Jakub Muller on Sunday January 20, 2008 at 1:20 pm at home in Richmond, California. He weighed in at 7 pounds and 20 zs. and was 18 inches long.

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

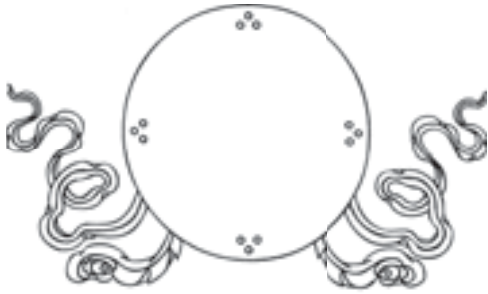
Naomi Zeitz: mirror@tsegyalgar.org
413 369 4208
Tsegyalgar office and bookstore:
413 369 41 53, 413 369 44 73

Italy

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.



The Mirror
PO Box 479
Conway, MA 01341
USA

The Mirror c/o Merigar
Arcidosso 58031
GR Italy

Happy Holidays!
The Mirror Staff
Liz Granger, Naomi Zeitz and Thomas Eifler

tashigar

norte

Tashigar North /Finca Tashigar

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

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

new gakyil members needed

Dear Community
We would like to inform you that in March 2008, Tashigar Norte will renew the Gakyil.

To assemble the New Gakyil, we are looking for people with the following characteristics

- Active members for at least three years and have annual membership fee fully paid
- Have attended at least three retreats with Rinpoche
- Motivated to offer a year of work in service of the Community
- Be able to work in a group and with open communication
- Be gentle and kind with others
- Speak Spanish and English preferably

In order to work under the advices and with the motivation of Rinpoche’s wishes, is necessary to have reed:

- The Blue Book of the Dzogchen Community, “Principles and Guidelines for Practitioners and Gakyil Members” by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- The Document “Collaboration” by Yeshe Silvano Namkhai (International Gakyil) and Luigi Ottaviani (Shang

- Shung Institute) regarding to the reorganization of the International Dzogchen Community
- “Margarita Guidelines” by Yeshe Silvano Namkhai (International Gakyil)
- “Modification to the Structure of the Dzogchen Community”, by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (for Tashigar Norte)

If you need some of the texts mentioned above, contact us and we will send you a copy.

If you are interested to apply for be member of the Gakyil of Tashigar Norte, please send your application to secretary@tashigarnorte.org

Gakyil and Secretary of Tashigar Norte

new gekö needed

Dear Community
We would like to inform you that at the end of March 2008, the Gekö position at Tashigar Norte will be available.

For this position, we are looking for someone with the following characteristics:

- Active member for at least three years and have annual membership fee paid

- Have been attended at least three retreats with Rinpoche
- Motivated to offer a year of work in service of the Community
- Be able to work in a group
- Speak Spanish and English
- Be gentle, kind and principally patience with others
- Work collaboratively and in a spirit of open communication with the Gakyil in executing the responsibilities of this very important position.

In order to work under the advices and with the motivation of Rinpoche’s wishes, is necessary to have read:

- The Blue Book of the Dzogchen Community, “Principles and Guidelines for Practitioners and Gakyil Members” by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- The Document “Collaboration” by Yeshe Silvano Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani (Shang Shung Institute) regarding to the reorganization of the International Dzogchen Community
- “Margarita Guidelines” by Yeshe Silvano Namkhai (International Gakyil)
- “Modification to the Structure of the Dzogchen Community”, by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (for Tashigar Norte)

If you need some of the texts mentioned above, contact us and we will send you a copy.

the ornamentation of the tashigar norte gonpa

lauri denyer

A year ago, Rosa Namkhai asked Michele Salvatore and Anna Pucci to oversee the ornamentation of the Tashigar Norte Gonpa, saying that it was time to change the industrial appearance that it had retained, despite its architectural enhancement and impressive outer appearance. This quality, somewhere between that of an airline hanger and a barn, was acceptable but not ideal for a gonpa in which the most sublime teachings are given by our Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Last year the project commenced with the ornamentation of the columns in the main part of the Gonpa. Migmar was consulted about the design, and a team of students diligently applied themselves to the task of painting them, in order to be ready for the Drupchen retreat.

A series of smooth panels were affixed to the main supports of the roof beams, covering the crisscrossing steel members with surfaces on which it would be suitable for large designs to be painted. These panels were then painted a deep red, in preparation for the future work.

Designs were proposed, but none were suitable. Rinpoche said that Migmar would know how to make a proper design, so he was consulted once again. Migmar was invited to Tashigar Norte, after a meeting about the project in Merigar in the autumn, to put the necessary artistry into the work. The design revolves around the twelve animals of the Tibetan zodiac, at Rinpoche’s request. It is augmented with the Eight Auspicious Symbols, and the whole of it comprises an abundant display of flowers, leaves and vines, twin-

ing around many thigles within which are the principal seed syllables and symbols.

The team of artists from Merigar consists of Michele, Migmar, Nicola Cassano, and Ivan Drozdov. Many people from Tashigar North are also assisting, including anyone who would like to participate and who is not afraid of heights (the work is being done on a high scaffolding). The painters work diligently, 6 days a week from early morning until dusk, with a short break at midday.

Tashigar del Norte sponsors the project. At this point (February 23rd), there is one more week of work to do on these surfaces. After that, there is more to decorate the yellow sections below these panels. Then next year, if funding can be found, there will be another season of similar work to do here, to bring the painting to completion.



Migmar painting the Gonpa at Tashigar North.

Vajra Dance Teacher Training
First Level
with the Main Instructors Prima Mai & Adriana Dal Borgo
March 28th–April 3rd

Who can attend?
All those who know the female and male part of the Vajra Dance of Six Spaces of Samantabhadra and The Vajra Dance of Three Vajras, and aspire to become a Vajra Dance teacher, or want to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the practice.

tashigar norte present the gonpa painting

Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters,
Here in Tashigar Norte we have the good fortune to see the paintings in the Gonpa spread day by day over the roof, creating a piece of Tibet in Margarita. They are beautifully designed and painted, by the four artists who have come from Merigar for the purpose (Migmar, Michele, Nicola, Ivan) and others from the local community who are assisting them.

However, the project turns out to be more complicated than expected, and the money allocated is not sufficient. We are appealing to the Community for donations so that the decoration of the Gonpa can continue and be completed in the best possible way, worthy of the teachings we receive there. For see more photos, please click here <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dhakini/sets/72157603953394386/show/> If you are able to support the project, please contact our secretary to secretary@tashigarnorte.org Thanks a lot for your collaboration. Tashigar Norte Community

all upcoming
Vajra Dance Courses 2008

In the Dzogchen Teaching sound and movement are very important because they are the means to integrate oneself into the state of contemplation. The Vajra Dance is principally a practice to harmonize the energy of the individual. If one has a more profound knowledge of the meaning of the Dance, it becomes a method for integrating the three existences of body, voice and mind into the

knowledge of the state of contemplation. This integration is one of the most important aims of a Dzogchen practitioner. The Vajra Dance is practiced on a Mandala, which represents the correspondence between the internal dimension of the individual and the outer dimension of the world.

Course of the Vajra Dance of Six Spaces of Samantabhadra for beginners
with the Intermediate Instructor Carmen Rivas
March 9th–13th

Who can attend?
Open to all those who are interested. Is not necessary have been received the Transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Fee: Bs.F 250/\$ 50 – with usual discounts for Members

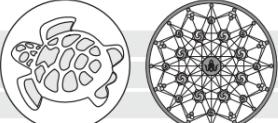
Dzogchen Community membership is required.

Please send an e-mail confirming your participation and telling us when, were and with whom you learned the Vajra Dance.

Fee: Bs.F 1.750/\$ 350 – discounts for members don't apply

>> continued on next page

tashigar norte



>> upcoming courses continued from last page

Vajra Dance Course of the Song of the Vajra for Advanced
with the Main Instructor Prima Mai
May 5th–8th

Who can attend?
All those who know the female or male part of the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra.
Dzogchen Community membership is required.

Fee: Bs.F 750/\$ 150 – with usual discounts for Members
Please register by email to secretary@tashigarnorte.org

Tashigar Norte is pleased to announce **Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat** with SMS Base Instructor Elías Capriles
March 14th–17th, 2008

Retreat Focus
Distinguishing Levels of Meaning in the Santi Maha Sangha Base Training (Or

“Making one’s Chest of Drawers for Organizing the Teachings of SMS Base Level”) Levels of Meaning According to Paths Levels of Meaning According to Vehicles Outer, Inner and Secret (and in some cases Super-Secret) Meanings Provisional (*neyartha/drangdön* [drang-don]) and Definitive (*nitārtha/ngedön* [nges-don]) Meanings

If you are interested to attend this course, please contact secretary@tashigarnorte.org

Prices will be announced soon
Gakyil and Secretary of Tashigar Norte

Tashigar Norte is pleased to announce **Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat Practice and Study** with SMS Base Instructor Grisha Mokhin
April 11th–14th, 2008

Fee: Bs.F 250/\$ 50 – with usual discounts for Members

If you are interested to attend this course, please register by email at: secretary@tashigarnorte.org

Gakyil and Secretary of Tashigar Norte
*
Yantra Yoga Courses 2008

Yantra Yoga or the Yoga of Movement is an ancient system of Tibetan yoga based on the text /The Union of the Sun and the Moon/, written in the 8th century by the master and translator Vairocana. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu wrote a detailed commentary on the root text and started to transmit this teaching in the West at the beginning of the seventies.
Yantra Yoga is a fundamental method to integrate the profound essence of the Dzogchen Teaching in the three doors (body, voice and mind) of the practitioner. Through positions and movements combined with breathing one’s energy

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

Yantra Yoga Teacher Training First Level
with the Main Instructors
Fabio Andrico & Laura Evangelisti
April 15th–23rd

Who can attend?
All those who already have experience with Yantra Yoga and aspire to become a teacher, or want to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the practice.
Dzogchen Community membership is required.

Fee: Bs.F 1.750/\$ 350 – Discounts for members don’t apply

Course on the Third Series of Yantras with Variations for advanced
with the Main Instructor Laura Evangelisti
May 1st–4th

Who can attend?
All those who have a basic knowledge of Yantra Yoga.
Dzogchen Community membership is required.

Fee: Bs.F 650/\$ 130 – with usual discounts for Members.

Please register by e-mail to secretary@tashigarnorte.org

Gakyil & Secretary of Tashigar Norte
*

upcoming Moxibustion Course
with Elio Guarisco
First Level: May 17th–19th
Second Level: May 28th–30th
Third Level: June 6th–8th

Tibetan Medicine
The healing power of the heat
In Tibetan medicine moxibustion is the queen of all external therapies. Moxa uses heat which has the power to unblock the causes and the effects illnesses. This course is inspired by the work and the vast research conducted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu over many years, studying and comparing numerous ancient sources on Tibetan moxibustion. The Shang Shung Institute is organizing a course of moxibustion on three levels. Each level consists of three days of explanation and practice. The

course will be an introduction to the practice of moxibustion on the basis of the principles of Tibetan medicine, illustrating the 500 points on which moxa can be applied and the relative therapeutic indications, and also using the different method of application

First Level
May 17th:
Morning: 10:00 am–12:30 am
General introduction to the practice of moxibustion · Methods for preparing artemisia for moxibustion · Illnesses for which moxibustion is indicated · Illnesses for which moxibustion is not indicated · Points on the body where moxibustion is not to be done
Afternoon: 3:30 pm–5:30 pm
Moxibustion points indicated by an illness · Moxibustion points to be located by measures · Measures used to

determine moxibustion points · Four different methods of applying moxibustion · Norms to be followed after moxibustion · Benefits of moxibustion · Reference books for the Clear Crystal Mirror manual of moxibustion

May 18th:
Morning: 10:00 am–12:30 am
Location of 80 moxibustion points on the central part of the back · Therapeutic benefits of applying moxibustion on the 80 points · Training in recognition of the 80 points
Afternoon: 3:30 pm–5:30 pm
Method of applying moxibustion on the 80 points of the central part of the back · Training in applying moxibustion on the 80 points of the central part of the back · Moxibustion points on the cervical vertebrae · Introduction to the three humors of Tibetan Medicine

May 19th:
Morning: 10:00 am–12:30 am
Bodily location of the three humors · Characteristics of the three humors · Location of the 74 moxibustion points on the lateral part of the back · Therapeutic benefits of applying moxibustion on the 74 points · Training in recognition of the 74 points
Afternoon: 3:30 pm–5:30 pm
Symptoms of the imbalance of the three humors · Training in applying moxibustion on the 74 points of the lateral part of the back · Seven types of humoral constitutions

If you are interested to attend these courses please register by e-mail to secretary@tashigarnorte.org
Prices will be announce soon
Blue Gakyil and Secretary of Tashigar Norte

Tashigar Norte is pleased to announce **Mandarava Tsalung Retreat** with Elio Guarisco
May 22nd–25th

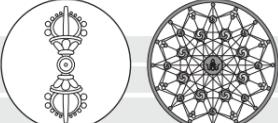
Schedule
6:00 a.m. 1st Thun
9:00 a.m. 2nd Thun
5:00 p.m. Explanations

Fee: Bs.F 250 – with the usual discounts for Dzogchen Community Members

Please confirm your participation to: secretary@tashigarnorte.org

Blue Gakyil & Secretary of Tashigar Norte

tashigarsur



Tashigar South Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar Calle pública S/N	Tanti 5155 Pcia. de Córdoba Argentina	Phone & Fax: 0054 - 3541 - 498 356 tashigarsur@gmail.com
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tashigar mandala

first general assembly meeting with yeshi namkhai

february 21, 2008

The first general assembly of current and prospective homeowners or ‘usufructuaries’ of Tashigar Mandala took place in the Gonpa of Tashigar South on February 21, 2008. At present there are about 25 homes constructed with the possibility of about 45 altogether. The meeting began with a presentation of work done to date by Pepe Poncio, the past and newly reelected Mandala Administrator. This was followed by a lively discussion of the projects to be undertaken like water source and distribution – drinkable and other – roads, electricity, telephone and various infrastructure issues. There were 2 main proposals addressing the problem of potable water. The assembly then voted to reelect Pepe Poncio as



SMS Second Level Training, January 11–17, 2008.

the Mandala Administrator, as well as the three representatives of the three “neighborhoods”, Martha Trillo, Anna Garcia and Alicia Caballeros.

Yeshi Namkhai was present at the meeting and offered valuable input and advice. One important piece of advice he gave was that we had to decide if we wanted to have condominiums or a



Breathing course with Fabio Andrico, January 23–26, 2008.

more global vision, and from this base we can move ahead and develop Tashigar Mandala.

Photo: N. Zeitz

tashigar^{sur}

buenos aires retreat december 15-16, 2007

elina lerner

Two days could be a long or short time according to our vision. Every time Chögyal Namkhai Norbu comes to Argentina, he spends a few days in Buenos Aires and offers his teachings. During the month of December, Buenos Aires has a moderate climate. After a very rough winter and spring, everyone was anxiously awaiting the end of the year and vacation time.

December is a month when an old and eternal myth reappears in the porteños tradition of Buenos Aires. Everyone wants to finish what was started with the deep desire of starting the New Year

in a more organized manner, with less worries and responsibilities. We usually try to design a program for the New Year that is a challenge; then it becomes a combination of courage and strategy.

The Buenos Aires Gakyil started organizing the retreat with Rinpoche with enthusiasm in August of 2007. We tried to communicate well since Buenos Aires is a very big city and we don't yet have a common place to meet, therefore we must travel long distances and that takes a lot of time. Because of this obstacle, we benefited by an increased effort towards communication. Sometimes it felt like our telephones were on fire as people tried to find out about the next Ganapuja, Yantra Yoga or Vajra Dance practice. The last year we also started to realize that we needed to collaborate more positively with the



Dance of 6 Spaces of Samantabhadra and Three Vajras for Advanced with Adriana dal Borgo, January 27-31, 2008.

Photo: N. Zeitz

Gar of Tashigar South and that was often challenging.

We had two objectives in 2007 and they were to offer a very nice place to our Master for the teach-

ings and to increase the number of people interested in the teachings. It seems we fulfilled both aims. We hope in 2008 to offer our precious Master and all the

Dzogchen Community a new space where the teachings could be taught for the benefit of all sentient beings!



Kumar Kumari at Tashigar South with Carolina Mingolla.

Photo: L. Hume

passages:

Died: Horacio Toledo died on February 29 at 10pm in Cordoba, Argentina. Horacio entered the Dzogchen Community with the first retreat in Alta Gracia in 1989. He was Gekö at different times and also a Red Gakyil member. He always cooked asado [barbeque] for all in the Community. He was married to Luisa, who is also a member of the Community. He died very peacefully. Please keep him in your practice.



namgyalgar and pacific rim

news from namgyalgar star pulsford

It is now almost 5 years since our Master has been here in his physical form, so the recent news of his intention to return at the end of January 2009 created a deep stir of excitement and joy throughout the Namgyalgar summer retreats. Everywhere conversations of his return were audible. Excited voices discussing plans of ways to get time off work to spend the 3 months with Rinpoche, enthusiastic abandonment of individuals' previous plans, as well as the disappointed voice of a child, "Do you mean I still have to wait a whole year to see Rinpoche?" – to which came the gentle reply of one of our dance teachers, "We have waited now already for 5 years, so for us to wait just one more year is very short".

Our summer retreat began with a precious opportunity to attend the video web cast of

Rinpoche's teachings in Tashigar. Santi Maha Sangha teacher Angie Gilbert revised the meaning of what had been taught each day, helping us to understand any points we had missed. The web cast teachings were combined with a retreat of the Chod, lead by Angie, who explained gradually the meaning of the practice, as well as how to use the damaru and bell and giving us the chance to practice the Chod many times.

The retreat schedule was full, and well attended with several groups travelling over 2000 kilometres to attend the retreats, some of whom for which the retreat was their first contact with Rinpoche's teachings. Local teachers taught the Dance of the Three Vajras in the mornings and Yantra Yoga in the afternoons. For the first time ever at Namgyalgar a children's program was incorporated into the retreat, with the Kumar Kumari being taught by Yantra Yoga teacher Emily Coleing to a dedicated group of children, who impressed us all with an elegant and serious demon-



Emily Coleing with Kumar Kumari students.

stration of what they had learned at the conclusion of the retreat.

This retreat was followed by a Vajra Dance retreat lead by Lynne Geary, with one week of practice of all 3 dances. At the time of writing this retreat is still going, the mandala is full, and the smooth coordinated energy and blessings of this practice evident all around. Soon we will begin a week of Yantra Yoga practice with Emily Coleing teaching the first

and second series to interested new comers, and some of us using the opportunity to practice the 3rd and 4th groups as well.

Namgyalgar, which once used to seem cold and rainy at this time of year, in recent years has become warm and delightful, even the crops the farmers grow near by have changed, to adapt to the warmer weather. This year again followed this pattern with huge blue skies and sunny days. Ev-

eryday we found some time to go and swim at the fantastic beaches near the Gar, and integrate a little with the powerful and majestic elements of this area.

Sitting silently with our Vajra brothers and sisters on the grassy slopes of Namgyalgar after practicing the Chod, staring at the vast jewelled night sky, our European Vajra brother here for the first time, seemed to read all our minds saying, "This is something special we will never forget". It is true, I think we are all aware; time here at Namgyalgar is so precious. The chance to practice these deep methods with our Vajra brothers and sisters, at this precious place blessed by the Master, fills the heart with joy and gratitude. My heart is singing knowing our precious master intends to come here again to Namgyalgar very soon!!! We await you! – and from the heart invite all our Vajra family from around the world, who have opportunity to travel, to come and join us here with you!!!

Reviews

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book review
the old man basking in the sun

raimondo bultrini
translation by liz granger

The Old Man Basking in the Sun
Longchenpa's Treasury of Natural Perfection
Foreword by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Translation and commentary by
Keith Dowman
2006, Pg 303
Vajra Publications,
Jyatha Thamel, Nepal
www.vajrabooks.com.np

Eye of the Storm
Vairotsana's Five Original
Transmissions
Translation and commentary by
Keith Dowman
2006, Pg 106
Vajra Publications

In the ultimate definitive analysis
Just as golden chains and hempen
ropes are equally binding,
So the sacred and the profane do both
enslave us;
And just as white and black clouds
are equally enshrouding,
So virtue and vice alike veil gnosis:
The yogin or yogini who understand
that
Fosters release from moral conditioning

To read and present a book of teachings containing such precise images and symbols – a difficult challenge for the limits of the conceptual mind – is an act of practice rather than one of writing. It calls for a plunge into the universe of teachings by realized yogis such as the great Longchenpa, the author of the quotation. Fortunately the book we are talking about is already the fruit of the practice of the translator Keith Dowman, a real expert of Dzogchen.

The title given to the work, *The Old Man Basking in the Sun*, evokes an image which is not ambiguous: a human being in the final stage of his existence is enjoying himself in the warm luminous nature of the elements which he finally feels part of. He enjoys them and gives enjoyment to those who understand the level of his peaceful contemplative integration.

These are intense moments like the light that surrounds the Old Man, reflected in the pages skillfully translated and commented on by Dowman, a disciple of one the most important yogis of the modern tradition of Ati Yoga, Dujom Rinpoche. In his introduction to the book, master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu explains that “Kusho Keith Dowman has spent many years living in India and Nepal in communion with many great masters who have realized the Dzogchen view. Studying within their purview, fully immersed in the sacred teaching, he has fortuitously absorbed the

realization of Ati Dzogchen. Now he has translated this extraordinary text, *The treasury of Natural Perfection*, and it can become part of the lives of fortunate Westerners, its inestimable value will become immediately apparent”.

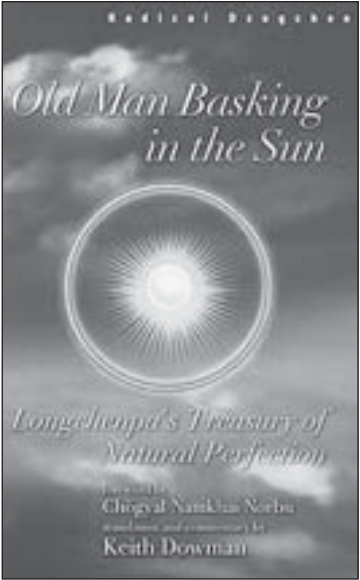
It is a good premise to attribute due importance to the text, but reading it directly is, without doubt, a jump into experience, to say the least, of the type of language used to describe the state, or the states of Dzogchen and the link with the transmission.

Timeless – unborn and unceasing,
motionless – without coming or going,
the master's contemplation is all inclusive,
so spontaneity is a pure unwavering Samadhi
and all events are assimilated to non-action.

Besides this text by Longchenpa, there is another translation by Dowman printed almost at the same time by the small but active publishing company Vajra Books in Thamel, Kathmandu. The second one has an equally suggestive title, *Eye of the Storm*, and is a text by Vairotsana who, together with Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, was one of the three main figures in the first introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. Besides being the centre of movement, the eye of the storm symbolizes the heart of the heart of the turmoil created in the mind by the words of practitioners who have realized their nature. Beyond cause and effect. And it is precisely this power in the use of words that Dowman refers to when he presents the five poems to directly induce “a vision of natural perfection in the mind of the reader”. “This” – explains Dowman in the introduction – “is not done by logic or causal connection but through the magic, the ambiguity, of poetry”.

We can make an extreme synthesis of words to describe the indefinable state beyond ordinary mind. “No-one and no-thing to change” and later on, “No controller! No control!” but in practical terms – writes Dowman in *The Old Man* – “...the percept “nonaction” should not be understood as cause to cease and desist in any discipline whatsoever, particularly on the progressive paths of spiritual aspiration”.

Dowman does not translate for Tibetans but for Western minds like his and in turn comments on passages from classical texts using a wide range of personal expressions. Even though some scholars may not be appreciative



of his style, he often manages to create a sparkling play of mirrors with new reflections for readers who are already used to more traditional but substantially similar translations.

Besides we shouldn't forget the respect that is due to the honest inspiration of a translator immersed in the original texts of a master such as Longchenpa. In his introduction to *The Old Man Chögyal Namkhai Norbu* reminds us of the importance of Longchenpa as a direct emanation “not only of Garab Dorje, the source of the Dzogchen tradition, but also of Vimalamitra, a renowned successor to Garab Dorje.”

Without a shadow of a doubt all of their teachings dwell on a single focal point that would remain completely alien to our capacity of ordinary perception without their explanations. There are not many masters who have realized this experience and know how to communicate it to their disciples. Frequently ascetics with great powers have never known how to verbally transmit instructions about their own practices to the ordinary minds of aspiring practitioners. Under the guidance of a real master, starting from one's first approach to Dzogchen, the limits of the conceptual mind of every serious practitioner are pushed to the boundaries of the Ultimate Truth, through words coming to perceive the importance of the integration between inner and outer, material and spiritual reality. But one needs direct experience in order to reach the origin or the source of the process that has matured in the mind.

Every act of the ethical behavior of an ordinary individual implies a personal way of accepting or refuting things in the world around him and in his own experiences. Right from our early learning years we are the severe or liberal judges of ourselves as well as of others. We know that by pardoning or condemning ourselves – therefore judging how we do in the processes of desire and aversion – we create a substantial part of our karma, almost as if we were keeping an unnecessary account book. From here arises the fear or worry that we all feel about having to present



the final account of that ledger to a superior entity one day. But what does this entity correspond to? To our most impartial consciousness? And where does this consciousness reside? In which corner of the mind did the concept of a judging consciousness take form?

In the approach to Dzogchen the supposition is to free oneself from this conditioning “beyond doubt”, beyond the rules of Cause and Effect that imply that phenomena have an origin and an evolution according to the action undertaken. But in order to reveal the tricks created by the ordinary mind during this process of self-liberation, based on a non-gradual and non-formal teaching like Dzogchen, some of the passages in which Dowman comments on Longchenpa's text can turn out to be extremely useful.

“The Dzogchen transmission taken as the cause of some future benefit indicates a mind at work at the lower end of the spectrum of its recipients. Moreover it is a dangerous error to interpret the percept “nondiscrimination” as license to indulge the peculiar personal weirdnesses that genetic and personal karma engender. In the moment, in the here and now, the originally pure mind of natural perfection makes no discrimination between right and wrong, good and bad, high and low, and between the poles of any dichotomy that social conditioning and intellectual idealism have inculcated, and it gives no positive reaction to the good nor any denial of the bad”.

It is in this delicate interpretation of the transition between relative Truth and absolute Truth that the great and mysterious game of karma is played out. “Acceptance of the totality of human potential” – writes Dowman – “may expand to infinity the horizons of our experience, but if the self serving rational mind takes hold of the notion that all and everything is permitted and uses it as principle to act upon through time, then the expectation that karma will perform its worst will not be disappointed. Karma may not exist in the timeless moment of nondual awareness, but is certainly lethal in the credulous rational mind in which a frame of moral conditioning is taken to be incontrovertible and in which moral causality is operative”.

If up to this point I have mainly referred to passages that are fundamentally conceptual - and potentially at risk of actually misleading some readers – I would like to bring your attention to other images contained in Longchenpa's verses in *The Old Man Basking in the Sun* that are deeply symbolic of the process of self-liberation:

“Now here, now gone, thoughts leave no trace,
And opened wide to seamless gnosis
Hopes and fears are not longer credible,
The stake that tethers the mind in its field is extracted,
And samsara, the city of delusion, is evacuated”.

Or: “Unchanging and unchangeable, nothing is there to desire, and with nothing to hold on to, not even a mind”.

Before leaving you to read the many facets of this text some of which are even controversial, I will simply quote a final passage from Longchenpa that condenses the essence of many reflections on the nature of phenomena and on “illumination” itself.

Why do we say that everything is mind?
Mind is the source and multiplicity mind.
Can Buddha arise as product
Or sentient beings evolve into buddhas?
Take charcoal for example – we can polish it,
But try as we may it does not become white;
In the same way, deluded beings,
Though they practice endless meditation,
Can never become Buddha.

laksminkara

the mad divine princess

Laksminkara was the sister of King Indrabhuti, the sovereign of two hundred thousand cities of Oddiyana. From infancy Laksminkara possessed many inner qualities due to the reawakening in her of the potentiality for total realization. Besides this she had listened to the discourses of great Tantric adepts, including Lwavapa, and she was expert in numerous Tantras. When the messengers of King Jalendra – to whose son her brother Indrabhuti had arranged for her to be married – accompanied her to Lanka to celebrate the wedding, she took with her a large retinue of Buddhist scholars and infinite wealth. But when she saw that the population of Lankapura was not Buddhist, Laksminkara became very sad. The astrologers held that it was not a favorable time for the princess to enter the palace of Jalendra, king of Lanka, and so Laksminkara stayed in a house in the city.

The prince she was engaged to and his convoy, which was returning from a hunting expedition, went to visit her to welcome her with a lot of game. “Who killed all these animals?” asked the princess, horrified. “We are coming back from the hunt”,

a servant said to her, “and your husband-to-be, the prince, went deep into the woods and managed to kill all these animals.” The princess, disgusted by the barbarity of the hunt which was carried out with the sole aim of filling the stomach, thought, “My brother is a king who defends the Buddhist faith: how could he permit my marriage with such a heretic?” and thinking this, she fainted.

When she recovered she gave all her wealth to the inhabitants of Lankapura and she gave her personal ornaments to the ladies of her retinue. Then she closed herself in her lodgings making it known that she did not want to receive anyone for ten days.

She shaved off her hair and stripped naked, covering herself with ashes. She seemed to have gone crazy, but her heart was determined: she wanted to attain supreme knowledge without hesitation. The king and the court, being very worried, sent doctors and medicine to the princess, but she violently chased away everyone who approached her, sending brass plates and saucepans flying across the rooms.

King Jalendra let King Indrabhuti know that he could come and take back his sister. The heart of the princess was turned far from the ordinary things of life and



she sought a way to get out of the situation she found herself in.

She fled from Lankapura, taking refuge in a cemetery to practice the teachings of her masters. Even though she seemed like a mad hermit, in reality she was determined to attain the final goal. After seven years of meditation she attained knowledge and powerful realizations.

One of the king’s road sweepers became her disciple and she transmitted her knowledge to him. This man understood the unreal nature of things and acted in such a way as to let others attain such understanding.

Some time later King Jalendra, accompanied by his retinue, ar-

rived near the dwelling of the yogini; they were returning from a hunting expedition and had lost their way. They were exhausted and were looking for a place to rest, so, by chance they stopped near the cave where Laksminkara lived. Seeing the woman, the king thought, “Who is that mad woman?” But then he noticed a supernatural light shining from inside the cave and from every corner divine girls arrived who made offerings to the yogini and sang songs of praise to her. When the king had managed to return to his palace a sincere faith in the woman had arisen in him. It was not long before king Jalendra returned to the cave to pay homage to Laksminkara. “Why do you revere a mad woman like me?” Laksminkara asked him. The king replied that he desired to receive her knowledge and the yogini said:

“All beings in conditioned existence suffer the pain which permeates such existence. There is no real joy for them. Those who are born must die. Even the gods who have the most sublime existence, are bound to that destiny. The three forms of lower life are torments: some eat each other, others are always hungry, yet others are tortured by fire and ice Oh King, seek the bliss of liberation!”

After this the yogini said to the king: “You cannot be my disciple, but go to one of your road-sweepers; he is my disciple and he could be your master. He has just attained knowledge; he could be the best friend for you.” “There are many sweepers at court, so how will I recognize him?” asked the king. “It isn’t hard to find him, because he is always offering food to the poor. Go to him tonight,” answered the princess.

When the king found the sweeper he examined him carefully and recognized in him the qualities of a master. He made him sit on the throne and he paid respect to him and asked him to explain his doctrine. The sweeper conferred on the king the initiation that transfers the power of knowledge. The road sweeper and the princess showed their miraculous powers and their knowledge to the inhabitants of Lankapura and taught their disciples the generation and completion stages of meditation on the natural state according to the Tantra of Vajravahni. At the end of their enlightened activity they went together, in their own bodies to the paradise of the Dakinis. ©

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Translated from the Tibetan by Elio Guarisco
English Translation by Nina Robinson

>> *The Mirror of total Clarity* continued from page 1
fused in all traditions. Rinpoche discussed specific shine practices related with the various levels of lower capacity – higher, medium and lower – including practices of shine with and without support. Rinpoche also talked about how a practitioner can remain for centuries in a state of *nepa* (calm state) becoming like a stone and it may be necessary for that person to be awakened by a Bodhisattva. He illustrated this with a story of a rich businessman who traveled here and there in Tibet, and when he had the chance he would find a nice cave and practice shine there. One time, the businessman remained for three days in shine and then after the three days he “fell asleep” in the state of shine, and for years his companions searched for him. They found his body still alive, with long hair, in a cave years later and had to ask an expert teacher to wake him up. Rinpoche wound up day two by saying that shine becomes contemplation when we remain in emptiness and discover who is noticing the emptiness. As well, if we increase this presence discovered in shine and we integrate

in that state, this is called realization.
On day three Rinpoche talked about and gave three types of Direct Introduction, connected to clarity, emptiness and sensation. Firstly he spoke about how in Sutra we can realize empty space and that is absolute truth, but in Vajrayana that is not complete. There is a famous saying in Vajrayana: “Mantrayana door is opened with initiation.” Then Rinpoche said that in Dzogchen the principle is not initiation, but that we need to discover our potentiality through movement. We have infinite potentiality in our real nature and the unique method of discovery is through experience.
On day four Rinpoche entered into the topic of *lhagthong* and that wisdom means movement related with our real nature, movement is part of our real nature, and the name *lhagthong* is always the same but its description varies. There is the alternation of emptiness and movement, but in Dzogchen we do not abandon thoughts, there is no difference between thought and no

thought. Garab Dorje said that if anything (thought) arises, you do not escape; you just observe its face. That is the way of self-liberation. Rinpoche went on to say that when we liberate the inside, the outside is automatically liberated. Rinpoche said that in Sutra, *lhagthong* means *prajna paramita*. He told how Milarepa said to Gampopa, his student who bragged that he could remain seven days in a state of shine: “If that is meditation, then the four samtens or dhyanas (the level of some dewas) must also be meditation. Fortunately you met me or you would be reborn as a dewa!” Rinpoche said that in Dzogchen, *lhagthong* is called *mi yowa* because the practitioner is integrated with movement. *Mi yowa* means you are totally integrated with movement and the knowledge of that principle. If you do not go after movement and you face it, then you liberate it and you have the moment of instant presence.

On day 5 the discussion of *lhagthong* continued and Rinpoche opened by saying that *lhagthong* means that we are in a state of contemplation in our real nature. For sentient beings their

real nature is in their physical dimension. He talked about how when we discover our real nature and the point of view is perfect, then we do not look outside and think and judge; we already know our condition. We must reverse the direction of our senses inside and observe the real *tawa* (view) inside and not be conditioned by our three gates.
On day six, the last day of the retreat, Rinpoche said that meditation does not mean being in a one pointed way in emptiness. That is not contemplation. To develop the main point of instant presence, we try to be aware in our daily life. That is our final “address” or destination. We should learn by being present in each moment. Instant presence is beyond time. Rinpoche stressed the aspect of *lhagthong mi yowa*, the natural state, understanding the state of Dzogchen. Rinpoche summed up by saying that we relax in the state of knowledge beyond dualism and we slowly manifest all. This is *lhagthong mi yowa*. We do not separate shine and *lhagthong*; shine becomes contemplation and is connected with movement, *lhagth-*

ong, and compassion manifests. We are not satisfied that only we have that realization, but that all beings do, and this becomes serious compassion. Otherwise only artificial compassion develops.
As is usual during retreats, there were morning classes in both beginners’ Yantra Yoga that focused on the Eight Movements and the Vajra Dance of the Six Liberations, as well as practice sessions in the late afternoon for both.
The retreat ended mid-day of the sixth day, and there was a final Ganapuja that was web cast worldwide. Following the Ganapuja was an auction where Tashigar South was able to raise much needed seed money for the various projects (see interview page 12) planned for the future, including a new Gonpa! As always, joy and sadness mingle on the last day of the precious time spent with Rinpoche in the mandala of the teaching. Once again, we thank Rinpoche with words for something far beyond and look forward to the next possibility to bask in the rays of the marvelous Dzogchen teaching. ©

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International
Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Main Office: PO Box 479, Conway, MA 01341, USA * Tel: 413 369 4208 * Fax: 413 369 4473 * mirror@tsegyalgar.org * **European Office:** The Mirror, Merigar, Arcidosso, 58031 GR, Italy * Tel: 39 32 98 86 52 92 * Fax: 39 05 64-96 81 10 * lizmirror@tiscalinet.it * **Editorial Staff:** Naomi Zeitz, Tsegyalgar, Conway, MA, USA * Liz Granger, Merigar, Arcidosso, Italy * **Literary Editor:** John Shane * **Advisors:** Des Barry, Adriano Clemente, Anna Eid, Barbara Paparazzo, Jim Valby * **International Blue Gakyil Advisor:** Fabio Andrico, International Publications Committee * **English Language Advisor:** Liz Granger * **Layout & Design:** Thomas Eifler * **Web Site Managers:** Thomas Eifler, Malcolm Smith * **Printer:** Turley Publications, Palmer, MA, USA * **Distribution:** Tsegyalgar at Conway, MA, USA * **Subscription Rate/6 Issues:** \$35 US available through Tsegyalgar; 35 € through Merigar * *Visa and Master card welcome* * **Online Mirror:** www.melong.com * All material © 2007 by The Mirror * **Reprint by permission only** * We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

Drawing of Earth Rat by Fulvio Ferrari.

Poems

22

cloud banks of nectar

a yearning supplication and aspiration
to the three roots

LONGCHENPA

Victorious Ones and Your Sons in the ten directions,
All assemblies of noble Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas,
And everyone who practices the Dharma, I supplicate
you respectfully.
Regard me with compassion and grant your blessings.
Gurus of the three lineages, peaceful and wrathful yidam
deities,
Dakas and Dakinis, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
Dharma Protectors and Samaya-holders, Rishis who have
attained true speech,
Lovingly bestow your blessings on this supplicating
child.
Kyema Kyihu, a wretched one like me,
Has been tormented by unbearable karma and the
kleshas for so long.
Stretch out your hands with great love and compassion
And guide me this very moment.
Although my nature is primordially enlightened,
Because of ignorance and confusion I have wandered
throughout existence.
I am desolate in this dream-like samsara.
Please be my refuge and protect me.
Please rescue me and countless sentient beings
From the endless ocean of samsara, so difficult to cross
Take us across the sea of suffering
In the unsurpassable boat of wisdom.
The manifestations of tendencies – habits for so long,
And dualistic grasping to deluded experience, are more
imposing than Mount Sumeru.
Please demolish them this very moment
With the wisdom vajra of supreme liberation.
The darkness of ignorance, such a dense obscuration,
has lasted so long,
It is hard to fathom and its end is impossible to see.
With your wisdom light rays please clear away
This immense cover which obscures the luminous
essence.

Whatever I do, it is but the cause of kleshas and
suffering.
Letting my mind turn completely away
From the futile concerns of this world,
Please make me spend day and night in Dharma practice.
Incorrect thinking is like overlapping waves.
Various conceptualizations chase after the five sense
objects.
Please pacify the eight collections, the tendencies and
the all-ground
Within Dharmadhatu.
Conceptual tendencies, the klesha-mind of the desire
realm,
And habitual tendencies connected with the samsaric
mind
Of the clarity of the form realm and the nonthought of
the formless,
Please purify all of them.
Having turned away from the pursuit of solitary peace –
The inferior attitude of practicing for the benefit of
oneself,
Let me enter the path of the supreme outer, inner and
secret teachings
And enable me to act vastly for the benefit of others.
Completely purifying karma, the kleshas and tendencies
Of all beings who are on an inferior, perverted or
mistaken path,
Please help everyone, without exception, to journey
together
To the liberated citadel of the wishfulfilling mind-
essence.
We have remained for so long, without beginning or end
In the ocean of obscurations, murky with emotions,
With no chance for emancipation by ourselves.
Please liberate us with your great compassion.
From the strong and intense emotions, so hard to
endure,
From the pain of existence with so much suffering,
And from the level of carelessness, dependency and
laziness
Please fully liberate us this very day.
May we fully realize that all futile phenomena
Are impermanent, unstable, a magical enticement for the
mind.
Please enable us to spend day and night continuously

With sincere renunciation and weariness.
Having attained awareness, super-knowledge and
samadhi
In the delightful secluded phases of sacred mountain
dwellings,
Please enable us to arrive, within this very lifetime,
At the celestial realm of great bliss, the spontaneous
accomplishment of the two benefits.
Exerting ourselves in practice, alone with perseverance,
May we not drift toward the concerns of this life for an
instant.
Perfecting the siddhis in the footsteps of the forefathers,
May we always please our spiritual master.
Free from the flows of broken samayas,
And realizing unmistakably the meaning of the view,
meditation, action and result,
Without wavering from the luminous state, day and
night,
May we accomplish the twofold benefit for self and
others.
Perfecting development and completion, the purity of
what appears and exists,
Let the ocean of dakinis samaya-holders gather like cloud
banks.
With the twofold siddhis descending on us like rain,
May we accomplish the four activities.
With pure perception and devotion arising without bias,
With uninterrupted love and compassion,
And with experience and realization – the virtues of view
and meditation – blazing forth,
May we impartially act for the welfare of beings.
Through this, our perfect devotion and merit,
May all beings be fully liberated together, without
exception,
And journey within this very lifetime
To Samantabhadra’s realm of spontaneously present
great bliss.

This supplication was made at Lharing Drag, the seat of the Self-Born Padma, by Longchen Rabjam, a yogin of the supreme vehicle who has attained unshakable faith in all the holy masters and is wealthy with the richness of learning. May this be auspicious throughout all directions and times.

year of the
earth rat

jacqueline gens

What comes to mind is a certain
brawn, a radiant boldness
that defies the boundaries of can’t do
or won’t make it happen.
I’ve seen you look askance,
your single eye focused
in the strut through garbage and refuse –
All the heaps of discouragements
that hinder others but excite your passion
for excellence and a worthy prosperity.
Let’s move mountains,
scale globes of gold,
defy the house rules
to blaze a path towards realization
arising from such unlikely origins
as the lowly earth rat
who never says No.

2. 7. 08
Jacqueline Gens
Brattleboro, VT
USA

yellow jacket

stephan hill

Yellow jacket
crawling slow
ly
over screen of my tent

Seeking freedom

Behind him,
the tent door blows open

Mr. Yellow Jacket, I can see your
problem.

But,
how can i explain it to you?

LONGCHEN RABJAM says, “awakened
mind is self knowing awareness
equal to space.”

michael white

The natural stream of awareness,
utterly lucid
and spontaneously present,
is the treasury of appearances.
It is infinite expanse
with no identity in itself
yet all else arises within it
as ornaments
of the vastness of mind.
In this basic space of phenomenon
appearances are concrete manifestations of emptiness
having no inherent existence
outside the uncontrived equanimity
of the pure and total presence
that is all inclusive,
ever fresh,
and totally complete.
Primordial presence
requires no effort
and seeks no achievement.
This open dimension of the total field of events and
meanings,
liberated from ideology,
released from adherence to any point of view,
is the limitlessly beneficial creative excitement
of intrinsic freedom.

impermanence, the preciousness of human birth and the precious master

gerry steinberg

I don't remember so much about this particular retreat, but I do remember these times. This photo was taken in 1983, the third retreat with Rinpoche in Conway. There was a retreat in 1982, and this was the second one in the fall of 1983. We were so fortunate. There were two teaching sessions a day, every evening a Medium Tun with Chöd practice with Rinpoche and lots of time altogether with Rinpoche. There were impromptu teachings and lungs and spontaneous activity. This photo an example. We were making these banners and Rinpoche brought a few of us across the street to the fields to take this photo. It was not just a photo, but somehow a symbol of our journey together in this boat.

When I was first introduced to Rinpoche's teachings I was a passive recipient. Mr. Anderson, the teacher of the Gurdjieff Community in Conway, had developed an interest and connection to Buddhist teachings. His first connection was with Dodrup Chen Rinpoche and Dudjom Rinpoche. Bob Kragen then in-

troduced Mr. Anderson to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teachings through transcripts of a retreat in Sardinia. We would read the excerpts together. Prior to this, we had received teachings and empowerments. Initially it seemed somewhat foreign and strange, passively going along with our teacher Mr. Anderson and trusting in his understanding that this was the right path for us.

Then everything changed. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu came to Conway. I remember the first time I laid eyes on the Master. I was standing on the steps of the group house. Rinpoche was getting out of the car and somehow I was prepared. I had been working cleaning the kitchen with Alex Siedlecki, and was miraculously in a state of presence at the point I didn't understand. The moment I made contact with Rinpoche's presence I had no doubt this was my Teacher, my Master. During the next weeks the teaching put everything into perspective; everything seemed to fit together.

Initially, when I looked at the photo again I judged those who are no longer actively involved



with the Community. How could they leave? What a unique opportunity we have: this Master, this Teaching, so precious, how fortunate to be born into this opportunity. How about me? Then I was so full of dreams, fantasies and possibilities. Impermanence and the preciousness of human birth were mere concepts to pay lip service to, and on some level there always seemed to be plenty of time to realize these teachings. What a unique and precious opportunity we have to have been born in this time and place with this Master. Time is

passing! Now twenty-five years later we can only try to be in these teachings and this practice. That is the best I can do and am most grateful for the opportunity.

Homage to the Master! ©

michael katz

To look at this old photo as we gathered with the Maestro in a field during a brilliant autumn day in Conway Massachusetts, I am reminded of impermanence. I am also reminded of Rinpoche's unshakeable commitment to the teachings and to his students. It brings back memories of the many days of teachings and the many nights gathered with friends. I am also reminded that some of us had more hair back then. May Rinpoche's life be long! ©

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

how i arrived at tashigar south

maria estrella

Today is Saturday, Feb. 2nd, 2008. I'm in Cordoba State, Argentina, and it was my first day as a practitioner of "something" about which I have no idea.

I'm still in awe and feel strange, as I could never have imagined these practices and programs totally unknown to someone of my 57 years.

There's a Master that draws people from great distances just to listen to his teachings. People congregate from Russia, Italy, Greece, France, USA, Venezuela, Peru, Nicaragua, Chile, etc., etc, and everyone with different languages and cultures.

Although somehow different and strange, I didn't resist what was happening. It was as if this "mysterious" path was destined for me.

Everything started one Sunday, during the month of August 2007. I came to Tanti to paint and rest. One day after having finished my painting and, without any particular reason, instead of returning to Cordoba I decided to explore further. Driving my car in no particular direction, a big advertisement captured my at-

tention: "Piedras del Sol Ashram, yoga, meditation, etc." Of course, I entered. It was a beautiful place. They told me about their schedule and explained me what it was about. So I thought: "One day I'll come back to spend some time here". So, Monday, January 28th of the next year, I arrived at the Ashram. Everything was so organized and calm that I felt great comfort. On Wednesday, January 30th, in the morning, something happened out of the blue. While I was returning from a nice walk, a little girl that was passing by suddenly turned around, smiled at me in such a friendly and joyful way that I thought she had mistaken me for somebody else.

She came towards me and immediately started talking without interruption. She told me that her name was Katya, she was ten years old, that she was carrying a doll in her arms, that she was keeping her house key in her pocket (and that she shouldn't lose it), and that she was on her way to meet her mother who was working in Tashigar. This name was new to me, but I didn't ask her anything so as not to confuse her. We continued walking until



Maria and Katya at the commodore of Tashigar South. Photo: N. Zeitz

we arrived at the entrance of the Ashram where I should have entered. So I said good-bye to her, but immediately she asked me "Aren't you coming with me?"

I couldn't say no to such a sweet offer, so I blindly followed her.

She continued talking until all of a sudden she pointed out a house, visible from the road. "That is the Master's house", she said, "And that's his swimming pool".

That moment I knew where I was and what "Tashigar" meant. I had heard about a Buddhist Center in the Ashram, and I realized it was this place. When we arrived, Katya took me to the kitchen, introduced me to her mother, and flew away. She had

"deposited" me in this place, and that was that.

I returned to the Ashram after being informed about their program, but without any particular intention. I only wanted to continue my stay at the Ashram, because that's what I had planned.

Friday, Feb. 1st, the beginning of the retreat, just at midday, I was going to climb some rocks and read before my yoga session, when suddenly a lady that was also staying at the Ashram and to whom I'd never spoken to, walked by carrying many things, including a vacuum. So I offered to help her, convinced I could return to my book afterwards.

She was Maria Octavia, from Venezuela. As we walked by, she told me she was going to the retreat, and told me I should stay at Tashigar. Just "by chance" I had a tent and an inflatable mattress in my car. This was too much of a coincidence to me.

I packed in five minutes. Maria Octavia dropped all her plans in order to help me settle in.

And here I am, in Tashigar. Friday afternoon, yesterday, I met the Master during the first day of the teachings. Everything was new to me, so I tried to follow the "ceremony" even though I did not understand a word.

At the end, with the last few seconds of daylight, I entered my tent. I was so afraid that I went

to bed crying and asking myself, "Why am I here? Why have I left the Ashram where I was so safe and comfortable to stay at this unknown place, so far away from everything."

I observed my fear, accepted it, and in this way I fell asleep.

Saturday, when the Master started the teaching, he first started talking about new people. He asked for hospitality for the newcomers, and I started to feel that tears returned to my eyes. But now I feel warmth in my heart.

And here I am, on top of a great question mark, trying to stop my thoughts, my uncertainties and my fears. I am trying not to hide behind familiarities of every day.

I still have some time before next Saturday when I promised Maria Octavia to take her to the airport. So I've decided to stay in Tashigar until Saturday.

Besides the above-mentioned "coincidences", there were many others more subtle and fragile; those that only oneself can contemplate and understand. I realize that I'm not making any decisions by myself. The only thing I do is to follow what every day throws at me.

God will have the last word ...

how i met CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

ellen halbert

In my dream, the one that I call my life, I am driving from Virginia to Massachusetts, almost a full day's journey. It is early spring, but I am driving north, back into winter. I am in a bad mood.

As I drive, I scold myself for having arranged this trip. I have a very demanding job as an art therapist at a day treatment center for mentally ill adults. There has been too much work, too few staff, and too many clients in crisis. I need a break – a week relaxing on a beach in the Caribbean maybe. Instead I am driving north to sit all day for 10 days taking notes on teachings to be given by a Tibetan lama I have never met, on a subject I have never heard of. I am doing this because someone I trust recommended it. I must be crazy – what was I thinking when I made this decision?

Finally, in the state of Massachusetts, I enter a frozen wonderland of conifer forests covered with snow, huge icicles hanging from eaves, and swollen streams rushing over rocks. The beauty lightens my mood a little. When I arrive at my hotel they tell me a blizzard is expected that night. It's good you arrived now rather than later, they say. I laugh ruefully.

That afternoon I sit among many strangers on the floor of an elementary school auditorium. We all stand when a jovial man enters and sits at the front. He speaks English with a strong accent and uses Tibetan words to introduce some concepts quite foreign to me. I take notes as best I can, trying to approximate the sounds of the Tibetan words, often evaporating from my mind before I can capture them on paper. My mind strains to grasp what I hear. Yet strangely, at the same time, I feel sure that what I am hearing is the most profound, beautiful truth that I have ever encountered. I feel as if the top of my head has been removed and I am being filled with warm, delicious nectar.

As predicted, that night a blizzard hits. In the morning 3 feet of snow covers everything, and the cars in the parking lot are almost invisible under it. Plows are busily clearing the roads and hotel employees shovel diligently to uncover our cars. Soon the way is clear and I easily arrive again at the retreat hall where teachings resume promptly as scheduled. I marvel at the apparent ease with which this has been accomplished.



Ellen at the new outdoor mandala at Tashigar South. Photo: N. Zeitz

The following days of my dream turn many of the strangers into friends, and I happily enter into the flow of activities. I do strange movements that make my body feel new and different. I sound AH along with everybody else. Although I am not sure what is supposed to happen when we do this. I furtively peek at the people around me for clues, but finally give up, and just close my eyes and make the sound.

The teaching we are being given is called Longde, and we make measurements for special sticks that will support our practice. I try to draw the strange positions and to understand their purpose. I try to imagine a time when I might feel confident doing all of this.

The participants from Massachusetts are trying to raise money to buy a schoolhouse and some land in a nearby town where they want to make a center for the teach-

ings. One night there is an auction to raise money for this, and Rinpoche is very entertaining in his promotion of some of the objects auctioned. The bids fly back and forth around the room and the sums rise fast. Without thinking I find myself bidding on a pair of earrings made by a vendor at the retreat. Almost before I realize what has happened I bid \$200, a ridiculous sum for a pair of earrings, and no one counters. In shock, I realize that the earrings are mine and I will pay this outrageous amount. When I stand up to accept the earrings Rinpoche looks at me. It is not an ordinary look, but an intense, almost fierce, focused gaze. For a long moment my dream stops and I don't understand what is happening. Afterward I think maybe he has seen everything about me – inside and outside, past, present and future.

The next day Rinpoche gives countless transmissions of practices, and the people from Massachusetts announce that enough money has been raised to make the down payment on the schoolhouse. In a festive mood we close with a Ganapuja.

I drive the long way home as if floating on a cloud, and laugh at the difference in my attitude from when I came. I feel such gratitude and deep joy for all that has happened. I have not met Rinpoche in the traditional sense – I was too terrified to speak to him personally. But I know that I have found my teacher and my path.

In my dream, the years since have held many marvelous experiences and difficult challenges. The schoolhouse in Massachusetts has become Tsegyalgar, and I have become a practitioner and a member of the Dzogchen community. And this has changed my dream forever, until I finally wake up.



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